

**Experience and Teleology in Ancient  
Historiography  
Futures Past from Herodotus to Augustine**  
Jonas Grethlein, Universität Heidelberg

Ihr alle kennt die wilde Schwermut, die uns bei der Erinnerung an Zeiten des Glückes ergreift. Wie unwiderruflich sind sie doch dahin, und unbarmherziger sind wir von ihnen getrennt als durch alle Entfernungen.

Ernst Jünger, *Auf den Marmorklippen*

## **Acknowledgments**

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the support of various kinds that I received while working on this book. Much of *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography* was written in the East Coast idyll of Providence, Rhode Island where I spent the academic year 2010/11 as Gerda-Henkel fellow at Brown University. Many thanks to the Gerda-Henkel-Stiftung and Brown's Classics Department for an invaluable year of thinking, reading and writing! A research seminar at King's College, Cambridge, in February 2011 allowed me to put three chapters to the test and provided much intellectual stimulation. I am most grateful to Robin Osborne for the invitation and splendid hospitality as well as to all participants for their probing questions. Further astute comments came from Chris Pelling and Kostas Vlassopoulos who responded to my paper at the Triennials 2011, also in Cambridge. I am fortunate to have in Bill Furley and Christopher Krebs two friends and learned philologists who read the entire manuscript with great care. I also benefitted from the expertise of Johanna Hanink, Bob Morstein-Marx and Kurt Raaflaub and their comments on individual chapters.

It would be impossible to name everyone from whom I have learnt in discussion and correspondence, but that does not prevent me from expressing my gratitude at least to Debby Boedeker, Angelos Chaniotis, Monika Fludernik, Renaud Gagné, Simon Goldhill, Christian Grethlein, Albert Henrichs, Marianne Hopman, Simon Hornblower, David Konstan, Ted Lendon, Elizabeth Meyer, Sara Monoson, Joe Pucci, Tim Rood, Michael Squire, Christian Tornau and Bob Wallace. I am also indebted to Sabine Hug, Benjamin Allgaier, Leonhard Graf von Klinckowstroem, Marie-Charlotte von Lehsten and Dominic Meckel for their assistance in formatting the manuscript. Last but not least I thank Michael Sharp and the two anonymous readers for the Press for their helpful suggestions.

Parts of sect. 1.III and 10.II draw on 'Experientiality and narrative reference. With thanks to Thucydides' *History and Theory* 49, 2010: 315-35; ch. 2 is a revised version of 'The presence of the past in Thucydides' in M.

Tamiolaki and A. Tsakmakis, edd. *Thucydides' Techniques. Between Historical Research and Literary Representation*; sect. 6.I expands on a section of 'How (not) to do history: Xerxes in Herodotus *Histories*' *AJPh* 130, 2009: 195-218. I am grateful for permission to re-use these articles for this book.

My argument combines broad theoretical reflections on history and narrative with close readings of ancient texts. To make the argument accessible to readers with no Greek and Latin, I have added translations that, while foregoing elegance and sometimes even straining readability, attempt to convey the features crucial to my interpretation. I have consulted and used, with modifications, the following translations: Waterfield (1998) for Herodotus; Lattimore (1998) for Thucydides; Brownson (1998) [1922] for Xenophon; Paton (1922-7) for Polybius; Rolfe (1921) for Sallust; Usher (1974-85) for Dionysius; Russell (2001) for Quintilian; Woodman (2004) for Tacitus; Babitt (1936) and Perrin (1914-26) for Plutarch; Cary (1914-27) for Dio; Sheed (2011) for Augustine. As to Greek names, I tend to adopt latinized forms, except where familiarity dictates otherwise. The abbreviations of journals follow the *Année Philologique*, those of ancient authors the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

## Abbreviations

Blass-Thalheim	F. Blass and T. Thalheim (eds.). (1914) <i>Antiphontis Orationes et Fragmenta</i> . Leipzig.
DK	H. Diels and W. Kranz (eds.). (1952) <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker. I–III</i> . (6th edn). Berlin.
FGrH	F. Jacoby (ed.). (1923–) <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> . Berlin.
I.G.	<i>Inscriptiones graecae</i> (1873–) Berlin.
TLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> (1900–) Leipzig.
Peter	H. Peter (ed.). (1883) <i>Historicorum Romanorum Fragmenta</i> . Leipzig.
Usener-Radermacher	H. Usener and L. Radermacher (eds.). (1899–1929) <i>Dionysii Halicarnasei Opuscula. I–II</i> . Leipzig.
V	E.-M. Voigt (ed.). (1971) <i>Sappho et Alcaeus. Fragmenta</i> . Amsterdam.
Lex. Tac.	A. Gerber, A. Greef and C. John (eds.). (1877–1903). <i>Lexicon Taciteum. I–II</i> . Leipzig.

## 1. Futures past: Historiography between experience and teleology

### I. EXPERIENCE AND TELEOLOGY

The encounter of Croesus with Solon stands prominently at the beginning of Herodotus' *Histories*. Besides featuring a clash of worlds – Lydian king meets Greek sage – the episode helps to set the tone for the narrative, encapsulating Herodotus' take on history *in nuce*. Memorably, Solon hesitates to praise Croesus' version of bliss, pointing out that 'we must look to the conclusion of every matter, and see how it will end' ('σκοπέειν δὲ χρὴ παντὸς χρήματος τὴν τελευτὴν κῆ ἀποβήσεται.' 1.32.9). It is not difficult to read this wisdom metaleptically as a reference to the *Histories* themselves:<sup>1</sup> a wealth of prolepses betrays Herodotus' interest in very recent and contemporary events, notably the intra-Hellenic conflicts in the second half of the fifth century,<sup>2</sup> and yet his narrative ends with the year 479 BCE. A gap of two generations thus allows Herodotus to acquiesce to the maxim of the *Histories*' Solon and consider historical events from their end.

A very different view of how to narrate the past comes to the fore in an ancient comment on Herodotus' most prominent successor. In his treaty *On the glory of the Athenians*, Plutarch turns to Thucydides to illustrate Simonides' dictum that poetry is a speaking painting (*De glor. Ath.* 347a):

Thucydides is always striving for this vividness in his writing, since it is his desire to make the reader a spectator, as it were, and to instil in readers the emotions of amazement and consternation felt by eyewitnesses.

ὁ γοῦν Θουκυδίδης ἀεὶ τῷ λόγῳ πρὸς ταύτην ἀμιλλᾶται τὴν ἐνάργειαν, οἷον θεατὴν ποιῆσαι τὸν ἀκροατὴν καὶ τὰ γινόμενα περὶ τοὺς ὀρῶντας ἐκπληκτικὰ καὶ ταρακτικὰ πάθη τοῖς ἀναγινώσκουσιν ἐνεργάσασθαι λιχνευόμενος.<sup>3</sup>

The visual quality of Thucydides' narrative lets the reader view the fighting at Pylos and the battle in the harbour of Syracuse as if they were just unfolding.

Solon's metaleptic comment on the *Histories* and Plutarch's reading of Thucydides describe two poles between which narratives of the past oscillate: teleology and experience. The historian can capitalize on the advantage of hindsight or try to render the past as it was experienced by the historical agents. It is the project of *Futures Past* to explore this tension in ancient historical narrative. In this introductory chapter, I will chart its theoretical implications and thereby

---

<sup>1</sup> See also Artabanus in 7.51.3; cf. Grethlein 2009b: 214.

<sup>2</sup> This has been much commented on in scholarship, see, e.g., Fornara 1971b; Stadter 1992; Moles 1996.

<sup>3</sup> See also Plut. *Nic.* 1.1; 1.5. On Plutarch's manifold plays with Thucydides, see Pelling 1992.

provide the framework for my readings as well as elucidating their relevance for the theory of history. After elaborating on teleology and experience in the remainder of this section, I will use Danto's concept of 'narrative sentences' as a steppingstone to conceptualize the tension between them that I label 'futures past' (II). I shall then turn to narrative and situate my approach in a current debate among theoreticians of history (III). In a final step, I will sum up the goals of *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography* and give a synopsis of its argument (IV).

In the context of my argument, telos does not signify the historians' ulterior motives, e.g. to entertain or educate their readers, but the vantage-point from which a course of events is told. Posteriority endows the historian with a superior stance the importance of which is nicely illustrated by an episode from Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme*. The novel's hero, Fabrice del Dongo, desperately trying to join Napoleon's troops despite his young age and poor knowledge of French, witnesses the battle of Waterloo. Donned in the uniform of a French hussar, he wanders right onto the battlefield, joins the troops of Marshal Ney and is wounded in the leg. Although Fabrice is as present and as close as possible, the narrative focalized through his eyes tells us very little about the battle. This is not only due to Fabrice's imbecile character and his spatially limited vantage-point, but also bespeaks the superiority which retrospect bestows on historians. Notably a couple of weeks later, after recovering from his injury, Fabrice tries to learn about the battle from journal articles and even wonders: 'What he had seen, was it a battle, and secondly, was this battle Waterloo?'<sup>4</sup>

The temporal distance that at first sight appears as an impediment to the historians' work is, besides the access to multiple perspectives, one of their chief assets. Hindsight allows historians to evaluate events in the light of later events and make out links that are still invisible to the historical agents. The Austrian novelist von Doderer puts it beautifully in the words of the narrator of his *Die Dämonen*: 'Out of that past, what belongs together in truth (often without our knowing) gradually grows together; and related entities shake hands and bridge the gap of time even if they were widely separated from each other in life, in different years, at different places, without an accessible link between their environments.'<sup>5</sup> Less poetic, but conveying more or less the same idea is a

---

<sup>4</sup> Stendhal 2007: 87: 'Ce qu'il avait vu, était-ce une bataille, et en seconde lieu, cette bataille était-elle Waterloo?' On the discrepancy between the experience of a battle and later reports, see Tolstoy in the second epilogue to *War and Peace* (1220-1); the battle narratives of this novel seem strongly influenced by Stendhal.

<sup>5</sup> von Doderer 1956: I: 16: 'Aus jenem Vergangenen aber schwankt wie aus Nebeln zusammen, was aus Wahrheit zusammen gehört, wir wußten's oft kaum, aber jetzt reicht das verwandte Gebild dem verwandten die Hand und sie schlagen eine Brücke durch die Zeit, mögen sie auch sonst im Leben ganz weit auseinandergestanden haben, in verschiedenen Jahren, an verschiedenen Orten, zwischen denen eine recht eigentlich gangbare Verbindung der Umstände fehlt.' See also the impressive description of the view from the window that can be read as a metaphor for the historian's activity (20-1).

fragment from the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century BCE annalist Fannius: ‘When we have learned our lessons in life, then much that seems good at its time, turns out to be bad and many things are very different from what they seemed to be ...’ (*cum in vita agenda didicimus, multa, quae inpraesentiarum bona videntur, post <mala> inventa et multa amplius alius modi atque ante visa essent ...*, fr. 1 Peter). It is crucial for historians to go beyond the perspective of their characters and view the past from the telos of events still anterior to them.<sup>6</sup> Even David Carr, one of the most eloquent advocates of the role of experience in historiography, affirms this when he elaborates on the steps of historical reconstruction: in a first step, historians retrieve the events as experienced by the historical agents, they then compare the experiences of various characters and finally incorporate them in a new story from their own elevated point of view.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, historians and philosophers have not tired of warning against the sway of teleology and have instead advanced a focus on the experiences of historical agents. To start with, two scholars who are not often mentioned in the same sentence may illustrate the reservations of historians against ‘the enormous condescension of posteriority’:<sup>8</sup> in his diatribe against the ‘whig interpretation of history’, Herbert Butterfield attacks liberal historians who fail to do justice to the past by not seeing it in its own right, but ‘produce a scheme of general history which is bound to converge beautifully upon the present’.<sup>9</sup> With a very different political agenda in mind, E. P. Thompson, the doyen of British neo-Marxist history, sets out to record the experiences of the English working class.<sup>10</sup>

From a more theoretical point of view, Raymond Aron had already observed in 1938: ‘Retrospect creates an illusion of fatality which contradicts the contemporaneous impression of contingency.’<sup>11</sup> He argues that causal analysis by historians should serve less to trace the great lines of history than to re-establish the uncertainty of the future for those who lived in the past.<sup>12</sup> More than half a century later (and without taking note of Aron), M. A. Bernstein chooses a particularly sensitive subject for historical representation to challenge the tendency towards teleological constructions in historiography and objects that the Shoah is envisaged as unimaginable and inevitable at the same time.<sup>13</sup> This perspective fails in particular to do justice to the experiences of the Jewish population before the Nazis’ destructive machinery started up. From yet another

---

<sup>6</sup> The advantage of hindsight is felt with particular force in the case of autobiography, cf. Freeman 1993: 108-9.

<sup>7</sup> Carr 2006: 135.

<sup>8</sup> Thompson 1966: 12.

<sup>9</sup> Butterfield 1931: 12.

<sup>10</sup> Thompson 1966.

<sup>11</sup> Aron 1938: 181: ‘La retrospection crée une illusion de fatalité qui contredit l’impression contemporaine de contingence.’

<sup>12</sup> Aron 1938: 182.

<sup>13</sup> Bernstein 1994.

angle, Lucian Hölscher notes that historical reconstructions neglect past views of the future and suggests an ‘archaeology’ which moves through the layers of earlier historical reconstructions to the events themselves and envisages them in the horizon of their own time.<sup>14</sup>

Teleology and experience are obviously at loggerheads: the more historians cash in on hindsight, the further they move away from the perspective of the historical agents. Trying to write history as it was experienced, on the other hand, requires renouncing the superior stance of retrospect. That said, teleology and experience are not without links. As emphasized by Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit*, human life is directed towards the future. We anticipate the future with a wide variety of feelings ranging from fear to hope. This variety notwithstanding, this anticipation of the future by historical agents prefigures the teleologies of historians. Needless to say, the goals pursued by humans are not necessarily identical with the telē from which their lives are later told, but nonetheless embed in the world of experience a structure that is homologous to the teleologies of historical narratives.<sup>15</sup>

It seems that the experiential quality of historical narrative is deeply rooted in our interest in the past. Some branches of current historiography may revel in numbers, statistics and maps, but, together with the work of many professional historians, the flourishing industry of the historical novel bespeaks a desire to know what it felt like to lie face to face with Cleopatra, to join a crusade or to be on board the Mayflower. Gumbrecht takes this aspect further when he argues that our interest in the past originates in the desire to transgress the limits of our *Lebenswelt*. Applied to time, this means: ‘We want to know the worlds that existed before we were born, and experience them directly.’<sup>16</sup> Linked to the wish to feel with past generations is the urge to experience them oneself in some way. Another aspect of experiential historiography is that it lends itself to recovering the possibility of agency in the flow of history. While teleology often tends to trace lines beyond the grasp of historical protagonists, the focus on experiences suits well a view of history as the product of individual agency.<sup>17</sup>

Besides being fostered by the retrospect with which we view the past, teleology appears to answer another deep-seated desire. While we are exposed to the vagaries of the future in our lives, the past offers a closed realm. Hermeneutics reminds us that there is no definitive narrative of the past, that different angles are

---

<sup>14</sup> Hölscher 2003: 52.

<sup>15</sup> This homology provides an answer to Bernstein’s question as to why to privilege the end of something (1994: 29). This is not an arbitrary imposition by historians as he insinuates, but corresponds to the structure of human action itself.

<sup>16</sup> Gumbrecht 1997: 419.

<sup>17</sup> It ought to be emphasized that these are only tendencies: If the telos is identical with an agent’s goal, a teleological account can also emphasize the role of agency, whilst an experiential account can also highlight failures of historical agents.

possible and that the further processing of time will continue to open new ones,<sup>18</sup> but, within the retrospect of a single narrative, all the openness and insecurity that make life just as troublesome as exciting can be banned. The look back permits us to master the contingencies to which we are subject in life, to replace vulnerability with sovereignty. Teleology can thus serve as a means of coping with temporality.

Following the pull to be in touch with the past as well as the desire to overcome the vagaries of time, experience and teleology arguably constitute the core of our interest in the past. Beginning with Herodotus, historians have of course prided themselves on their accuracy and methodological rigour, thereby setting their reconstructions apart from non-scholarly views.<sup>19</sup> And yet, historiography is rooted in our everyday interest in the past.<sup>20</sup> While the political aspects of ancient historiography have received much attention, an exploration of the tension between experience and teleology lets us elucidate a more existential aspect and view historiography as a means of coming to grips with temporality.

## II. FROM 'NARRATIVE SENTENCES' TO FUTURES PAST

Arthur Danto's idea of 'narrative sentences' can help us conceptualize the tension between teleology and experience that underlies historiography. In his analytical philosophy of history, Danto observes that historians are fond of a particular type of sentence: 'Narrative sentences refer to at least two time-separated events, and describe the earlier event.'<sup>21</sup> The statement 'The Thirty Years' War began in 1618',<sup>22</sup> for example, is about an event in 1618 that is seen against the horizon of a later event, the year 1648. Danto limits his analysis to single sentences, but I contend that the structure of 'narrative sentences' also defines narratives of the past as a whole: the retrospect makes historians view the past in the light of subsequent events. The vantage-point historians choose influences the selection of the material as well as its arrangement and thereby gives historical narratives their character. The later event against which the earlier event is described in Danto's narrative sentences recurs *mutatis mutandis* as the telos in a historiographic work.

---

<sup>18</sup> In the words of a character of *Die Dämonen*, the historian Neuberg (109): 'Jedesmal aber muß die ganze Vergangenheit neu geordnet und gesichtet werden, da ja jedesmal ihr Schwerpunkt, nach welchem sich alles richten muß, anderswohin verschoben ist: nämlich in eine andere Gegenwart und das heißt aber zugleich auch in einen anderen jetzt tiefinnerlich verwandten und höchst gegenwärtigen Teil der Vergangenheit.' ('Yet, every time the entire past has to be ordered and envisioned anew, because every time its centre of gravity, to which all things tend, shifts to another place, namely to another present and that means simultaneously to another point in the past that is deeply related and truly present.')

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a and 2011b for a new assessment of the rise of Greek historiography in the tension between innovation and continuity with other genres.

<sup>20</sup> For this take on history which is indebted to the phenomenological tradition, see the introductions in Grethlein 2006a und 2010a.

<sup>21</sup> Danto 1985: 159.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Danto 1985: 152.

This telos is distinct from, albeit dependent on, the horizon of the historians' present; the historians' reconstruction ought therefore not to be mixed up with Gadamer's notion of 'Horizontverschmelzung'.<sup>23</sup> The fusion of our horizon with the horizon of our object that is part of any act of understanding also applies to historians and explains why every age has to narrate the past anew. It is not necessary that the present of the historians forms the telos of the events they narrate. While the historians' understanding of their subjects is influenced by the horizon of their present, the telos of their narratives can also be in the past,<sup>24</sup> often the endpoint or climax of their narratives, for example the final victory in a war monograph or the death of the hero in a biography. While belonging to the general hermeneutics of understanding, the temporal poetics of historical writing are not identical with them.

Certain events such as military victory and death suggest themselves as telos, but the vantage-point from which specific historic events are told is as undetermined as it is crucial for their understanding: a history of Germany in the 1920s, for instance, can be told from the vantage-point of the economic crisis casting its shadow in 1929 or from the vantage-point of the Shoah, to mention just two possibilities. While in the first case Adolf Hitler and his political agitation would barely be mentioned, the Beer Hall Putsch and *Mein Kampf* would figure prominently in the second.

The Peloponnesian War furnishes an ancient example of the possibility of various telē and their impact on how we understand the past: Thucydides' narrative, as we have it, breaks off in mid-sentence, but passages such as the evaluation of Pericles in 2.65 and the second proem in 5.26 make it clear that the defeat of Athens in 404 BCE is the telos of *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. Thucydides' picture of the Peloponnesian War is so powerful that we have come to take it for granted, but other endpoints, conditioning rather different storylines, are thinkable, too. Dionysius, for example, takes issue, among other aspects, with the ending of Thucydides' account. While he levels his critique at the point where *The History of the Peloponnesian War* breaks off, obviously assuming that it is the intended endpoint, his suggestion of an alternative telos nonetheless illustrates an interpretation of the Peloponnesian War that is at odds with the one that we glean from the fragment of *The History of the Peloponnesian War* (*Pomp.* 3.10):

It would have been better, after going through all the events, to end his history with a climax, and one that was most remarkable and especially

---

<sup>23</sup> See especially Gadamer 1986: 275-83. Habermas blurs the distinction when he embeds a discussion of Danto's 'narrative sentence' in his review of *Wahrheit und Methode* (1977: 342-51).

<sup>24</sup> To be precise, the telos necessarily belongs to the past as the act of retrospective writing is always posterior to the events covered.

gratifying to his audience, the return of the exiles from Phyle, which marked the beginning of the city's recovery of freedom.

κρεῖττον δὲ ἦν διεξελθόντα πάντα τελευτὴν ποιήσασθαι τῆς ἱστορίας τὴν θαυμασιωτάτην καὶ μάλιστα τοῖς ἀκούουσι κεχαρισμένην, τὴν κάθοδον τῶν φυγάδων τῶν ἀπὸ Φυλῆς ἀφ' ὧν ἡ πόλις ἀρξαμένη τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἀνεκομίσαστο.

Whereas the telos of Thucydides' account creates a sombre picture of Athenian history, the vantage-point favoured by Dionysius would have it end on an up-beat note.<sup>25</sup> Instead of being the story of a mighty polis brought down by a corrupt political system, the Peloponnesian War would appear as the pertinacity of the Athenian democracy through a host of hardships and trials.

The very notion of a single Peloponnesian War lasting from 431-404 BCE is far from being the only way of viewing the history of this time, as several texts from the fourth century reveal: Andocides and Aeschines consider the hostilities in 431-421, 419/418 and 415-404 BCE as distinct wars just as Socrates in Plato's *Menexenus* distinguishes between the battles of Tanagra and Oenophyta, the Ten Years' War and a 'third war', arguably covering 415-404 BCE.<sup>26</sup> Needless to say, envisaged against the background of the Nicias Peace, the first years of the Peloponnesian War read very differently from Thucydides who takes the breakdown of Athens in 404 BCE as his vantage-point.

The choice of a vantage-point is the fulcrum on which historians balance experience against teleology in their narratives. Those who downplay hindsight and align their perspectives with the historical agents will foreground contemporary experience. Capitalizing on retrospect, on the other hand, and choosing vantage-points remote from the agents leads to strong teleologies. I suggest calling the underlying temporal dynamics 'futures past'.<sup>27</sup> Besides entwining retrospect with prospect, the term captures the asymmetry between characters and historians – what is still future for the former, is already past for the latter – and signifies the point that regulates the balance between experience and teleology: the stronger the future in a given narrative's 'futures past', the stronger its focus on experience; the more the 'futures past' is treated as past, on the other hand, the more prominent becomes its teleology.

Most historiographic works feature elements of both experience and teleology. Accounts that fully ignore the perspective of the agents tend to be

---

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Marincola 2005: 305; Fromentin 2008: 61.

<sup>26</sup> Andoc. 3.3-9; 29-31; Aeschin. 2.173-6; Pl. *Menex.* 242e-3b. Cf. de Ste. Croix 1972: 294-5.

<sup>27</sup> My use of 'futures past' is distinct from Koselleck's. His 1979 book bears the main title *Vergangene Zukunft* that is rendered as *Futures Past* in the title and as 'former future(s)' in the text of the English translation (cf. the translator's note in Koselleck 1985: xi n. 13). While Koselleck is interested in the future as seen in the past, an aspect that proves fundamental for his take on *Neuzeit*, I focus on the temporal asymmetry of agents and historians in the sense outlined above.

unsatisfying, as shown in Quintilian's comparison of a lapidary statement that a city was conquered, with a colourful account including the feelings of the conquered: '... to state the whole is less than to state all the parts.' (... *minus est tamen totum dicere quam omnia. Inst. 8.3.69*). On the other hand, it is hard, if not impossible, to escape hindsight entirely given that our view at the past is retrospective. It seems that the combination of both is crucial to our engagement with the past.<sup>28</sup> The blessing of hindsight is felt only against the background of the agents' experience which in turn demands retrospect to be understood. Historical explanation requires both: in order to explain a course of events we need to know both where they are headed and how this end was reached.<sup>29</sup> While most historical narratives thus contain both experience and teleology, they weight and express them differently as my readings of various ancient works will illustrate.

### III. NARRATIVE AND EXPERIENCE

After elaborating on the concept of 'futures past' as defining the asymmetry between agents and historians, it is time to turn to narrative and consider its capacity to express teleology and experience. The power to express hindsight in narrative needs no further argumentation as its teleological leanings are well-known. The posteriority of the act of narrating comes to the fore in the privileging of the past tense in narrative.<sup>30</sup> Thomas Mann's narrator in *Joseph und seine Brüder* can therefore ask in his *Höllenfahrt* that explores the depth of the fountain of history: 'Is not the past the element of the narrator and his life-breath, familiar to him as temporal mode and appropriate as water is to fish?'<sup>31</sup>

The case for narrative and experience has been made by Monika Fludernik, who in *Natural Narratology* sets out to define 'narrativity' as mediated 'experientiality', that is 'the quasi-mimetic evocation of real-life experience'.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> I am therefore hesitant to follow Strasburger in his polarization triggered by a reflection on Polybius' critique of Phylarchus (1966: 83): 'Wird der Mensch über Gang und Wesen der Geschichte sachgerechter belehrt durch den Verstand oder das Gefühl, durch das Sich-Erheben zu nüchterner Betrachtung der pragmatischen Zusammenhänge von hoher Warte aus oder durch den Versuch, die Realität, welche Geschichte für die von ihr handelnd und leidend Betroffenen hatte, in voller Intensität nachzuerleben?!' ('Does one learn more about the course and essence of history from intellect or feeling, from rising to sober consideration of pragmatic links from high above, or from the attempt to re-experience with full intensity the reality that history had for those who were affected by it in acting and suffering?'). With admirable lucidity, Strasburger identifies here the tension between experience and teleology as a central question, but he does not recognize their intricate interaction.

<sup>29</sup> I owe this important point to Chris Pelling.

<sup>30</sup> On the importance of retrospect for narrative, see, e.g., Abbott 2005; on the past tense as expressing 'Sinnabgeschlossenheit', see Wolf 2002: 49. On teleology in narrative, see also Ajouri 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Mann 1960: I: 53: 'Ist nicht das Vergangene Element und Lebensluft des Erzählers, ihm als Zeitfall vertraut und gemäß wie dem Fisch das Wasser?'

<sup>32</sup> Fludernik 1996: 12. However, Fludernik denies the presence of experientiality in historiography, a position that I will challenge in the epilogue.

Introspection is the most obvious means of expressing the experiences of characters in narrative; accordingly the modernist novel with its focus on processes of consciousness is a prime example of Fludernik's definition of 'narrativity'. In this section, I would like to go beyond Fludernik's analysis and demonstrate why narrative lends itself to the representation of experience. Narrative, I hope to show, permits us not only to learn about past experiences, but also, within certain boundaries, to re-experience them. My argument takes up the recent interest of theoreticians in the experience of the past while challenging their tendency to pit it against narrative. Let me first discuss two examples of this trend in more detail to chart the contribution that the angle of *Futures Past* can make to the current debate.<sup>33</sup> I will then elaborate on narrative re-experience, briefly touch upon the special case of historiography and finally throw my approach into relief through a comparison with the ancient concept of *enargeia*.

#### 'The New Romanticists'

The recent turn from narrative to experience in the theory of history is nicely illustrated by the works of Frank Ankersmit. After following Hayden White's lead and elaborating on a rhetorical theory of history,<sup>34</sup> Ankersmit grew more and more interested in how we experience the past. In *Sublime Historical Experience* (2005), Ankersmit challenges the linguistic transcendentalism that he finds not only in tropology, but also in hermeneutics, semiotics, and deconstruction. Experience, Ankersmit argues, precedes language and is incommensurate with narrative.<sup>35</sup> Historians, too, experience the past before they represent it. The experience of the past takes place in the tension between 'discovery' and 'recovery'. The 'loss' of the past is countered by 'love', the desire for it: 'The sublimity of historical experience originates from the paradoxical union of the feelings of loss and love, that is, of the combination of pain and pleasure in how we relate to the past.'<sup>36</sup> Ankersmit stresses that his new approach is not meant to recant his earlier works, but sheds light on how historians access the past before they set out to represent it. Nonetheless, the conceptualization of historical experience necessitates a turn from postmodern theory with its focus on linguistic representation to a 'New Romanticism' of experience, especially feeling.

A good deal of Romanticism has also been discerned in Gumbrecht's reflections on history.<sup>37</sup> I have already referred to his observation that the desire to transgress the limits of our everyday world brings with it a yearning to experience the past. According to Gumbrecht, the sensual aspect of this yearning has long

---

<sup>33</sup> For a lengthier version of the following argument, see Grethlein 2010b.

<sup>34</sup> Ankersmit 1994; 2001.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Ankersmit 2005: 172-3.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Ankersmit 2005: 9.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Kramer 2009: 85-97.

been marginalized, but has come to the fore more recently in the enthusiasm for archives, the attention to historical detail in movies, and the popularity of museums. Like Ankersmit's, Gumbrecht's interest in experience goes hand in hand with a rejection of narrative, albeit for different reasons. Narrative, Gumbrecht argues, has been closely linked to the didactic claims of history and has lost its plausibility with the discrediting of the topos *historia magistra vitae*. In his book *1926*, Gumbrecht thus puts forward an experiment in non-narrative historiography. He represents this year 'at the edge of time' on three synchronic levels. Under the heading of 'arrays', topics such as 'Americans in Paris', 'boxing', and 'League of Nations' are described. The 'codes' include 'authenticity versus artificiality', while the third part is devoted to 'codes collapsed', for example 'authenticity = artificiality (life)'. In this way Gumbrecht tries 'to conjure some of the worlds of 1926, to "re-present" them, in the sense of making them present again. To do this with the greatest possible immediacy achievable through a historiographic text (as opposed to, say, photographs, sound-documents, or material objects).'<sup>38</sup>

*1926* is brilliantly written and full of fascinating observations, and Gumbrecht's 'presentism' has struck a chord with many theoreticians.<sup>39</sup> Eelco Runia, for example, has made a case for a turn from 'representationalism' to 'presentism'. Besides or even before the meaning of history, there is 'the unrepresented way the past is present in the present'. While the meaning of history is constructed in metaphors, it is the figure of metonymy that grasps the past's presence.<sup>40</sup> Nonetheless, despite the timeliness of Gumbrecht's approach, its case against narrative is open to challenges. Didactic history may have depended on narrative, but it does not follow that once didactic history has lost its plausibility, narrative is thereby discredited. *1926* itself belies the programmatic reflections of its author, for much of its brilliance is owed to the splendid narratives embedded in the descriptions. The appeal and dilemma of *1926* rests on an awkward combination of historiographical goal and medium. Thanks to its sequentiality, the medium of language is well suited to represent developments, whereas material relics are traces in which the past can be grasped metonymically.<sup>41</sup> Gumbrecht, however, uses language to make the past tangible, and in the process reveals not so much that experience can replace narrative, but rather that a tension exists between the two.

---

<sup>38</sup> Gumbrecht 1997: x.

<sup>39</sup> Part of Gumbrecht's appeal is the easy accessibility of his argument. Mersch 2002 presents a philosophically more profound case for presence that precedes, or is at least parallel to, meaning.

<sup>40</sup> Runia 2006: 1-29. See also the 'Forum on Presence' in *History and Theory* 45, no. 3 (2006) and Froeyman 2012.

<sup>41</sup> It is therefore not surprising that scholars such as Eva Domanska combine their presentist approaches with a focus on materiality (2006).

Ankersmit's and Gumbrecht's interest in experience is to be welcomed as it highlights aspects that have long been neglected in history.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, their reflections do not do justice to narrative. Polemics against narrative can be understood as part of the reaction against the linguistic turn, but, I think, seriously understate the capacity of narrative and thereby also impair our understanding of experience and history. A fresh look at experience and narrative will reveal the potential of the latter to express the former.

### *Narrative re-experience*

The relationship between experience and narrative is manifold. In a long tradition reaching from Aristotle to Auerbach, scholars have viewed narrative as a form of mimesis, often of experience. At the same time, experience seems to depend on narrative. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's 'paradox of expression',<sup>43</sup> Bernhard Waldenfels considers the 'paradox of narrative' and states: 'Narrative refers to an experience which gains shape only in the process of narrating and re-narrating.'<sup>44</sup> David Carr even argues that experiences themselves have narrative structures.<sup>45</sup> Of course, experience and narrative are not identical; rather, they are mutually dependent on each other. On the one hand, narratives refer to experiences, while on the other, experiences are fixed in the form of narratives.

The point that is crucial to my argument focuses in on a different aspect, namely that narratives lead to experiences. Whoever reads or listens to a narrative has a reception experience. Reflection on the nature of this experience triggered by narratives in general will help us reconsider the value of narrative to express past experiences. The character of aesthetic experiences has been elucidated by Hans-Robert Jauß, who compares the 'aesthetic attitude' with role-playing in the everyday world as analyzed by Helmut Plessner and writes: 'Both modes of experience require that human beings double themselves in adopting a given role.' There is, however, also a difference: aesthetic role-playing 'creates awareness of the doubling which is implied in all role-playing and allows enjoying oneself in the experience of the role'.<sup>46</sup> The aesthetic distance, the 'as-if' of fiction, is fundamental: 'Aesthetic pleasure, which takes place in the balance between

---

<sup>42</sup> Although the idea of experience has not fared well under the auspices of the linguistic turn, it has been used by theoreticians and historians, e.g. Thompson 1966; for a survey, see Jay 2005.

<sup>43</sup> Merleau-Ponty 1945: 442-7.

<sup>44</sup> Waldenfels 2004: 50: 'Die Erzählung bezieht sich auf eine Erfahrung, die erst im Erzählen und Wiedererzählen Gestalt gewinnt.'

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Carr 1986.

<sup>46</sup> Jauß 1982: 226-7: 'Für beide Erfahrungsweisen wird vom Menschen erfordert, sich mit der Aufnahme einer vorgegebenen Rolle zu verdoppeln ... [Das ästhetische Rollenverhältnis ...] macht nunmehr die Verdoppelung, die allem Rollenverhalten inhärent ist, kontrastiv bewußt und ermöglicht es, sich selbst in der Erfahrung der Rolle zu genießen.'

disinterested contemplation and experiential participation, is a way of experiencing oneself in the experience of the other.<sup>47</sup>

The experience of oneself in the experience of another is an important aspect, but a point to which Jauß does not really pay attention seems to me even more important: the temporal structure that aligns reception experiences with experiences in the *Lebenswelt*.<sup>48</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer's reflections on experience in *Wahrheit und Methode* provide us with a good starting point for charting the temporality of reception experiences.<sup>49</sup> Gadamer rejects tendencies to deprive experience of its historical dimensions and thereby to make it objective; instead, he harks back to Hegel. Unlike Hegel, Gadamer does not view self-knowledge as the telos of experience, but he adopts the earlier philosopher's assumption that experiences disappoint expectations: 'Any experience worthy of this name thwarts an expectation. The historical being of man thus implies, as a trait of its nature, a fundamental negation that comes to the fore in the intrinsic relation between experience and insight.'<sup>50</sup> This is particularly evident in painful experiences, but it is also the case in pleasurable ones where what makes an experience an experience is the structure of experience itself, namely, that it interrupts the normal flow of what is usual. Experiences are disruptive by structure rather than by content.<sup>51</sup>

We can thus say that experiences always involve our expectations, an observation on which Koselleck has capitalized in his 'semantics of historical time'.<sup>52</sup> The temporal structure of our consciousness, with its chain of *re-* and *pro-* *tentions*, leads us to direct expectations of the future, expectations that are either confirmed or disappointed by experiences.<sup>53</sup> Even what is absolutely unexpected, something that has not even been deemed unlikely, upsets a prior expectation or, to be more exact, the horizon of expectations.

Narratives generate the tension between expectations and experiences at two levels. First, the plot features experiences as the characters have expectations that are realized or not by the action. Second, the recipients of the narrative harbour expectations concerning the plot and on this basis have reception experiences. The relation between the experiences of characters and readers is, I would argue, crucial to the dynamics of narrative. It can be shaped in various ways: in the Homeric epics and Greek tragedy, for example, the narrator provides

---

<sup>47</sup> Jauß 1982: 85: 'Ästhetischer Genuß, der sich derart in der Schweben zwischen uninteressierter Kontemplation und erprobender Teilhabe vollzieht, ist eine Weise der Erfahrung seiner selbst in der Erfahrung des anderen.'

<sup>48</sup> The reflections of Jauß 1982: 39-40 are vague.

<sup>49</sup> Gadamer 1986: 352-68.

<sup>50</sup> Gadamer 1986: 362: 'Jede Erfahrung, die diesen Namen verdient, durchkreuzt eine Erwartung. So enthält das geschichtliche Sein des Menschen als ein Wesensmoment eine grundsätzliche Negation, die in dem wesenhaften Bezug von Erfahrung und Einsicht zutage tritt.'

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Waldenfels 2004: 55, and, from a Husserlian perspective, Tengelyi 2007: 19.

<sup>52</sup> Koselleck 1979: 349-75.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Tengelyi 2007: 9.

his narratees with prolepses and thereby privileges them over the characters who have no insight into the future. Many detective novels, on the other hand, are effective in withholding information from readers and thereby raising suspense. Yet other stories, notably by modernist authors, strongly focalize the action through characters and thereby align readers with them.

The doubling of experience is, I believe, a major reason for the ubiquity of narrative in the most diverse cultures and periods of history. In another paper, I argue that narrative allows us to experience, without the constraints of the everyday world, the tension between expectation and experience that underlies our lives.<sup>54</sup> For my argument here, the way of orchestrating narrative mentioned last is of particular interest, as it makes the experience of the reader follow the experience of the characters. This, however, goes against the teleological drive that inheres in narrative through the retrospective stance of the narrator. Even if the narrator does not explicitly reveal his superior knowledge, teleology is deeply inscribed in the construction of many narratives.<sup>55</sup> As Chekhov notes: 'If in the first chapter you say that a gun hung on the wall, in the second or in the third chapter it must without fail be discharged.'<sup>56</sup> Narrative economy, here the readers' knowledge that details tend to be relevant for the plot, privileges readers over characters. That being said, the teleological drive of narrative can be minimized through what Morson calls 'sideshadowing': 'By focussing on the middle realm of possibilities, by exploring its relation to actual events, and by attending to the fact that things could have been different, 'sideshadowing' deepens our sense of the openness of time.'<sup>57</sup> In the works of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy Morson finds instances of this attempt to avoid the impression of inevitability fostered by the retrospective vantage-point. 'Sideshadowing'-devices recreate the situation in which the characters find themselves.

### *Re-experience in historiographic narrative*

Morson identifies 'sideshadowing' in fictional narrative, but it is not limited to fiction and also possible in historical narrative. There it is admittedly more difficult to achieve as historians narrate the past which, unlike the content of novels, is known. However, readers may be familiar only with the major developments and many details and entire story-lines will be new to them. Cognitive research has also shown that there can be suspense in the process of re-reading.<sup>58</sup> Tricky as it is in historical narrative, 'sideshadowing' is highly significant for the question of how to get in touch with the past. Strategies of

---

<sup>54</sup> Grethlein 2010d. Bubner 1989 harks back to Kant's third *Kritik* to emphasize the significance of the 'as-if' for aesthetic experience in general.

<sup>55</sup> See, e.g., Brooks 1984.

<sup>56</sup> Chekhov 1974: 23.

<sup>57</sup> Morson 1994: 6.

<sup>58</sup> See Gerrig 1989a: 277-80; 1989b: 633-48; Brewer 1996.

‘sideshadowing’ let the readers not only learn about the experience of historical agents, but re-experience it. Readers face the same openness of the action as the characters, and like them are forced to conjecture about its further development and then find their expectations confirmed or disappointed by its outcomes. Used in historical narrative, ‘sideshadowing’ makes the past present again.

This ‘re-presentation’ of the past can take on very different forms: just as reality is perceived differently, the re-experience triggered by historiography can follow various perspectives. The action narrated can be seen through the eyes of a detached observer or an agent, of a victim or a perpetrator, of a marginal or a powerful instance. While these perspectives will yield very different, even contradictory accounts, they all converge in considering history not as a given past, but as a present.

The significance of ‘sideshadowing’ for historiography can be seen in the light of the problems it raises. As subsequent chapters will amply illustrate, some of the most powerful devices of ‘sideshadowing’ draw on fictional elements. In Thucydides, for example, speeches and introspection are crucial to restoring presentness to the past, though in most cases they are arguably fictional.<sup>59</sup> Yet even in these cases, ‘sideshadowing’ contributes something to the representation of the past. The concept of a ‘narrative reference’ helps us assess the costs and benefits of this technique. I employ the term ‘narrative reference’ by analogy with Paul Ricoeur’s notion of ‘metaphorical reference’. In his seventh study on metaphor, Ricoeur demonstrates that metaphors derive their metaphorical meaning from the failure of literal meaning and, parallel to this, gain a second-order reference from the suspension of reference.<sup>60</sup> In the same vein, I would argue, the speeches in Thucydides have the function of a second-order reference. Although the speeches he recounts are not the words that were actually uttered, such that these speeches referentially fail as reports of what in fact was said, they do recreate the presentness of the past and thereby take on a referential function at a secondary level. The sacrifice of literal truth in a positive sense permits a reference to and ‘re-presentation’ of the openness of the past.

The notion of a ‘narrative reference’ mediates between the claims of the linguistic turn and the ‘New Romanticism’. It takes up the new interest in experience, but elaborates on narrative’s capacity to convey it. The re-experiencing of the past through narrative for which I argue needs to be qualified though. I have already touched upon a fundamental difference between readers and characters which bears drawing out more fully: while the characters have real experiences, the experiences of the recipients take place in the mode of ‘as-if’. Only the senses of sight and hearing, but not the other senses including the most ‘pathic’ sense of touch, are involved. More important, readers are not directly

---

<sup>59</sup> As the cases discussed in the epilogue illustrate, even some modern historians are willing to experiment with fictional devices in order to restore presentness to the past.

<sup>60</sup> Ricoeur 1975: 273-321.

affected by what they read. Their experience is vicarious as it is directed towards the experiences had by others. Nonetheless, experiences in the mode of ‘as-if’ have the same temporal structure as real experiences. They unfold the same chain of *pro-* and *re-tentions* in the consciousness of readers, and are therefore legitimately considered experiences by Husserl.<sup>61</sup> ‘Narrative re-experience’ can therefore be defined as the experience of the same temporal openness concerning the plot that the characters are subject to with regard to their future, and accordingly the experience of the same emotions but in an ‘as-if’ mode.

To sum up, due to its reconfiguration of human time, narrative proves a particularly apt medium for the representation of experience. There is a tension between narrative and experience, but far from only opposing experience, narrative can express past experiences and even let its readers re-experience them in the present. While being a medium of representation, narrative has the capacity to put us in touch with the past. In restoring its temporal horizon, it makes us suspend hindsight and envisage its future not as the past that it has already become for us, but as the future that it still was for the historical agents.

#### *Narrative re-experience and enargeia*

A focus on the experiential quality of narrative seems particularly appropriate for a culture such as classical antiquity which emphasizes the spell words cast over their recipients. Gorgias, for example, calls the *logos* a ‘powerful ruler’ (‘δυνάστης μέγας’, 11.8 DK) and elaborates on its effects (11.9 DK):

Into those who hear it comes fearful fright and tearful pity and mournful longing, and at the successes and failures of others’ affairs and persons the mind suffers, through the words, a suffering of its own.

ἦς τοὺς ἀκούοντας εἰσῆλθε καὶ φρίκη περίφοβος καὶ ἔλεος πολὺδακρυς καὶ πόθος φιλοπενθήης, ἐπ’ ἀλλοτρίων τε πραγμάτων καὶ σωμάτων εὐτυχίαις καὶ δυσπραγίαις ἴδιόν τι πάθημα διὰ τῶν λόγων ἔπαθεν ἡ ψυχὴ.<sup>62</sup>

Gorgias rates poetry’s grip on listeners so highly that he equates it with real-life experiences without qualifications. This emphasis on the ‘pathic’ dimension of reception corresponds with the violence attributed in [Longin.] *Subl.* 15.9 to the rhetoric *phantasia* that ‘not only persuades, but enslaves the listener’ (‘οὐ πείθει τὸν ἀκροατὴν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ δουλοῦται’).

---

<sup>61</sup> On the temporal structure of consciousness, see Husserl 1928. On the experiential character of fictional acts, see Husserl 1950: III: 78; 2006: 168.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Segal 1962: 120-7.

The term of *phantasia* is closely linked to the concept of *enargeia* that figures prominently in ancient treatises on literature and rhetoric.<sup>63</sup> An exemplary definition can be found in the *Lysias* of Dionysius Halicarnassus (7):

This consists in a certain power he has of conveying the things he is describing to the senses of his audience, and it arises out of his grasp of circumstantial detail. Nobody who applies his mind to the speeches of Lysias will be so obtuse, insensitive or slow-witted that he will not feel that he can see the actions which are being described going on and that he is meeting face-to-face the characters whom the orator introduces.

αὕτη δ' ἐστὶ δύναμις τις ὑπὸ τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἄγουσα τὰ λεγόμενα, γίγνεται δ' ἐκ τῆς τῶν παρακολουθούντων λήψεως. ὁ δὲ προσέχων τὴν διάνοιαν τοῖς Λυσίου λόγοις οὐχ οὕτως ἔσται σκαιὸς ἢ δυσάρεστος ἢ βραδύς τὸν νοῦν, ὅς οὐχ ὑπολήψεται γινόμενα τὰ δηλούμενα ὁρᾶν καὶ ὥσπερ παροῦσιν οἷς ἂν ὁ ῥήτωρ εἰσάγη προσώποις ὁμιλεῖν.

*Enargeia* features in discussions not only of oratory, but also of historiography.<sup>64</sup> I have already quoted Plutarch's praise for the graphic qualities of Thucydides' writing. Lucian, to give another example, reflects on *enargeia* in historiography in general (*Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* 51):

The task of the historian is similar: to give a fine arrangement to events and illuminate them as vividly as possible. And when a man who hears him thinks thereafter that he is actually seeing what is being described and then praises him – then it is that the work is perfect and has brought our Phidias of history its proper praise.

Τοιοῦτο δὴ τι καὶ τὸ τοῦ συγγραφέως ἔργον – εἰς καλὸν διαθέσθαι τὰ πεπραγμένα καὶ εἰς δύναμιν ἐναργέστατα ἐπιδειῖξαι αὐτά. καὶ ὅταν τις ἀκροώμενος οἴηται μετὰ ταῦτα ὁρᾶν τὰ λεγόμενα καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἐπαινῆ, τότε δὴ τότε ἀπηκρίβωται καὶ τὸν οἰκεῖον ἐπαινον ἀπέλιπε τὸ ἔργον τῷ τῆς ἱστορίας Φειδίᾳ.<sup>65</sup>

The ancient concept of *enargeia* prefigures in some regards my focus on the experiential aspect of narrative, but is not identical with it. While the idea of the recipient 'meeting face-to-face the characters' ('προσώποις ὁμιλεῖν', Dion.

---

<sup>63</sup> See Zanker 1981; Manieri 1998; Otto 2009: 67-134. On *enargeia* and *phantasia* in the *progymnasmata* of the Imperial Age, see Webb 2009: 87-130.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Manieri 1998: 155-64. See also Scheller 1911: 57-61; 65-71; Strasburger 1966: 78-86; Walker 1993. [Dion.], *On mistakes in declamation*, 27 even rants against the use of ekphrasis, common in poetry and historiography, in oratory. Webb 2009: 84-5, however, prudently warns against taking this as evidence for a non-rhetorical origin of ekphrasis in historiography or poetry.

<sup>65</sup> On this passage, see Avenarius 1956: 130-40.

Hal. *Lys.* 7) is close to my notion of restoring presence to the past, it is accentuated differently. The most salient aspect of *enargeia*, rooted in the word's etymology, is visual appeal.<sup>66</sup> The Anonymus Seguerianus, for instance, defines *enargeia* as 'speech bringing what is being explained before the eyes' ('λόγος ὑπ' ὄψιν ἀγών τὸ δηλούμενον', *The art of political speech* 96). Time and again in the course of this study, we will encounter graphic scenes that enhance the mimetic appeal of an account, but visual quality is not the core element of experiential narratives. As defined in this section, the experience triggered by narrative hinges on its temporal sequence which can be made to mimic the sequence of past events. Most detailed descriptions, on the other hand, bring narrated time to a pause; they may help the reader to visualize the settings of the action, but also interrupt the mimesis of its sequence.

The temporal aspect of narrative is not entirely absent though from ancient discussions of *enargeia*.<sup>67</sup> In the *progymnasmata* of the Imperial Age, actions figure besides static objects as a potential subject of ekphrasis which is defined more or less by *enargeia*.<sup>68</sup> Demetrius even discusses suspense as an aspect of *enargeia* in his essay *On style*: 'We should not state the fact at once, but unfold it gradually, thus keeping the reader in suspense and forcing him to share the anxiety.' ('δεῖ τὰ γενόμενα οὐκ εὐθύς λέγειν, ὅτι ἐγένετο, ἀλλὰ κατὰ μικρόν, κρεμῶντα τὸν ἀκροατὴν καὶ ἀναγκάζοντα συναγωνιᾶν.' 216). Quintilian elaborates on a *trahatio temporum* or *metastasis* (*Inst.* 9.2.41):

We can form a picture not only of things past and present, but also of things future or of what might have been future. Cicero in *Pro Milone* gives a marvellous account of what Clodius would have done if he had secured the praetorship.

*Nec solum quae facta sint aut fiant sed etiam quae futurae sint aut futura fuerint imaginamur. Mire tractat hoc Cicero pro Milone, quae facturus fuerit Clodius si praeturam invasisset.*<sup>69</sup>

Making the past present includes evoking its own temporal horizon; in yoking together the perspectives of agent and historians, the form of *futurum fuisse* condenses the concept of the future past into a grammatical tense. These reflections notwithstanding, the visual appeal is far more prominent in ancient discussions of *enargeia* and gives the term a nuance that is different from my concept of experiential narrative that is centred on time. Therefore, while using

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Zanker 1981: 309-10; Manieri 1998: 106; 123 with n. 404.

<sup>67</sup> An interesting reflection on historiography and narrative time in a different context can be found in Diodorus 20.43: historiography can imitate events, but will fall short in that it has to present simultaneous events sequentially.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Webb 2009: 67-8.

<sup>69</sup> See also Quintilian's exemplary account of a murder in 6.2.31-2.

the terms ‘experiential’ and ‘mimetic’ more or less synonymously, I will distinguish them from the ancient concept of *enargeia*.

#### IV. OUTLINE

##### *Goals*

Being located at the intersection of the theory of history, narratology and Classics, *Futures Past* combines theoretical reflections with close readings. More specifically, it builds on the close link between time and narrative that the narrator of *Der Zauberberg* notes: ‘Time is the element of narrative just as time is the element of life, inextricably entangled with it as with the bodies in space.’<sup>70</sup> Paul Ricoeur makes the link even stronger, arguing ‘that time becomes human to the degree that it is articulated in the mode of narrative, and that a story receives its full significance when it becomes a condition of temporal existence.’<sup>71</sup> If we focus on narrative and pay it closer attention than Ricoeur does, we can say that time is a fundamental category of our lives and simultaneously a technical aspect of narrative.<sup>72</sup> Both points are intricately linked: the narrative treatment of time is far from being merely a technical aspect that is exhausted by identifying ‘anachronies’ and labelling modifications of speed and frequency, but can be read as a mode of coming to grips with temporality. While politics and the notion of authority tackled in some of the most fruitful recent studies of ancient historiography do not play a major role in *Futures Past*, this focus on time pushes it beyond formalism. Time is an important aspect of the organization of narrative, but, as emphasized in my approach, has simultaneously an existential dimension.

In its exploration of time and narrative, *Futures Past* hopes to make a threefold contribution to scholarship. It first takes up the interest in experience that looms large in the current theory of history. As I have outlined in the preceding section, scholars eager to break the spell of the linguistic turn have identified experience as an antidote to it. Against Ankersmit’s and Gumbrecht’s inclination to pit it against narrative, I try to demonstrate narrative’s capacity for experience. Narrative is a medium of representation, but its doubling of experience renders it particularly apt to make the past present. My approach thus aims at mediating the insights of the linguistic turn with its critique by the ‘New Romanticists’.

Second, the readings of *Futures Past* draw heavily on the arsenal of narratology. The categories established by scholars such as Genette and Bal have

---

<sup>70</sup> Mann 1926: 706: ‘Die Zeit ist das Element der Erzählung, wie sie das Element des Lebens ist, – unlösbar damit verbunden, wie mit den Körpern im Raum.’

<sup>71</sup> Ricoeur 1983-5: I: 85: ‘...que le temps devient humain dans la mesure où il est articulé sur un mode narratif, et que le récit atteint sa signification plénière quand il devient une condition de l’existence temporelle.’

<sup>72</sup> For such an approach, see Grethlein 2010d.

significantly enhanced our understanding of the workings of narrative.<sup>73</sup> A new generation of scholars though has broken new ground and has widely broadened the scope of narratology.<sup>74</sup> the focus on narrative has given way to intermedial studies, a new footing in cognitive science has been found and various fields such as philosophy, psychology and anthropology have developed their own narratologies. Not all of these innovations have been welcomed by traditional narratologists who fear that their discipline has been watered down and become a label that is as arbitrary as it is fashionable. *Futures Past* tries to do justice to both the heritage of classical narratology and the more recent impulses. It deploys the established categories of narratological analysis, but makes them fruitful for questions beyond its scope. More precisely, it offers an exercise in using narratology as a heuristic tool to explore how narrative helps us come to grips with our temporality.<sup>75</sup>

Third, ancient historiography has established itself as arguably one of the most prolific fields in Classics. Hayden White's *Meta-History* as well as Woodman's focus on rhetoric has prompted scholars to take seriously the narrative art of ancient historians and to consider it less as detracting from veracity than as generating historical meaning.<sup>76</sup> The more recent developments in the theory of history, into which my approach taps, notably the interest in presence, promise to yield similarly rich returns for the study of ancient historiography. While the notions of closure and *enargeia* have already attracted some attention,<sup>77</sup> the agenda of futures past permits a new systematic look at the temporal dynamics of ancient historiography. It helps to complement the investigation into how historians create historical meaning with an analysis of how they make the past present or master the vagaries of time through retrospect. Besides enhancing our understanding of the narrative craft applied in individual texts, this approach also yields a new perspective on the history of ancient historiography. New links will emerge that will enrich our view of the dialectic between innovation and tradition, for example when the notion of mimesis in Hellenistic historiography is reconsidered in light of Thucydides' striving for vividness, or when on the other hand the prominence of teleology lets us see Sallust as closer to Herodotus and Polybius than to Thucydides.

### *Focus*

---

<sup>73</sup> Genette 1980 [1972]; Bal 1977.

<sup>74</sup> For a survey of the recent development in narratology, see Nünning 2003.

<sup>75</sup> For this take on narratology, see Grethlein and Rengakos 2010.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. especially White 1973; Woodman 1988. For an extremely polemical attack against these approaches, see Lendon 2009.

<sup>77</sup> On closure, see, e.g., Marincola 2005 (survey); Pelling 1997a (Plutarch's *Lives*); Boedeker 1988 (Herodotus); Levene 1992 (Sallust); on *enargeia*, see, e.g., Walker 1993 (survey); Davidson 1991 (Polybius). On narrative time in general, see Hornblower 1994; Rood 1998; de Jong 1999; the contributions to Grethlein and Krebs 2012.

The range of works discussed in *Futures Past* is simultaneously narrow and broad. The balance between teleology and experience applies to any kind of narrative and could also be explored in works of fiction. This is illustrated by the comparison of epic and dramatic poetry by Schiller and Goethe who ponder on a similar tension: in their view, the dramatic desire to make the action present goes against the distance that is characteristic of epic.<sup>78</sup> By the same token, Ortega and Bakhtin contrast the closedness of the epic past with the openness of the novel.<sup>79</sup> In the field of classical literature, Winkler has elaborated on the relation between auctor and actor in Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, demonstrating the novel's focus on its protagonist's experience.<sup>80</sup> Homeric epic serves as an example for teleological narratives, as its juxtaposition with drama and novel suggests; at the same time, Strauss Clay's recent study of *Homer's Trojan Theater* draws attention to features that make the heroic past tangible for the audience.<sup>81</sup> The epic aspiration to presence is explicitly phrased by Lucan in *BC* 7.210-3:

... When wars are read, they will excite hopes and fears together and useless prayers; and all men will be spell-bound as they read the tragedy, as if it were still to come and not past; and all will still take sides with you, Magnus.

... *cum bella legentur,*  
*spesque metusque simul perituraque vota movebunt,*  
*attonitique omnes veluti venientia fata,*  
*non transmissa, legent et adhuc tibi, Magne, favebunt.*

That the tension of futures past is central to narrative comes to the fore in Brooks' reflection on the reading process: 'Perhaps we would do best to speak of the anticipation of retrospection as our chief tool in making sense of the narrative, the master trope of its strange logic.'<sup>82</sup> It seems nonetheless reasonable to sharpen the focus of this study and limit its scope to historiography: experience and teleology, while shaping narrative in general, gain special significance through the historians' claim to report what has happened.<sup>83</sup> It is not their aim to represent any

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Jauß 1955: 18-23.

<sup>79</sup> Ortega y Gasset 1925; Bakhtin 1981.

<sup>80</sup> Winkler 1985.

<sup>81</sup> For some qualifications of epic teleology, see, e.g., Grethlein 2006a: 257-83; on the presentness of the heroic past, see before Strauss Clay 2010 especially Bakker 1993.

<sup>82</sup> Brooks 1984: 23.

<sup>83</sup> The factual character of historiography also affects an important narratological issue, namely the distinction between author and narrator. Genette 1991: 65-94 points out that this distinction is not necessary in factual narrative, for which the author takes responsibility. This seems to apply *a fortiori* to ancient historiography: Sailor 2008: 7 observes that the distinction is unknown in ancient criticism and Pelling 2009: 149 n. 5 makes the important point that ancient historians often speak with 'the "authority" of real-life political experience'. I nonetheless side with Gribble 1998: 46 and will in most cases prefer to speak of the narrator in order to highlight that I am referring to the rhetorically fashioned narratorial persona instead of the biographical subject. The *Anabasis*

experience and construct any teleology, but to do justice to actual experiences and historical connections. While not being identical with the objectivism of modern positivist historians, the ancient claim to veracity sets historiography off from other genres such as epic and tragedy. Through the referential claims of historiography, the balance between experience and teleology becomes more than a mere stylistic device for enticing the reader; it involves the notion of what history is – the experiences of the historical agents or the great lines drawn in retrospect.

At the same time, *Futures Past* is not limited to historiography in a narrow sense. The reader will find discussions of Xenophon's *Anabasis* and Plutarch's *Lives* as well as of the works of Thucydides and Tacitus. In reconsidering Jacoby's approach to Greek historiography, Marincola has made the important point that many of the fine generic distinctions such as *Zeitgeschichte*, chronography and mythography lack evidence in our ancient sources.<sup>84</sup> Even the distinction between historiography and biography that Marincola takes for granted seems to be less than clear-cut.<sup>85</sup> The aspects investigated in *Futures Past* are not restricted to the political monograph that is still sometimes deemed real historiography, but equally apply to other forms of narrating the past. In order to fully explore the dynamics of futures past in ancient historiography, it thus seems wise to consider a wide range of historiographic texts. Two chapters will even go beyond this frame to throw into relief the findings, the first in discussing a non-historiographic text, Augustine's *Confessions*, the second in tackling modern historiography.

### Synopsis

The primary principle for arranging the chapters of *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography Past* is not chronology. There is no development from Herodotus to, say, Tacitus; the treatment of experience and teleology in ancient historiography does not lend itself to a teleological account. Nor does genre seem to be a decisive factor: Herodotus' *Histories* and Tacitus' *Annals*, for example, both deal with events completed in an earlier generation, but whereas the former has a strongly teleological design, the latter is more experiential. While Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War tries hard to restore presentness, Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*, another monograph of a recent event, foregrounds teleology. Neither genre nor date determines a history's take

---

which was obviously not published under the name of Xenophon is a case that helps justify this reticence even in ancient historiography.

<sup>84</sup> Marincola 1999. See also Pelling 1999 for a more flexible notion of genre in historiography that starts from the expectations of readers.

<sup>85</sup> Marincola 1997: 319-20. Momigliano 1971 has been an influential advocate of a clear borderline between historiography and biography, but has been successfully challenged, e.g., by Gentili and Cerri 1988. For a survey of the debate, see Schepens 2007.

on the futures past. In certain historical circumstances either experience or teleology may have a special appeal, and either may be more or less conducive to the scope of a historiographic genre, but ultimately each historian is free to prefer one over the other.

Instead of time and genre, I have chosen the two poles of futures past as organizing principle and have grouped together works that lean towards experience and works that gravitate towards retrospect. While this structure is best suited to the agenda of futures past, it comes at the price of some ambiguity. As I have pointed out, it is hard to find accounts that manage to reject fully either aspect. The attribution of authors to the two parts is therefore not absolute, but one of tendency, and I will also consider teleological aspects of the works discussed in the part on experience and vice versa. The chronological arrangement of authors within the parts on experience and teleology is owed more to the train of argument than to an attempt to construe a development.

Let me mention one further limitation: *Futures Past* does not aim at an exhaustive treatment of the vast corpus of ancient historiography, but is limited to case studies. I have tried to select texts that help elucidate different aspects of experience and teleology while also covering a variety of genres and periods. That being said, many other authors would yield fascinating material; just to touch upon two: the prominence of spectacle of Livy's *Ab urbe condita* highlights its experiential potential, while the role of space as examined by Jaeger helps to cement a teleological design.<sup>86</sup> Flavius Josephus' *Antiquitates* is another universal history that, besides inviting comparison with *Ab urbe condita*, would allow consideration of the impact of the Jewish tradition on the futures past. If the reader misses discussion of these and other texts, I hope that, instead of seeing this as a deficiency of *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography*, she takes it as a sign of the fruitfulness of its agenda.

The individual chapters try to do justice to the intricacies of an author's take on experience and teleology and interact with each other in manifold ways. Nonetheless, the trajectory of the main argument can be summed up in the following way: the mimetic quality of Thucydides' narrative has already been noted in antiquity. Instead of discussing one of the much-hailed passages such as the battle in the harbour of Syracuse, I engage in a close reading of Phormion's two naval victories and the capture of Mytilene in order to demonstrate how relatively minor incidents are rendered experiential by Thucydides (II). Xenophon is often considered an epigone of Thucydides, but the *Anabasis* illustrates a mastery of experiential narrative that has nothing to fear from comparison. While the Thucydides chapter offers a sequential reading of two select episodes, this chapter provides a thematic exploration of important devices for making the past present: focalization, graphic description, speeches, 'sideshadowing', closure (III). Plutarch extols Thucydides and Xenophon for their *enargeia*, but the *Alexander*

---

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Jaeger 1997. On spectacle in Livy, see Feldherr 1998.

illustrates that the mimesis achieved in the *Lives* is different from the experiential quality of their works. The episodic structure of the *Alexander* downplays temporal sequence; at the same time, Plutarch elaborates scenes that are strongly appealing visually and help to drive home his moral points (IV). The account of Germanicus' visit to the Teutoburger Wald, I suggest, can be read as an implicit reflection on the mimetic quality of Tacitus' *Annals*. While the preceding chapters demonstrate that an author's admission of uncertainty interrupts the narrative mimesis, the death of Germanicus and the Pisonian Conspiracy, on the other hand, illustrate that ambiguity can enhance the experiential appeal of an account (V).

The first part focussing on experience is complemented by a second part assembling chapters which concentrate on teleology. In Herodotus' *Histories*, the commemorative practice of Darius and Xerxes highlights the fact that history can only be told in retrospect. Accordingly, the *Histories* are strongly teleological, while also demonstrating that even once events have come to an end historical meaning is not stable and shifts with the vantage-point of the beholder (VI). The idea of a *symplotke* gives Polybius' universal history a strongly teleological design, which will be thrown into relief through a comparison with Aristotle's concept of plot and the modern notion of history. At the same time, Polybius is aware of the intricacies of teleology and offers some penetrating reflections on them. Moreover, despite his polemic against Timaeus and others, he showcases from time to time gripping mimetic accounts (VII). Sallust's presentation of the Catilinarian Conspiracy against the backdrop of Rome's decline after the destruction of Carthage reveals a further aspect of teleology: not only are events shaped by the choice of a later point of view, but also the events chosen as telos are highly charged. As teleological as the *BC* is, it encapsulates two alternative assessments of the conspiracy that rival its main plot-line (VIII).

In the third part, I will look beyond historiography in order to throw the findings of the two main parts into relief and to deepen the inquiry into the dynamics of futures past. Through the convergence of experiencing and narrating instance in one person, autobiography exacerbates the tension between experience and teleology. In addition to this, Augustine's Christian agenda renders the take on the futures past in the *Confessions* special. While featuring experiential passages, notably the conversion scene in book 8, the narrative design of the *Confessions* is deeply teleological. At the same time, I will argue that Augustine strives to come close to God's take on history which, in transcending both experience and teleology, is a-temporal (IX). In the epilogue, I will return to the current debate on history and experience and review some attempts of contemporary historians to restore presentness to the past in light of the strategies found in the works of ancient historians. Together with teleology, experience has remained a pole of narrating the past, but modern scholars trying to make the past present face new challenges (X).

## 2. Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*

*The History of the Peloponnesian War* affords a splendid starting point for an investigation of experience and teleology in historiography. Thucydides is not only skeptical about the power of memory in general (e.g., 1.22.3), but also fully aware of the deforming impact of teleology, as a passage from book 2 reveals:<sup>87</sup> when the Athenians are ravaged by pestilence at the very beginning of the war, the elderly recall an oracle: ‘A Dorian war will come, and with it plague.’ (ἤξει Δωριακὸς πόλεμος καὶ λοιμὸς ἅμ’ αὐτῶν. 2.54.2). However, discussion arises as to whether the oracle contained the word ‘plague’ (‘λοιμός’) or ‘famine’ (‘λιμός’), a matter of a single letter, but sufficient to prompt Thucydides to reflect (2.54.3):

But under the circumstances, the opinion naturally prevailed that plague was mentioned: men shaped their memories in accordance with what they experienced. And yet, I suppose, if another Dorian war breaks out after this one, and it happens there is famine, they will probably recite accordingly.

... ἐνίκησε δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος εἰκότως λοιμὸν εἰρησθαι· οἱ γὰρ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς ἃ ἔπασχον τὴν μνήμην ἐποιοῦντο. ἦν δέ γε οἶμαί ποτε ἄλλος πόλεμος καταλάβη Δωρικὸς τοῦδε ὕστερος καὶ ξυμβῆ γενέσθαι λιμόν, κατὰ τὸ εἶκός οὕτως ἄσσονται.

The excision of the omicron highlights not only the sway of the present over the past, but also unveils the hermeneutics of retrospect. In the Herodotus chapter below, we will see that oracle narratives exacerbate the structure of teleology, as the prediction makes a telos explicit already in the past.<sup>88</sup> By pointing out that the prediction about the plague/famine was altered in light of recent experiences, Thucydides dismantles the oracle as a projection *ex eventu*. The retrograde movement of making the prediction fit what was predicted forcefully demonstrates the tendency of teleologies to taint our memories of the past.<sup>89</sup>

For his own work, on the other hand, Thucydides claims the greatest temporal closeness possible between events and narrative. Most prominently, in the very first sentence of his history (1.1.1), Thucydides claims that he ‘began his

---

<sup>87</sup> At the same time, Thucydides also seems aware that temporal distance facilitates judgment, for example when he mentions that people are inclined to consider present wars as greater than all previous ones (1.21.2).

<sup>88</sup> Cf. ch. 6.

<sup>89</sup> A similar critical approach to oracles underlies Eur. *Ion* 517-65, cf. Maurizio 1997: 318-19. Harrison 2000: 144 shows that Herodotus is also aware of post-eventum fabrication of oracles.

work right when the war broke out' ('ἀρξάμενος εὐθύς καθισταμένου').<sup>90</sup> It does therefore not surprise that he was extolled for *enargeia* in antiquity. I have already quoted in the introduction the praise he receives from Plutarch who refers to the fights at Pylos and quotes a passage from the battle in the Syracusan harbour to illustrate the vividness of the narrative (*De glor. Ath.* 347b):

Again, in his account of the Sicilian expedition: 'The infantry of both sides on the land, as long as the fighting at sea is evenly balanced, endure an unceasing struggle and tension of mind' because of their battling forces; and 'because of the continued indecisiveness of the struggle they accompany it in an extremity of fear, with their very bodies swaying in sympathy with their opinion as to the outcome.'

καὶ πάλιν 'ὁ ἐν τοῖς Σικελικοῖς ἐκ τῆς γῆς πεζὸς ἀμφοτέρων, ἰσορρόπου τῆς ναυμαχίας καθεστηκυῖας, διὰ τὸ ἀκρίτως ἄλαστον ἄγωνα καὶ ξύντασιν τῆς γνώμης ἔχων' διὰ τὰς συντάξεις \*\*\* ὡς συνεχὲς τῆς ἀμίλλης καὶ τοῖς σώμασιν αὐτοῖς ἴσα τῇ δόξῃ περιδεῶς συναπονεύων' ...

The internal audience of the soldiers and their physical reactions to the fighting of their comrades help to bring the reader close to the scene on the very battlefield.

Modern scholarship has for a long time been obsessed with Thucydides' accuracy and, more lately, has concentrated on his artful use of narrative to create historical meaning, but the mimetic dimension of *The History of the Peloponnesian War* has not escaped notice:<sup>91</sup> Thucydides' strategies of 'representing' the past make him a cornerstone of Dunn's argument that the end of the fifth century saw a 'present shock', that, in other words, political turmoil and cultural change brought about an intense focus on the present.<sup>92</sup> In his interpretation of the Corcyrean conflict, Morrison distinguishes three points that 'create a particular type of experience for the reader':<sup>93</sup> multiple perspective, authorial reticence and episodic structure.

Put in narratological terms, Thucydides' orchestration of focalization, voice and time lets the reader re-experience the past as if it were present. The employment of various viewpoints makes the narrative vivid. Only rarely does the authorial voice intervene and remind the reader of its mediating function. Most

---

<sup>90</sup> Hornblower 1991-6: *ad loc.* nicely elicits the tension in Thucydides' claim: 'Th[ucydides] sat down to record a set of events which were still in the future.'

<sup>91</sup> Besides the works discussed above, see also Kitto 1966: 298-9; Connor 1985; Greenwood 2006: 19-41; Grethlein 2010a: 248-52. On Thucydides' artful creation of historical meaning through narrative devices, see, e.g., Connor 1985; Hornblower 1994; Rood 1998. Cornford 1907 is an important forerunner.

<sup>92</sup> Dunn 2007: 111-50.

<sup>93</sup> Morrison 1999: 94.

important, perhaps, is the temporal organisation of the narrative, which reports the events of the various theatres of war season by season.<sup>94</sup> Thucydides downplays hindsight and tends to avoid prolepses; the reader is thus by and large limited to the perspective of the historical agents.<sup>95</sup>

In this chapter, I would like to shift the focus from the shiny pearls of Thucydides' narrative, which, only too understandably, dominate in studies of his vividness, to less prominent passages. Instead of discussing obviously mimetic passages such as the final battle in the harbour of Syracuse, I will tackle two minor episodes, Phormion's two naval victories in 2.83-92 (I) and the capture of Mytilene in 3.25-34 (II) in order to explore the experiential quality in less noteworthy parts of the narrative. My findings will be qualified by a look at un-experiential features and traces of teleological design (III).

### I. PHORMION'S DOUBLE VICTORY (2.83-92)

My first example is Thucydides' report of the first two major sea battles between the Athenians and Spartans. In the first encounter, which takes place in the gulf of Acarnania, Phormion and twenty Athenian ships defeat a Peloponnesian fleet of 47 ships under Cnemon, transporting troops to Acarnania (2.83-4). Thucydides begins his account with Phormion's plan: to wait for the off-shore wind, which will confuse the enemy; then to attack (2.84.1-2). The battle proceeds in accordance with Phormion's plan: the wind throws the Peloponnesian ships into disarray, making them easy prey for the Athenians (2.84.3-4). After the battle, Cnemon and advisors arriving from Sparta collect more ships from their allies, bringing the fleet to 77 ships, whereas twenty ships sent from Athens are delayed in Crete and come too late for the second battle, off Naupactus (2.85-6).

Before the second encounter, Thucydides first gives us the speeches addressed to the soldiers (2.87-9) and continues by reporting the Peloponnesian stratagem, namely to sail toward Naupactus and to force Phormion to follow them into the bay (2.90.1-2). And indeed, this strategy permits the Peloponnesians to battle the Athenians in the narrows. Only eleven Athenian ships escape to Naupactus, the rest are captured by the Peloponnesians (2.90.3-91.2). Then the tables are turned most unexpectedly: the last of the Athenian ships headed to Naupactus sails around a merchant vessel and attacks and sinks the first of the pursuing ships. The ensuing confusion in the Peloponnesian fleet prompts the Athenians to sail quickly back and rout their enemies. Twenty Athenian ships thus defeat a Peloponnesian fleet of 77 (2.91.3-92). In what follows, I would like to discuss several devices that contribute to the experiential character of this narrative: graphic description, tense, internal focalization, speeches and composition.

---

<sup>94</sup> On the temporal organization of Thucydides' account, see Dewald 2005.

<sup>95</sup> See, however, the qualification of this observation below ???

### *Graphic description and tense*

Ancient discussions of *enargeia* foreground visual appeal and are therefore nuanced differently from my concept of experiential narrative. And yet, while extensive descriptions freeze narrated time and thereby interrupt its mimesis through narrative time, they help the reader visualize the scene and can thereby contribute to the narrative's experiential character. The description preceding the battle in the gulf of Acarnia is a case in point (2.84.3):

And when the wind *blew up* and the ships, *being* already in a small space, *were thrown into disorder* by both together, the wind and the boats; and ship *collided* with ship, and they were pushed apart with poles; and the crews, *shouting* and fending one another off with abuse, *listened* neither to what *was ordered* nor to their officers and *being* in their inexperience unable to lift their oars in the ocean swell, *made* the ships less responsive to the helmsmen, then, at that moment, Phormion gives the signal; and falling upon the enemy, the Athenians first sink one of the generals' ships and then destroyed the others wherever they went, and brought it about that none turned to resist in the confusion, but they fled to Patras and Dyme in Achaea.

ὥς δὲ τό τε πνεῦμα κατήρει καὶ αἱ νῆες ἐν ὀλίγῳ ἤδη οὔσαι ὑπ' ἀμφοτέρων, τοῦ τε ἀνέμου τῶν τε πλοίων, ἅμα προσκειμένων ἐταράσσοντο, καὶ ναῦς τε νηὶ προσέπιπτε καὶ τοῖς κοντοῖς διεωθοῦντο, βοῆ τε χρώμενοι καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀντιφυλακῆ τε καὶ λοιδορίᾳ οὐδὲν κατήκουον οὔτε τῶν παραγγελλομένων οὔτε τῶν κελευστῶν, καὶ τὰς κώπας ἀδύνατοι ὄντες ἐν κλύδωνι ἀναφέρειν ἄνθρωποι ἄπειροι τοῖς κυβερνήταις ἀπειθεστέρας τὰς ναῦς παρεῖχον, τότε δὴ κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον σημαίνει, καὶ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι προσπεσόντες πρῶτον μὲν καταδύουσι τῶν στρατηγίδων νεῶν μίαν, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἢ χωρήσειαν διέφθειρον, καὶ κατέστησαν ἐς ἀλκὴν μὲν μηδένα τρέπεσθαι αὐτῶν ὑπὸ τῆς ταραχῆς, φεύγειν δὲ ἐς Πάτρας καὶ Δύμην τῆς Ἀχαΐας.

While the battle itself is briefly summarized, the confusion created among the Peloponnesian ships by the wind is described in detail. The attempts of the Peloponnesians to push the ships apart with poles, the inability of their rowers to move the oars in the waves, and the noise that makes it impossible to pass on orders evoke a vivid image of the scene. The disorder of the ships is stylistically mimicked through the long sentence meandering through participles and parentheses.

Verbal tense may contribute to the *enargeia* of this passage: the confusion of the Peloponnesians is described in the imperfect and present participles (*italics*). The choice of this tense can be explained in various ways: it could be used to indicate the circumstances of the action, the attack, or it could express the durative and iterative aspect of the manoeuvres. Another aspect may also come into play. In a paper on tenses in Thucydides, Bakker argues that tenses may have significance in addition to temporal reference, namely to signal the relative distance of the narrator to the events narrated.<sup>96</sup> In this scheme, aorist forms temporally distance the narrator from the events narrated and thereby emphasize the gap between past and present. The imperfect, on the other hand, places the narrator in the past, more specifically in the time of the events. The stance of the narrator is removed from the present of the enunciation, but close to the action narrated and therefore highly conducive to mimetic accounts. Bakker's argument is particularly persuasive for such accounts as the Syracusan harbour battle with an embedded audience whose perspective the mimetic imperfect forms purport. Our scene here does not feature a comparable group of observers, but the soldiers confused by the chaos provide the perspective on which the narrative zooms in through the imperfect forms, presenting the events 'as if they are seen on the spot'.<sup>97</sup>

While the confusion of the ships is reported in the imperfect tense, Phormion's signal and the Athenians' attack are narrated in the present tense (underlined). This closely conforms to Rutger Allan's argument that Thucydides uses the historical present in order to underline turning points in the action through 'epistemic immediacy'.<sup>98</sup> In our passage, the imperfect brings the reader close to the scene and the historical present endows the turning point with additional immediacy and emphasis. Together, the two tenses reinforce the graphic quality of the description and let the reader follow the battle as if it was unfolding right before her eyes.

### *Internal focalisation*

Another important device for rendering narrative experiential is internal focalisation. Internal focalisation lets the reader learn about the past from the perspective of the historical protagonists.<sup>99</sup> Despite its etymology, focalization is

---

<sup>96</sup> Bakker 1997.

<sup>97</sup> Bakker 1997: 18.

<sup>98</sup> Allan 2011.

<sup>99</sup> The prominence of perception (in narratological terminology, focalization) in Thucydides has been tackled from different perspectives: Montgomery 1965: 45-95, de Romilly 1956 and Schneider 1974 explore the function of reasoning and intentions; Hunter 1973 argues that Thucydides derives the characters' purposes from the facts in order to question his objectivity; Westlake 1989: 201-23, on the other hand, tries to show that 'personal motives, aims and feelings' are often based on 'information obtained directly from the individual to whom motives or feelings are ascribed or from one or more close associates believed to be trustworthy' (201); Lang 1995

not limited to seeing, but embraces all senses, intellectual activity and emotional response.<sup>100</sup> Narrating the action through the perception of characters makes the reader encounter it as present. The prominence of internal focalization in Thucydides' narrative style is nicely illustrated by his account of the manoeuvres leading up to the first sea battle (2.83.2-3):

Phormion watched out for them when they sailed along the coast and out of the gulf, since he wanted to attack on the open sea. The Corinthians and their allies were not sailing toward Acarnania prepared for a sea battle but were equipped more as transports and did not believe that the Athenians, with their twenty ships, would dare to fight a sea battle against their [i.e. the Corinthians'] forty-seven ships; yet when they observed them [i.e. the Athenians] sailing along the opposite coast while they were close to land themselves and, as they were crossing from Patras in Achaea toward Acarnania on the opposite mainland, saw the Athenians sailing toward them from Chalkis and the Evenus river, and they [i.e. the Corinthians] had not eluded them [i.e. the Athenians] by setting sail at night, they are now indeed forced to fight a sea battle in the middle of the gulf.

ὁ γὰρ Φορμίων παραπλέοντας αὐτοὺς ἔξω τοῦ κόλπου ἐτήρει, βουλόμενος ἐν τῇ εὐρυχωρίᾳ ἐπιθέσθαι. οἱ δὲ Κορίνθιοι καὶ οἱ ξύμμαχοι ἔπλεον μὲν οὐχ ὡς ἐπὶ ναυμαχίᾳ, ἀλλὰ στρατιωτικώτερον παρεσκευασμένοι ἐς τὴν Ἀκαρνανίαν καὶ οὐκ ἂν οἰόμενοι πρὸς ἑπτὰ καὶ τεσσαράκοντα ναῦς τὰς σφετέρας τολμῆσαι τοὺς Ἀθηναίους εἴκοσι ταῖς ἑαυτῶν ναυμαχίαν ποιήσασθαι· ἐπειδὴ μέντοι ἀντιπαραπλέοντάς τε ἐώρων αὐτοὺς, παρὰ γῆν σφῶν κομιζομένων, καὶ ἐκ Πατρῶν τῆς Ἀχαΐας πρὸς τὴν ἀντιπέρας ἠπειρον διαβάλλοντες ἐπ' Ἀκαρνανίας κατεῖδον τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἀπὸ τῆς Χαλκίδος καὶ τοῦ Εὐήνου ποταμοῦ προσπλέοντας σφίσι καὶ οὐκ ἔλαθον νυκτὸς ἀφορμισάμενοι, οὕτω δὴ ἀναγκάζονται ναυμαχεῖν κατὰ μέσον τὸν πορθμόν.

Thucydides reports not so much the movements themselves, but rather the characters' perceptions, expectations and motives: while Phormion 'wants' ('βουλόμενος') to attack on the open sea, the Corinthians are 'not prepared for a battle' ('οὐχ ὡς ἐπὶ ναυμαχίᾳ') and 'believe' ('οἰόμενοι') that the Athenians will not dare to approach their superior force. The following movements are internally focalized through the Corinthians: they 'observe' ('ἐώρων') the Athenians sail along the opposite coast and 'see' ('κατεῖδον') the Athenians approaching them

---

surveys the expression of motivation by participles; Rood 1998: 61-82 gives a narratological analysis showing that 'Thucydides' focus on perceptions helps to explain events' (80); Stahl 2003 emphasizes the disappointment of expectations.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Nelles 1997: ch. 3 on focalization and senses and, on further aspects, Rimmon-Kenan 1983.

when they try to cross the sea. ‘And they [i.e. the Corinthians] did not elude them [i.e. the Athenians] by setting sail at night’ (‘καὶ οὐκ ἔλαθον νυκτὸς ἀφορμισάμενοι’) returns the focalization to the Athenians, subtly interweaving it with the perspective of the Corinthians: while ἔλαθον νυκτὸς ἀφορμισάμενοι implies the plan of the Corinthians, the negation expresses the Athenians’ anticipation of it. The change of perspective from Corinthians to Athenians illustrates that Thucydides does not bind the reader to the point of view of one side. Through constantly shifting the vantage-point, he discourages identification with either party and also guards himself against the charge of bias.

There are several cases in which even two instances of internal focalization are superimposed. In 2.89.4 and 6, for example, Phormion argues that the Peloponnesians regard the situation with fear. The Peloponnesians, on the other hand, take into account what the Athenians think (2.90.2):

On this wing they stationed their twenty best sailors, so that now, if Phormion thought they were sailing towards Naupactus and sailed along the coast in that direction himself to defend it, the Athenians would not escape their attack beyond the reach of their wing, but these ships would close in on them.

ἐπὶ δ’ αὐτῶ εἴκοσιν ἔταξαν τὰς ἄριστα πλεούσας, ὅπως, εἰ ἄρα νομίσας ἐπὶ τὴν Ναύπακτον αὐτοὺς πλεῖν ὁ Φορμίων καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπιβοηθῶν ταύτῃ παραπλέοι, μὴ διαφύγοιεν πλείοντα τὸν ἐπίπλου σφῶν οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἔξω τοῦ ἑαυτῶν κέρως, ἀλλ’ αὐται αἱ νῆες περικλήσειαν.

The doubling of the internal focalization pulls the reader deep into the world of the action as it is experienced by the historical agents.

In the introductory remarks, I pointed out that the chronological progression of the story and the avoidance of anachrony are crucial to the experiential quality of Thucydides’ historiography. The account of the Naupactus battle features an analepsis that interrupts the chronological order but nonetheless serves to recreate the presentness of the past. Thucydides announces that Phormion wanted to encourage his men and adds (2.88.2):

In the past he always told them and conditioned them to think that for them no naval force was so large that they could not withstand its attacks, and the crews had long since accepted this assessment among themselves, that as Athenians they did not give way before any horde of Peloponnesian ships.

πρότερον μὲν γὰρ αἰεὶ αὐτοῖς ἔλεγε καὶ προπαρασκεύαζε τὰς γνώμας ὡς οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς πλῆθος νεῶν τοσοῦτον, ἦν ἐπιπλήη, ὅτι οὐχ ὑπομενετέον ἐστί, καὶ οἱ στρατιῶται ἐκ πολλοῦ ἐν σφίσι αὐτοῖς τὴν

ἀξίωσιν ταύτην εἰλήφασαν, μηδένα ὄχλον Ἀθηναῖοι ὄντες  
Πελοποννησίων νεῶν ὑποχωρεῖν.

Of course, this flashback does not follow the course of events, but it evokes the horizon of experience of those soldiers who heard Phormion's encouraging words with his earlier comments in mind. The anachrony, which at first sight seems to interrupt the mimesis, is internally focalized and helps to present the action from the perspective of the agents. Thucydides' use of focalization is so pervasive that he sometimes reports the action only indirectly through the plans and perceptions of the agents. Following the action through the eyes of the characters, the reader easily gains a sense of witnessing history as it unfolds.

### *Speeches*

In speeches, Thucydides not only adopts the perspective of the protagonists but also lets them speak in their own words.<sup>101</sup> In an article on 'frontières du récit', Genette reconsiders Plato's juxtaposition of direct speech (mimesis) with narrative (diegesis): 'Plato opposed mimesis as perfect imitation to diegesis as imperfect imitation. However, a perfect imitation is not an imitation, it is the thing itself.'<sup>102</sup> The direct presentation of utterances seems to give unmediated access to the past; in temporal terms, it makes narrated and narrative time converge. Speeches are thereby highly conducive to making narrative experiential. In the passage under consideration here, the speeches of the Peloponnesian generals and of Phormion reveal how they assessed their present situation and what they conjectured about the future in the light of what had just happened: the Peloponnesian generals attempt to dispel their men's fears by explaining away their previous defeat and highlighting their superiority. They adduce deficient preparation, bad luck and inexperience as the reasons for defeat and invoke the courage and superior size of their fleet as factors that render them superior to the Athenians (2.87).

As commentators have not failed to notice, Phormion's address to his men closely corresponds to the speech of the Peloponnesian generals.<sup>103</sup> He tries to free the Athenians from their fear of the mighty fleet of the enemies. The great number of ships, he points out, only exhibits the fear of the Peloponnesians, who refuse to meet them on equal terms. The Peloponnesians are by no means more

---

<sup>101</sup> Scholarship on speeches in Thucydides has focused on the issue of their authenticity, e.g. Hornblower 1987: 45-72, and on their relation with the narrative, see besides de Romilly 1956 and Hunter 1973 also Morrison 2006. See also the articles in Stadter 1973. For a new take on speeches and 'plupast' in Thucydides, see Grethlein 2012 on the Plataean Debate.

<sup>102</sup> Genette 1966: 156: 'Platon opposait mimesis à diegesis comme une imitation parfaite à une imitation imparfaite; mais l'imitation parfaite n'est plus une imitation, c'est la chose même.'

<sup>103</sup> Luschnat 1942: 26-7; de Romilly 1956: 140-3.

courageous than the Athenians, who can rely on their superior naval experience. The very fact that the Athenians dare to confront them with a much smaller force is bound to increase their fear. Phormion then lays out his strategy: he intends to avoid fighting in the narrows; instead, he prefers the open sea, where the Athenians can cash in on their technical superiority. After emphasizing the importance of order and silence, Phormion finally calls attention to what is at stake: victorious, they can discourage further Spartan expeditions at sea; in the event of defeat, on the other hand, they will jeopardize Athens' naval supremacy (2.89). While not directly advancing the plot, these speeches evoke the temporal horizon of the historical agents and make the readers perceive the past through their lens; more specifically, they align the readers with the soldiers listening to the generals.

Speeches and internal focalization also buttress the mimetic appeal of the narrative in other respects: Thucydides uses them in particular to convey a great deal of information without using his narratorial voice. His description of the first battle, for example, is very short, as we have seen; the narrative can focus on the confusion of the Peloponnesians because the Athenian strategy has already been laid out in the reflections attributed to Phormion.<sup>104</sup> The account of the second battle is more complex, but again important pieces of information are introduced at the level of the action. This comes to the fore in Gomme's comments on the tactical considerations found in Phormion's speech: 'All this explanation of the advantages of open waters to the Athenians seems out of place in an address immediately before a battle to well-trained sailors; it is Thucydides rather, reminding the reader.'<sup>105</sup> The Peloponnesians' speech, on the other hand, is limited to an evaluation of the first battle and encouragement for the imminent encounter, but Thucydides reports their strategy, with great narrative economy, directly before the battle (2.90.1-2), thereby endowing his account with much dramatic force. By having the characters focalize and voice important pieces of information, Thucydides reduces the visibility of his narratorial mediation and gives the reader the impression that she is following the events as experienced by the historical agents.

Speeches embed in the action not only factual information, but also interpretive elements. Noting the close correspondence of the speeches of the Peloponnesians and Phormion, de Romilly states: 'Phormion has entirely shattered the argument of the Peloponnesians.'<sup>106</sup> Phormion's speech reveals that the points on which the Peloponnesians build their confidence, their numerical superiority and their courage, are irrelevant: the fact that the Peloponnesians confront the Athenians with such a great fleet indicates their fear. In addition,

---

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Luschnat 1942: 26; de Romilly 1956: 145.

<sup>105</sup> Gomme, Andrewes and Dover 1941-81: *ad* 2.89.9.

<sup>106</sup> de Romilly 1956: 141: 'Phormion a donc ruiné, dans son ensemble, l'argumentation péloponnésienne.'

courage is linked to experience, by means of which the Athenians easily surpass the Peloponnesians at sea.<sup>107</sup> Together with the juxtaposition of the speeches, their correspondences with the narrative suggests an evaluation of the action. The Athenians' swift turn from flight to fight illustrates their courage and experience that Phormion foregrounds in his pre-battle address.<sup>108</sup> The speeches thus allow Thucydides to pass judgment without having to insert his narratorial voice – the evaluation is presented diegetically. Another example of this is Phormion's appeal: 'This is a great contest for you, either to end the Peloponnesians' hope for their navy or to bring closer to the Athenians their fear regarding the sea.' ('ὁ δὲ ἄγων μέγας ὑμῖν, ἢ καταλῦσαι Πελοποννησίων τὴν ἐλπίδα τοῦ ναυτικοῦ ἢ ἐγγυτέρω καταστῆσαι Ἀθηναίοις τὸν φόβον περὶ τῆς θαλάσσης.' 2.89.10). Thucydides refrains from narratorial intrusion, but lets Phormion remark on the importance of the battle.

This interpretation adds a noteworthy facet to our understanding of speeches. It is widely agreed that Thucydides uses speeches to integrate general reflections into his narrative. Just think of the Plataean and Mytilenean Debates, which shed light on the conflict between justice and expediency in interstate relationships. Luschnat and de Romilly have shown that also in the Naupactus narrative the speeches extend the significance of the scene beyond the specific events involved, in the words of the latter: 'They depart from the immediate situation and are elevated, in the domain of ideas, to the level of the grand political debates.'<sup>109</sup> At the same time, while transcending their contexts, these and other speeches contribute to the experiential character of the narrative, as we have just seen: the form of *oratio recta* collapses the distinction between narrated and narrative time. Speeches also serve to integrate factual information, evaluation and deeper reflection into the level of the action, permitting Thucydides to keep a low profile as narrator. His authorial reticence, foregrounding the action, not only makes the narrative dramatic but also slyly lends authority to it, as the judgment seems to emerge from the events themselves.

### *Composition*

A final point that enhances the mimetic dimension of Thucydides' account is the selection of narrative elements and their arrangement. While de Romilly and Hunter have explored the close correspondence between Phormion's plans and the course of events, Stahl has rightly drawn attention to the role of the unexpected in

---

<sup>107</sup> See also Hornblower 1991-6: *ad* 2.87.4: 'In fact, as we are surely meant to recall, Pericles at 40.3 had claimed for Athens precisely the combination of thought and action which the Peloponnesian commanders here insinuate that she lacks.'

<sup>108</sup> de Romilly 1956: 143-4; Hunter 1973: 53-5, who uses Phormion as evidence for her thesis that Thucydides tends to derive purposes from facts.

<sup>109</sup> de Romilly 1956: 150: 'Elles [i.e. the speeches] partent de l'immédiat pour s'élever, dans le domaine des idées, au niveau des grands discours politiques.'; cf. Luschnat 1942: 31.

the second battle.<sup>110</sup> The quickness and θάρσος with which eleven Athenian ships rout a fleet of 77 may illustrate, as de Romilly and Hunter suggest,<sup>111</sup> the experience and courage of which Phormion boasts in his speech, but it is only the fortuitous presence of a merchant vessel that allows the Athenians to apply them: ‘A merchant ship happened to be anchored in the open water ...’ (ἔτυχε δὲ ὀλκὰς ὀρμούσα μετέωρος ...’, 2.91.3).

The role of the unexpected is reinforced through the composition of the battle narrative, notably through parallels to the first battle.<sup>112</sup> As Thucydides begins the account of the first battle by letting us witness the reasoning of Phormion, he now informs us of the strategy of the Peloponnesians: in both scenes, the subsequent narrative confirms the reasoning of the characters. A detail underscores the parallel: the signal that launches the Peloponnesian attack echoes the signal for which the Athenians waited in the first battle (2.90.4 ~ 2.84.3). The parallel presentation leads the reader to expect that everything will again go according to plan, and that just as Phormion’s plan had enabled the Athenians to overcome the Peloponnesians in the first battle, analogously this time the Peloponnesians will emerge victorious. Then, however, the merchant vessel turns up out of the blue... In first closely modelling his account on the narrative of the first battle and then, without preparation, introducing the unexpected turning of the tables, Thucydides recreates for the reader the surprise that overcomes the Peloponnesians and that leads to the reversal of the tide of the battle, ‘as a consequence of this unexpected and unlikely event’ (γενομένου τούτου ἀπροσδοκίτου τε καὶ παρὰ λόγον’, 2.91.4). Thus, Thucydides not only refrains from foreshadowing the subsequent course of the action, but also arranges his narrative so that it conveys some of the experience of the historical agents.

To sum up, the account of Phormion’s double victory illustrates several means by which Thucydides makes the past present. Graphic description, tense, focalization, speeches and narrative composition all contribute to the mimetic power of his narrative. Of course, Thucydides writes in hindsight, and readers with some knowledge of the Peloponnesian War will remember the outcome of the sea battles. Nonetheless, the narrative compels the reader to witness the events as if they were just unfolding. History is always written retrospectively, but Thucydides enlists numerous narrative techniques to restore presentness to the past.

## II. THE CAPITULATION OF MYTILENE (3.25-35)

---

<sup>110</sup> de Romilly 1956: 143-4; Hunter 1973: 53-5; Stahl 2003: 87-91.

<sup>111</sup> de Romilly 1956: 147 on quickness, Hunter 1973: 54 on θάρσος.

<sup>112</sup> A comparison of the two battles is already suggested at the level of the action when Phormion appeals to his men: ‘... and confront these enemies in a manner worthy of your past achievements.’ (‘... ἀμύνεσθέ τε τούσδε ἀξίως τῶν προειργασμένων.’ 2.89.9).

The second episode I would like to discuss to highlight the experiential quality of *The History of the Peloponnesian War* is the account of the capitulation of Mytilene in 427 BCE. The Mytilenean oligarchs conspire with the Peloponnesians and plan to liberate Lesbos from Athenian rule. When the Athenians learn about these plans, they start besieging Mytilene. A Spartan messenger, Salaethus, promises the help of forty Peloponnesian ships as well as a Spartan invasion of Attica and thereby encourages the Mytileneans to continue to endure the siege (3.25),<sup>113</sup> but, while a Spartan army ravages Attica, the Mytileneans wait in vain for reinforcements from Sparta and finally capitulate (3.26-8). Meanwhile, the forty Peloponnesian ships, under the command of Alcidas, arrive at Icarus and Mykonos (3.29). In a brief direct speech, an Elean named Teutiaplus suggests that the Spartans sail as fast as possible to Mytilene and take the Athenian corps by surprise (3.30). Alcidas rejects this proposal, as well as one made by some Ionians and Lesbians, reported in indirect speech, to sail to Ionia and to compel its cities to defect from the Athenians. Instead, Alcidas hurries back to the Peloponnese, pursued by the Athenian general Paches and his fleet (3.31-33.1). When Paches fails to catch Alcidas, he captures the Colophonian city Notion, afflicted by stasis. He expels the Arcadian and Persian forces that had supported the dominant party and restores the exiles (3.33.2-34). On arrival in Mytilene, Paches arrests the Spartan Salaethus and sends him to Athens along with the leaders of the conspiracy (3.35). The episode of the capitulation of Mytilene precedes one of the most read passages in Thucydides, the Mytilenean Debate, and employs some of the devices of making the past present seen in the account of Phormion's sea battles, as well as some new ones. In my discussion, I will briefly touch upon focalization and composition and then explore narratorial manipulation of time, 'sideshadowing' and indirect evaluation.

#### *Internal Focalization and composition*

Since the episode of Phormion's naval successes has already provided us with ample material to illustrate internal focalization as a means of rendering an account experiential, I will limit myself to one example here. In 3.33, Thucydides notes that Alcidas quickly fled from Ephesus and adds (3.33.1):

For he had been spotted by the Salaminia and the Paralus while he was still anchored off Clarus (they happened to be sailing from Athens). Fearing pursuit, Alcidas sailed across the open sea with no intention of putting in anywhere but the Peloponnese.

---

<sup>113</sup> On the narrative subtlety of this passage, see Rood 2006: 225-6.

ὥφθη γὰρ ὑπὸ τῆς Σαλαμινίας καὶ Παράλου ἔτι περὶ Κλάρων ὀρμῶν (αἱ δ' ἀπ' Ἀθηνῶν ἔτυχον πλέουσαι), καὶ δεδιῶς τὴν δίωξιν ἔπλει διὰ τοῦ πελάγους ὡς γῆ ἑκούσιος οὐ σχήσων ἄλλη ἢ Πελοποννήσῳ.<sup>114</sup>

Here we have another case of a double internal focalization: Alcidas notes that he has been seen by the Athenians. In the next paragraph, Thucydides turns to the Athenian side: Paches receives many warnings that the Peloponnesian fleet might attack the Ionian cities. One warning is singled out: ‘... and the Paralus and the Salaminia on their own evidence reported seeing Alcidas at Clarus.’ (‘αὐτάγγελοι δ' αὐτὸν ἰδοῦσαι ἐν τῇ Κλάρῳ ἢ τε Πάραλος καὶ ἡ Σαλαμινία ἔφρασαν.’ 3.33.2). It is striking that Thucydides, well known for his narrative economy, mentions the same incident twice within a single paragraph, first through the eyes of the Peloponnesians, who quickly sail away when they notice they have been spotted by the Athenians, then adopting the perspective of Paches, for whom the sighting of Alcidas in Clarus indicates the danger of an attack against an unfortified Ionia. The repetition illustrates the importance that Thucydides assigns to the perception of historical agents. Rather than reporting bare historical facts, Thucydides narrates them as experienced by historical agents to make the reader view the past from their perspective, as if it were still present.

In my interpretation of the battle at Naupactus, I argued that the repetition of the pattern of the first battle serves to recreate for the readers the surprise that caught the Peloponnesians and led to their defeat; the capitulation of Mytilene is narrated to similar effect. In chapter 25, Thucydides reports how Salaethus sneaks into Mytilene and discourages the citizens from surrendering. He announces that Sparta is about to invade Attica and will send 40 ships. In the following chapter, Thucydides turns away from the events in Mytilene to the invasion of Attica, which, he points out, ‘was the most severe for the Athenians, after the second one’ (‘χαλεπωτάτη ἐγένετο τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις μετὰ τὴν δευτέραν’, 3.26.3). Underscored by a verbal echo (3.26.1: ‘ἐσέβαλον’ ~ 3.25.1: ‘ἐσβολή’), this statement raises the expectation that the Spartans will keep their promises and that Mytilene will continue its resistance. The first sentence of chapter 27 thus comes rather as a surprise (3.27.1):

Meanwhile, the Mytileneans, since the ships for them did not arrive from the Peloponnesus but delayed, and their food had run out as well, are forced to come to terms with the Athenians in the following way.

Οἱ δὲ Μυτιληναῖοι ἐν τούτῳ, ὡς αἶ τε νῆες αὐτοῖς οὐχ ἦκον ἀπὸ τῆς Πελοποννήσου ἀλλὰ ἐνεχρόνιζον καὶ ὁ σῆτος ἐπελελοίπει, ἀναγκάζονται ξυμβαίνειν πρὸς τοὺς Ἀθηναίους διὰ τὰδε.

---

<sup>114</sup> On γάρ as marking the focalization of a character in Thucydides, see Hornblower 1994: 134.

Only after Thucydides has narrated at length how and on what terms the Mytileneans capitulate does he report what happened to the forty Peloponnesian ships (3.29.1):

The Peloponnesians in the forty ships, who were supposed to arrive quickly, wasted time even while sailing along the Peloponnesus and were leisurely in making the rest of their voyage, unnoticed by the Athenians in the city as they proceeded until they put in at Delos, and on reaching Icarus and Mykonos from there they first learned that Mytilene had been captured.

Οἱ δ' ἐν ταῖς τεσσαράκοντα ναυσὶ Πελοποννήσιοι, οὓς ἔδει ἐν τάχει παραγενέσθαι, πλέοντες περί τε αὐτὴν τὴν Πελοπόννησον ἐνδιέτριψαν καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἄλλον πλοῦν σχολαῖοι κομισθέντες τοὺς μὲν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Ἀθηναίους λανθάνουσι, πρὶν δὴ τῇ Δήλῳ ἔσχον, προσμείξαντες δ' ἀπ' αὐτῆς τῇ Ἰκάρῳ καὶ Μυκόνῳ πυνθάνονται πρῶτον ὅτι ἡ Μυτιλήνη ἐάλωκεν.<sup>115</sup>

Together with the focus on the Attic theatre of war, where the Spartans keep their promises, the postponement of the information about the forty Peloponnesian ships makes the capitulation of Mytilene unexpected. The delay of the fleet is imitated by the narrative delay in describing it;<sup>116</sup> narrative time mimics narrated time and recreates the presentness of the past.

#### *Narrative and narrated time*

Our episode features further play with narrative time, for instance in the account of the capture of Notion (3.34.3):<sup>117</sup>

He [i.e. Paches] invited Hippias, the leader of the Arcadians at the fort, to a parley on the understanding that he would let him return safe and sound if he rejected his proposal; when Hippias came to him, he held him under guard, although not in chains, makes a sudden attack on the fort and captures it, since they [i.e. the Arcadians] do not expect it, and he kills the Arcadians and all the barbarians inside; Hippias he brought in later, just as he had pledged, and, when he was inside, arrests and kills him with a bowshot.

ὁ δὲ προκαλεσάμενος ἐς λόγους Ἰππίαν τῶν ἐν τῷ διατειχίσματι Ἀρκάδων ἄρχοντα, ὥστε, ἦν μηδὲν ἀρέσκον λέγειν, πάλιν αὐτὸν

<sup>115</sup> The two previous references to the ships are focalized by the Peloponnesians (3.26.4). Cf. Rood 1998: 118.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Rood 1998: 118.

<sup>117</sup> On the displacement of the preceding information about the stasis in Notion which took place in 430 BCE and would therefore belong to book 2, see Hornblower 1994: 143.

καταστήσειν ἐς τὸ τεῖχος σῶν καὶ ὑγιᾶ, ὁ μὲν ἐξῆλθε παρ' αὐτόν, ὁ δ' ἐκείνον μὲν ἐν φυλακῇ ἀδέσμῳ εἶχεν, αὐτὸς δὲ προσβαλὼν τῷ τειχίσματι ἐξαπιναίως καὶ οὐ προσδεχομένων αἰρεῖ, τοὺς τε Ἀρκάδας καὶ τῶν βαρβάρων ὅσοι ἐνήσαν διαφθείρει· καὶ τὸν Ἰππίαν ὕστερον ἐσαγαγὼν ὥσπερ ἐσπείσατο, ἐπειδὴ ἔνδον ἦν, ξυλλαμβάνει καὶ κατατοξεύει.

In the discussion of the sea battles at Naupactus, I identified a tendency in Thucydides to lay out the reasoning and plans of historical agents before their actions. Here, on the contrary, Thucydides limits his account to the skeleton of bare facts. His narrative thereby mirrors the suddenness of the action ('ἐξαπιναίως') and makes it as unexpected for the readers as it was for the partisans in Notion ('οὐ προσδεχομένων'). Thucydides' narrative technique serves again to convey the experience of the characters, here of the victims of a ruse.

In the episode of Paches' trick, the acceleration of narrative time imitates the hurry in the action; the following passage, on the other hand, creates a contrast between narrative and narrated time. When Salaethus and the Mytilenean conspirators arrive in Athens, the *demos* is so enraged that it decides to execute not only them but all Mytileneans: 'Accordingly, they send a trireme to Paches reporting their decision and instructs him to put an end to the Mytileneans without delay.' ('πέμπουσιν οὖν τριήρη ὡς Πάχητα ἄγγελον τῶν δεδογμένων, κατὰ τάχος κελεύοντες διαχρήσασθαι Μυτιληναίους.' 3.36.3). No matter whether we take κατὰ τάχος with the predicate πέμπουσιν or with the infinitive διαχρήσασθαι, or even with the participle κελεύοντες, the haste of the Athenians, the speed of narrated time, contrasts with the deceleration of narrative time effected by the ensuing Mytilenean Debate that extends over fifteen chapters. While the preceding account summarizes the events, the reproduction of direct speech in the Mytilenean Debate draws out narrative time so that it becomes equal to narrated time. This stretching of narrative time throws into relief not only the haste of the first decision, but also makes the reader feel the speed necessary to save the Mytileneans in narrated time. Parallel to the discussion of the Athenians, the ship is on its way to Lesbos with its lethal mission: 'The longer the debate lasts, the slimmer becomes the chance of salvation for the Mytileneans. There can be no doubt that the historian is conscious of the dramatic element that these speeches ... lend to the narrative.'<sup>118</sup> The Mytilenean Debate thus creates suspense, just as the entire episode can be viewed as an instance of narrative 'Beinahe': All the Mytileneans were nearly killed; only 'since by luck there was no opposing wind, and the first ship was sailing without urgency for its horrible business' ('κατὰ τύχην δὲ πνεύματος οὐδενὸς ἐναντιωθέντος καὶ τῆς μὲν

---

<sup>118</sup> Stahl 2003: 108. See also Schwinge 2008: 55-6 on narrative and narrated time in this passage.

προτέρας νεῶς οὐ σπουδῆ πλεούσης ἐπὶ πρᾶγμα ἀλλόκοτον’),<sup>119</sup> the second boat arrived in time to prevent the execution of all Mytilenean men ordered by the first boat: ‘Mytilene’s danger came this close’ (‘παρὰ τοσοῦτον μὲν ἢ Μυτιλήνη ἦλθε κινδύνου.’ 3.49.4).<sup>120</sup> Through the modulation of narrative time, Thucydides recreates for the readers the suspense that the historical agents must have felt.

### ‘Sideshadowing’

I have argued elsewhere that such ‘Beinahe’-episodes in Thucydides serve as ‘sideshadowing’ devices.<sup>121</sup> Against the teleological tendency inherent in retrospective narrative, ‘sideshadowing’ devices restore the presentness of the past – what lies ahead is not treated as the past it has already become for the narrator and the readers, but as the future it is for the character. In driving home the openness of the past when it was still present, ‘sideshadowing’ alerts the reader to the fact that history could have taken a very different road. The effect of ‘sideshadowing’ is also prominent in the account preceding the Mytilenean Debate. The brief speech of the Elean Teutiaplus has vexed many scholars. Why, it has been asked, does Thucydides include a speech irrelevant to the action?<sup>122</sup> After all, Teutiaplus fails to convince Alcidas of his plan to sail to Mytilene. It is, to use a term coined by Prince, a ‘disnarrated’ element, i.e. a narrative of something that did not take place.<sup>123</sup> However, the very fact that Teutiaplus’ suggestion is not realized establishes its narrative significance, which goes beyond making the readers familiar with the thoughts of historical agents: in pointing to ‘the road not taken’,<sup>124</sup> the speech serves as a ‘sideshadowing’ device. It calls our attention to another possible course of events. By virtue of hindsight, we know that Alcidas will quickly return to the Peloponnese upon learning of the capture of Mytilene, but the speech illustrates the openness of the situation when it was still present – the Peloponnesians could also have sailed to Mytilene and, who knows, have captured it ...

---

<sup>119</sup> On the question of who focalizes the evaluation ἀλλόκοτον, see Hornblower 1994: 135.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. the parallel phrase in 7.2 and Hornblower 1994: 158; Stahl 2003: 109.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 250-1.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Rawlings 1981: 190, who calls it ‘the strangest speech in all of Thucydides’. It may also be added that such ineffective speeches do not square with Hunter’s thesis that Thucydides tends to derive purposes from actions (1973). On the effectiveness of speeches in Thucydides in general, see Hornblower 1987: 67-9, who also discusses the historicity of Teutiaplus’ speech (53-4 with n. 31).

<sup>123</sup> Prince 1988.

<sup>124</sup> Lateiner 1975: 180. See also Stahl 2003: 107, who speaks of a ‘missed opportunity’, but confuses Teutiaplus’ and the refugees’ suggestion when he claims that the narrative proves his plan right. In 3.32.3 it is the Chians who do not expect the appearance of Peloponnesians, and the fears in 3.33.2 are triggered by the lack of fortifications in Ionia. Of course, both points could be transferred to Mytilene which, however, was held by Athenian troops. Thus, they seem to support the plan to attack Ionia, on which see below.

This demonstration of the openness of the past is reinforced by the proposition of the Ionian and Mytilenean refugees to sail to Ionia and call for the defection of the Athenian allies (3.31.1). Although presented only in indirect speech, the ‘sideshadowing’ of this option is developed further than the possibility of a surprise attack on Mytilene. The plan and its potential gain are presented in great detail. The refugees point out that such an enterprise, welcome to the Ionians, would be likely to succeed and would have grave consequences for Athens: it would lose its ‘greatest source of revenue’<sup>125</sup> and would have to shoulder further expenses if it attempted a counterattack. Even the Persian satrap Pissouthnes could be persuaded to join them. The effectiveness of an attack on Ionia is confirmed by the subsequent narrative. In 3.32.3, Thucydides mentions that Alcidas catches Chians and others, who, not reckoning with the possibility of Spartan ships near Ionia, have come to the beach. This incident illustrates the unexpectedness of a Peloponnesian intervention in Ionia, just as the internal focalization of events through Paches underscores the potential of an attack to damage the Athenian empire (3.33.2):

The news reached Paches and the Athenians from Erythrae and then came in from every source: since Ionia was unfortified, there was growing fear that even if the Peloponnesians, even if not planning to stay, would fall on the cities and plunder them as they sailed along the coast.

Τῷ δὲ Πάχητι καὶ τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις ἦλθε μὲν καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐρυθραίας ἀγγελία, ἀφικνεῖτο δὲ καὶ πανταχόθεν· ἀτειχίστου γὰρ οὔσης τῆς Ἰωνίας μέγα τὸ δέος ἐγένετο μὴ παραπλέοντες οἱ Πελοποννήσιοι, εἰ καὶ ὥς μὴ διεννοῦντο μένειν, πορθῶσιν ἅμα προσπίπτοντες τὰς πόλεις.

Finally, Paches’ relief that he did not catch Alcidas corroborates the calculation of the expenses the Athenians would have incurred, had they decided to attack a Peloponnesian force in Ionia (3.33.3: ‘ἐφόρμησιν παρασχεῖν’ ~ 3.31.1: ‘ἐφορμῶσι’).

#### *Indirect evaluation*

In my discussion above of Phormion’s naval successes, I touched upon how indirect evaluation emerges from the correspondences of speeches with one another and with the narrative. The case of Alcidas furnishes a nice example of an indirect evaluation through narrative. As we have seen, the potential of the plan to destabilize Ionia that emerges from Thucydides’ account exposes the opportunities missed under the command of Alcidas. A minor episode also shows

---

<sup>125</sup> Kallet-Marx 1993: 139-43 argues that this claim does not necessarily contradict the low entries in the Athenian tribute lists for Ionia, as πρόσοδος also includes revenues other than this tribute.

the Spartan general in a less than positive light: Alcidas kills the majority of his Ionian prisoners of war and stops only when an embassy of Chians alerts him that in so doing ‘he would convert few enemies to friends but turn many more friends into enemies’ (‘ὀλίγους μὲν αὐτὸν τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἐς φίλιαν προσάξεσθαι, πολὺ δὲ πλείους τῶν φίλων πολεμίους ἔξειν’, 3.32.2). Moreover, Alcidas’ speedy flight stands in marked contrast to the slowness with which he had come to the aid of Mytilene.<sup>126</sup> His hesitant and fearful mode of operation is also thrown into relief by Paches’ capture of Notion. Admittedly, the ruse employed by Paches is rather questionable – he promises to send the leader of the Arcadians, Hippas, back ‘safe and sound’ after their negotiations, but then detains him in his camp, and after conquering the city finally shoots him – and still the narrative emphasis on the suddenness of the manoeuvre, as demonstrated above, establishes an effective contrast to Alcidas’ slowness. The reflection on speedy actions in Teutiaplus’ speech lifts the issue to a general level (3.30.4):

We must not hesitate and shrink from the danger but understand that, if there is any universal factor in war, it is what I have described; if a general guards against it in his ranks and attacks when he observes it among the enemy, he will have the greatest success.

καὶ μὴ ἀποκνήσωμεν τὸν κίνδυνον, νομίσαντες οὐκ ἄλλο τι εἶναι τὸ κενὸν τοῦ πολέμου ἢ τὸ τοιοῦτον, ὃ εἴ τις στρατηγὸς ἐν τε αὐτῷ φυλάσσοιτο καὶ τοῖς πολεμίοις ἐνορῶν ἐπιχειροίη, πλεῖστ’ ἂν ὀρθοῖτο.

Again, Thucydides avoids interrupting the course of events with his narratorial voice but nonetheless manages to convey an evaluation by embedding it in his account of the events. As Hornblower on 3.31.2 puts it: ‘Certainly Th[ucydides] in these [chapters] brilliantly manages to censure Alcidas without open authorial censoriousness.’<sup>127</sup> Such implicit censoriousness is very effective: the evaluation seems to emerge objectively from the events themselves just as the narrator’s reticence reinforces the mimetic appeal of the account.

<sup>126</sup> 3.31.2: ... ὅτι τάχιστα τῇ Πελοποννήσῳ πάλιν προσμεῖξαι (‘... was to arrive back in the Peloponnese as quickly as possible’); 3.33.1: ... ἐπλεῖ κατὰ τάχος καὶ φυγὴν ἐποιεῖτο (‘... sailed quickly ... and broke into flight’) ~ 3.29.1: οἱ δ’ ἐν ταῖς τεσσαράκοντα ναυσὶ Πελοποννήσιοι, οὓς ἔδει ἐν τάχει παραγενέσθαι, πλέοντες περὶ τε αὐτὴν τὴν Πελοπόννησον ἐνδιέτριψαν καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἄλλον πλοῦν σχολαῖοι κοιμισθέντες ... (‘The Peloponnesians in the forty ships, who were supposed to arrive quickly, wasted time even while sailing along the Peloponnese and were leisurely in making the rest of their voyage ...’). Cf. Kallet-Marx 1993: 139.

<sup>127</sup> For a somewhat exaggerated emphasis on the negative portrayal of Alcidas, see Rawlings 1981: 192, who sees him as a foil for Alcibiades in book 7 in accordance with his thesis that ‘Thucydides carefully measured the revolts of Lesbos in 427 BCE and of Chios in 412 BCE against one another, that he contrasted the Athenians’ ability to deal with the first revolt with their inability to handle the second, and that he wanted in particular to emphasize the improved effectiveness of the Lacedaemonian response to the second revolt caused by the leadership of Alcibiades’ (181).

### III. TELEOLOGY AND AUTHORIAL PRESENCE

Let me briefly summarize and qualify my findings before I add some caveats. Neither the first two sea-battles nor the capture of Mytilene is among the narrative jewels admired for their mimetic quality by ancient and modern critics alike. And yet, both episodes illustrate the means by which Thucydides restores presentness to the past throughout his narrative: time, focalization, voice, composition, tense and description. The chronological account permits Thucydides to align the reader's and the characters' experiences. Besides chronological order, the temporal category of speed can contribute to the mimetic power of narrative. Manipulation of the relationship between narrated and narrative time can make an account mimic the events narrated, as, for example, when a rapid-fire report expresses the suddenness of an action. Internal focalization helps to put the readers in the shoes of the historical agents and lets them see the events unfold through their eyes. A similar effect is achieved by the large number of speeches in which the historical agents voice their views themselves. Another aspect of voice is the narratorial reticence of Thucydides. As we have seen, evaluations and deeper reflections are often mediated diegetically and therefore seem to derive from the events themselves. Together with the three basic narratological categories of time, focalization and voice, composition can increase the experiential appeal of an account, for example through the 'sideshadowing' of 'Beinahe'-episodes which alerts the reader to the possibility of alternative developments. Tense, notably the imperfect and historical present, brings the reader close to the action. Thucydides also uses the non-narrative form of description<sup>128</sup> to make his account graphic, a technique discussed as *enargeia* already by ancient critics.

This picture needs some qualification. As Connor has pointed out, Thucydides employs various modes of discourse.<sup>129</sup> While some passages brim with detailed descriptions, others are less graphic. Compared with some of our fragments from Hellenistic historiography, Thucydides' style even seems exceedingly dry.<sup>130</sup> The experiential quality of his narrative has a rather intellectual tone: while not revelling in sensual descriptions, the narrative draws heavily on internal focalization: Thucydides consistently challenges the reader to consider the situation from the agents' point of view. As I have argued elsewhere, besides the insights into human nature and a critical method of great political value, this challenge to the reader is an important aspect of the usefulness to

---

<sup>128</sup> On description as an alternative medium of representation to narrative, see Wolf and Bernhardt 2007.

<sup>129</sup> Connor 1985.

<sup>130</sup> I take this comparison up in ch. 7.

which Thucydides lays claim in 1.22.4. The reading of Thucydides' account is an exercise in the art of conjecturing and reasoning that is crucial in politics.<sup>131</sup>

Sometimes Thucydides even interrupts the flow of the narrative to reflect. A prominent example of this is the appraisal of Pericles whose brilliance is thrown into relief through a comparison with his successors (2.65.10-13):

Those who came later, by contrast, since they were more on an equal level with one another and each was striving to become first, even resorted to handing over affairs to the people's pleasure. As a result, many mistakes were made, since a great city ruling an empire was involved, especially the expedition to Sicily, which was a mistake not so much of judgment about those they were attacking as that the senders did not subsequently make decisions advantageous for the participants, but by engaging in personal attacks over the leading position among the common people they both reduced the vigour of the armed forces and for the first time fell into confusion in the administration of the city. And after they had failed in Sicily, not only with their other forces but also with the larger part of the fleet, and now had a revolutionary situation in the city, they nevertheless still held out for three years against both their previous enemies and those from Sicily along with them, and moreover the majority of their allies, who had revolted, and later against Cyrus the King's son in addition, who furnished the Peloponnesians with money for their fleet, and they did not give in until, coming to grief through individual disputes, they brought about their own overthrow. So great at the time was the abundance of resources at Pericles' disposal, through which he foresaw that the city would very easily prevail in the war over the Peloponnesians alone.

οἱ δὲ ὕστερον ἴσοι μᾶλλον αὐτοὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὄντες καὶ ὀρεγόμενοι τοῦ πρῶτος ἕκαστος γίνεσθαι ἐτράποντο καθ' ἡδονὰς τῷ δήμῳ καὶ τὰ πράγματα ἐνδιδόναι. ἐξ ὧν ἄλλα τε πολλά, ὡς ἐν μεγάλῃ πόλει καὶ ἀρχὴν ἐχούσῃ, ἡμαρτήθη καὶ ὁ ἐς Σικελίαν πλοῦς, ὃς οὐ τοσοῦτον γνώμης ἀμάρτημα ἦν πρὸς οὓς ἐπῆσαν, ὅσον οἱ ἐκπέμψαντες οὐ τὰ πρόσφορα τοῖς οἰχομένοις ἐπιγιγνώσκοντες, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας διαβολὰς περὶ τῆς τοῦ δήμου προστασίας τὰ τε ἐν τῷ στρατοπέδῳ ἀμβλύτερα ἐποίουν καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν πόλιν πρῶτον ἐν ἀλλήλοις ἐταράχθησαν. σφαλέντες δὲ ἐν Σικελίᾳ ἄλλη τε παρασκευῆ καὶ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ τῷ πλέονι μορίῳ καὶ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἤδη ἐν στάσει ὄντες ὅμως † τρία † μὲν ἔτη ἀντεῖχον τοῖς τε πρότερον ὑπάρχουσι πολεμίοις καὶ τοῖς ἀπὸ Σικελίας μετ' αὐτῶν, καὶ τῶν ξυμμάχων ἔτι τοῖς πλέοσιν ἀφεστηκόσι, Κύρῳ τε ὕστερον βασιλέως παιδὶ προσγενομένῳ, ὃς παρεῖχε χρήματα Πελοποννησίοις ἐς τὸ ναυτικόν, καὶ οὐ πρότερον ἐνέδοσαν ἢ αὐτοὶ ἐν σφίσι κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας διαφορὰς

---

<sup>131</sup> Grethlein 2010a: 277-9.

περιπεσόντες ἐσφάλησαν. τοσοῦτον τῷ Περικλεῖ ἐπερίσσευσε τότε ἀφ' ὧν αὐτὸς προέγνω καὶ πάνυ ἂν ῥαδίως περιγενέσθαι τὴν πόλιν Πελοποννησίων αὐτῶν τῷ πολέμῳ.

We have seen that Thucydides knows how to encapsulate his judgment in a narrative in which his narratorial persona has left no traces. In some passages, though, he interrupts the mimesis for the sake of explanation and evaluation as when he elaborates on the decline of Athenian politics after the death of Pericles. Narrative may be predominant, but the *History of the Peloponnesian War* also features analytical passages.

The evaluation of Pericles interrupts not only the flux of the narrative, it also embeds in the account of the beginning of the Peloponnesian War a foreshadowing of its end. Thucydides is very sparing with prolepses<sup>132</sup> and, as we have seen, tries to convey the impression that he wrote parallel to the events; and yet, the praise for Pericles unveils the teleological design of *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. The text, as we have it, breaks off mid-sentence in 411 BCE, but the second prologue in 5.26 leaves no doubt that the capitulation of Athens in 404/403 BCE forms the telos of the narrative. Thucydides narrates the conflict between Athens and Sparta from the vantage-point of the former's capitulation.

Since modern historians have more or less adopted this view of the Peloponnesian War, this may seem natural to us, but, as I have pointed out in the introduction, ancient testimonies illustrate other possible takes: fourth-century orators distinguish several wars and Dionysius Halicarnassus suggests envisaging the Peloponnesian War from the vantage-point of the return of the exiles.<sup>133</sup> Thucydides' choice of 404/403 BCE significantly shapes his account of the war: his critique of Athenian orators, for instance, derives its force from being causally linked to Athens' defeat. The influence of hindsight has also been detected in the *Pentecontaetia*: In describing a dichotomy between Athens and Sparta, Thucydides clearly envisages Greek history after the Persian Wars from the vantage-point of the Peloponnesian War in the second half of the fifth century.<sup>134</sup> Even an author who foregrounds experience to such a degree as Thucydides cannot evade the spell of hindsight.

That being said, the teleological design of Thucydides' narrative is well-hidden. The two episodes I have discussed, for example, do not contain prolepses that alert the reader to the impact of hindsight. They do feature, however, examples of authorial intrusion that go against narrative mimesis. Thucydides' authorial reticence is remarkable, but from time to time he flashes his presence.<sup>135</sup> Let me give one obvious and one less obvious example: After narrating Salaethus'

---

<sup>132</sup> For further prolepses in Thucydides, see Dunn 2007: 116.

<sup>133</sup> See ch. 1???

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Raaflaub ???

<sup>135</sup> This is emphasized by Rood 2006.

arrival in Mytilene, Thucydides writes: ‘And this winter ended, and also the fourth year of the war ended which Thucydides has recorded.’ (‘ὁ τε χειμῶν ἐτελεύτα οὔτος, καὶ τέταρτον ἔτος τῷ πολέμῳ ἐτελεύτα τῷδε ὄν Θουκυδίδης ξυνέγραψεν.’ 3.25.2). Here and in other passages, reference to the author pointedly highlights his presence in the narrative. While the general reticence enhances the mimetic appeal of the narrative, such intrusions assert Thucydides’ control over his text. The narrative mimesis of the action is carefully balanced with passages that underline the authority of the narrator.<sup>136</sup>

The mediating presence of the author is marked more subtly, but is nonetheless visible in 2.86.5:

And for six or seven days they remained at anchor across from each other, practising and preparing for a sea battle, one side resolved not to sail outside the two Rhions into open water, for fear of the earlier disaster; the other side, not to sail into the narrows, thinking that in a limited space the battle would be in the enemy’s favour.

καὶ ἐπὶ μὲν ἕξ ἢ ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας ἀνθρώρουν ἀλλήλοις μελετῶντές τε καὶ παρασκευαζόμενοι τὴν ναυμαχίαν, γνώμην ἔχοντες οἱ μὲν μὴ ἐκπλεῖν ἔξω τῶν Ῥίων ἐς τὴν εὐρυχωρίαν, φοβούμενοι τὸ πρότερον πάθος, οἱ δὲ μὴ ἐσπλεῖν ἐς τὰ στενά, νομίζοντες πρὸς ἐκείνων εἶναι τὴν ἐν ὀλίγῳ ναυμαχίαν.

The ‘or’ (‘ἢ’) reveals the author’s uncertainty about a minor fact – the exact number of days the fleets faced each other – but this alerts the reader to the fact that we access the past only through the author’s reconstruction.<sup>137</sup> Passages like this unveil the presence of a narrator who, however, has crafted a narrative that by and large seems to follow the events themselves. Thucydides has been hailed as the father of critical historiography, but he also stands at the beginning of mimetic narrative in historiography. We will find many of the devices used by Thucydides, but also other ways of making the past tangible in the chapters on Xenophon, Plutarch and Tacitus. It will be particularly thought-provoking at the end of the Polybius chapter to envision the notion of mimesis in Hellenistic historiography in light of Thucydides’ concern with vividness. Our scanty remains of such historians as Duris and Phylarchus indicate a different use of experiential devices, but it is nonetheless noteworthy that some features that are still often associated with the phantom school of tragic historiography can be traced back to the historian whose high methodological standards the handbooks oppose to its affective style of writing.

---

<sup>136</sup> Gribble 1998: 43. See also ch. 7 ???

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Hornblower 1994: 151, who emphasizes that such hedges are very rare in Thucydides.

### 3. Xenophon, *Anabasis*

Xenophon's *Hellenica* end on an open note. Instead of a concluding authorial reflection or a closing narrative, we find the battle of Mantinea, which failed to produce a clear victor and thereby even increased the confusion in Greece. This open ending complements the abrupt beginning of the *Hellenica* which is not introduced by a proem, but starts with 'after this' ('μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα'). While Xenophon left it to his readers to figure out that his work aims to continue Thucydides' account, in the very last sentence he explicitly wishes for a successor: 'Thus far be it written by me; the events after these will perhaps be the concern of another.' ('ἔμοι μὲν δὴ μέχρι τούτου γραφέσθω· τὰ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ἴσως ἄλλω μελήσει.' 7.5.27). Xenophon belongs to a long tradition of ancient historians who presented their own narratives as part of a *historia continua*. And yet, he could have chosen another, more satisfying closure for his account such as the campaign and death of Agesilaus. John Dillery therefore suggests that the *Hellenica*'s open ending may also express Xenophon's resignation about Greek politics: 'He was an acute enough observer of his own day to recognize that not only was Mantinea not the decisive battle it was supposed to be but also the very fact that it settled nothing revealed a profound truth about the Greek world during the second half of the fifth and the first half of the fourth century: disorder was the typical condition of Greece.'<sup>138</sup>

The open ending of the *Hellenica* also indicates, I think, a distinct narrative strategy and view of history. Xenophon tries to eschew the teleological view that tends to come with the retrospect from which we approach the past. Instead of capitalizing on the advantage of hindsight, Xenophon goes out of his way to restore presentness to the past. He lets his readers experience the openness which the past had when it still was a present. To illustrate the narrative strategies which Xenophon uses to this end, I will turn to the *Anabasis*. While in the *Hellenica* the avoidance of a teleological view may be owed to the project of a *historia continua*, it is more striking and noteworthy in a monograph on a historical event with a more or less clearly defined beginning and end:<sup>139</sup> in 401 BCE, Cyrus gathers a large army including Greek soldiers in order to overthrow his brother Artaxerxes, the King of Persia. With this army, Cyrus marches from Sardis through Asia, where north of Babylon at Cunaxa he dies in battle. The Greek mercenaries then return in an adventurous katabasis through Kurdistan and Armenia and along the Black Sea to Ionia. The theme of the nostos invites a narrative from the viewpoint of the happy homecoming, but Xenophon employs

---

<sup>138</sup> Dillery 1995: 27. See Dillery 1995: 19 for other endings which Xenophon could have chosen.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Marincola 2005: 297, who notes that the monograph is 'a form that in some ways is most at odds with the movement of history'. The genre of the *Anabasis* has been much discussed. The labels include autobiography, diary, travel literature as well as historiography, cf. Reichel 2005.

various devices that we have seen at work in Thucydides to present the events as they were experienced by the historical agents. Graphic description and focalization (I), speeches (II) and ‘sideshadowing’ (III) make the account highly experiential. Even the closure which is so crucial to nostos narratives is not only deferred, but ultimately refused (IV). Nevertheless, the *Anabasis*’ mimesis is not free of interruptions (V). Concerning the experiential quality of his narrative, Xenophon is more than an epigone of Thucydides (VI).

## I. GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION AND INTERNAL FOCALIZATION

Xenophon’s *enargeia* receives praise from authors as different as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Lucian and Plutarch.<sup>140</sup> The last deems it unnecessary to give his own detailed account of the battle of Cunaxa in his vita of Artaxerxes for ‘Xenophon all but brings it before our eyes and, through his *enargeia*, always makes his reader much affected by the events, not as they have happened, but as they are happening, and sharing their dangers’ (‘Ξενοφῶντος μονονουχὶ δεικνύοντος ὄψει καὶ τοῖς πράγμασιν ὡς οὐ γεγενημένοις, ἀλλὰ γινομένοις ἐφιστάντος ἀεὶ τὸν ἀκροατὴν ἐμπαθῆ καὶ συγκινδυνεύοντα διὰ τὴν ἐνάργειαν’, *Artax.* 8.1).<sup>141</sup> As in his appraisal of Thucydides in *De gloria Atheniensium*, Plutarch is enticed by the emotional effect that the visual quality of the narrative has on the reader. In the introduction, I have noted that descriptions, while prompting the reader to visualize a scene, freeze narrated time and thereby interrupt the mimesis of its flux in the narrative. Ancient critics, however, did not limit *enargeia* to the description of static objects, but also found it in gripping accounts of action. In the report of Cunaxa lauded by Plutarch, focalization links the vivid description to the action.

Let us take a closer look at the beginning of the narration: the narrator first creates suspense by retardation. A messenger arrives late in the morning (1.8.1-2):

He appears riding at full speed, with his horse all covered in sweat, and he lost no time in shouting out to everyone he met, in Greek and other languages, that the king is approaching with a vast army, ready for battle. Considerable turmoil was the result of this news, because the Greeks and all expected that the king would fall on them while they were in disarray.  
... προφαίνεται ἐλαύνων ἀνὰ κράτος ἰδροῦντι τῷ ἵππῳ, καὶ εὐθύς πᾶσιν οἷς ἐνετύγχανεν ἐβόα καὶ βαρβαρικῶς καὶ ἑλληνικῶς ὅτι βασιλεὺς σὺν στρατεύματι πολλῶ προσέρχεται ὡς εἰς μάχην παρεσκευασμένος. ἔνθα δὴ πολὺς ταραχος ἐγένετο· αὐτίκα γὰρ ἐδόκουν οἱ Ἕλληνες καὶ πάντες δὲ ἀτάκτοις σφίσι ἐπιπεσεῖσθαι.

---

<sup>140</sup> Dion. Hal. 426.7; Lucian, *Eikones* 10; Plut. *Artax.* 8.1.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. Mejerling 1987: 30-1.

Cyrus and his soldiers hurry to arm themselves, but the King does not appear: ‘Midday came and still there was not a sign of the enemy.’ (‘καὶ ἤδη τε ἦν μέσον ἡμέρας καὶ οὐπω καταφανεῖς ἦσαν οἱ πολέμοιοι.’ 1.8.8). Then, however (1.8.8-9),

early in the afternoon a cloud of dust appeared, looking at first like a white cloud in the sky. Some time later, however, it was as if there was a huge black smudge on the plain. Before long, as the enemy drew nearer, there were flashes of bronze, and then the tips of their spears and the divisions of the army became apparent. On the left wing of the enemies there were cavalymen in white cuirasses. Tissaphernes, it was said, was their commander; next to them were foot soldiers with wicker shields and the heavily armed troops, rumoured to be from Egypt, with wooden shields which reached down to their feet. Then there were further cavalry units and more archers. All of them marched in serried squares, with a different people making up each square.

ἠνίκα δὲ δεῖλη ἐγίγνετο, ἐφάνη κονιορτὸς ὥσπερ νεφέλη λευκή, χρόνῳ δὲ συχνῶ ὕστερον ὥσπερ μελανία τις ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ ἐπὶ πολὺ. ὅτε δὲ ἐγγύτερον ἐγίγνοντο, τάχα δὴ καὶ χαλκός τις ἤστραπτε καὶ λόγχοι καὶ αἱ τάξεις καταφανεῖς ἐγίγνοντο. καὶ ἦσαν ἵππεῖς μὲν λευκοθώρακες ἐπὶ τοῦ εὐωνύμου τῶν πολεμίων. Τισσαφέρνης ἐλέγετο τούτων ἄρχειν· ἐχόμενοι δὲ γερροφόροι, ἐχόμενοι δὲ ὀπλίται σὺν ποδήρεσι ξυλίναις ἀσπίσιν. Αἰγύπτιοι δ’ οὗτοι ἐλέγοντο εἶναι· ἄλλοι δ’ ἵππεῖς, ἄλλοι τοξόται. πάντες δ’ οὗτοι κατὰ ἔθνη ἐν πλαισίῳ πλήρει ἀνθρώπων ἕκαστον τὸ ἔθνος ἐπορεύετο.

Graphic quality is not identical with internal focalization as it is not necessarily bound to a specific vantage-point. Xenophon’s detailed and vivid report of the approach of the regal army, on the other hand, follows closely the perspective of the Cyreans, describing what they see: first only dust, then the bronze weapons flashing in the light, finally single units of the army which are distinguished by what is visible from afar such as white cuirasses and differently sized shields. Internal focalization even extends to the identification of the units: the narrator does not state that the cavalymen *were* under Tissaphernes’ command or that the hoplites *were* Egyptian, but just reports what the observers reckoned. The graphic quality of the scene is enhanced by the absence of sound. Unlike what Cyrus had predicted, ‘they made no noise, but advanced slowly and steadily, in all possible silence’ (‘οὐ γὰρ κραυγῆ ἀλλὰ σιγῆ ὡς ἀνυστὸν καὶ ἡσυχῆ ἐν ἴσῳ καὶ βραδέως προσῆσαν.’ 1.8.11). The note of a modern commentator attests the visual appeal of the narrative: ‘The reader truly has before his eyes the flashes that radiate from the shiny spearheads, the armour and metal

fittings of the horses and that, depending on their movements, shine before the dark background and disappear again.’<sup>142</sup>

The combination of graphic description with internal focalization renders Xenophon’s account highly mimetic. We have already seen in the Thucydides chapter that internal focalization is an important means of ‘re-presenting’ the past. In making the reader learn about the events through the perception of the characters, it aligns them and puts the reader right on the spot of the action. I would like to illustrate the contribution of internal focalization to the presence of the past in the *Anabasis* through two characters, Cyrus and Xenophon.

### *The gaze of Cyrus*

While focalization potentially embraces all senses, in the case of Cyrus sight is dominant. In fact, the pervasive references to Cyrus’ gaze are crucial to his characterization and perhaps even establish a Herodotean intertext. At Peltas, the Arcadian Xenias makes sacrifices for the Lycaea and organises an athletic contest that Cyrus ‘watched’ (‘έθεώρει’, 1.2.10).<sup>143</sup> Not much later, at the fountain of Midas, Cyrus is asked by the wife of the Cilician king to show her the army. In the parade, Cyrus watches first the barbarian soldiers (‘έθεώρει’, 1.2.16) and then the Greeks. When they start running towards the camp, the barbarians are terrified and flee: ‘The Cilician queen watched and admired the brilliance and discipline of the army. Cyrus was delighted when he saw how frightened the barbarians were by the Greeks.’ (‘ή δέ Κίλισσα ιδούσα τήν λαμπρότητα καί τήν τάξιν τοῦ στρατεύματος έθαύμασε. Κύρος δέ ήσθη τόν έκ τῶν Έλλήνων εἰς τοὺς βαρβάρους φόβον ιδών.’ 1.2.18).

In Cilicia, there is a rumour that the Cilician king Syennesis is guarding the heights. However, after waiting a day, a messenger reports that he has left and Cyrus can ascend the mountains and ‘see the camp where the Cilicians had been keeping guard’ (‘είδε τὰς σκηνὰς οὗ οἱ Κίλικες έφύλαττον’, 1.2.22). After Cyrus informs the Greeks at the river Euphrates that he intends to challenge the King and offers them a raise in their pay if they join him, Meno persuades his troops to cross the river quickly and thereby to signal their agreement before the others to ingratiate themselves with Cyrus (1.4.13-15). And indeed, Cyrus is delighted when he perceives this move of Meno’s men (‘Κῦρος δ’ έπει ήσθητο διαβεβηκότας, ήσθη’, 1.4.16).<sup>144</sup> On the following day, the carts get stuck and

<sup>142</sup> Lendle 1995: *ad* 1.8.8: ‘Man sieht förmlich die Blitze vor Augen, welche von den blank geputzten Speerspitzen, Harnischen, Metallbeschlägen der gepanzerten Pferde usw. je nach ihrer Bewegung vor dem dunklen Hintergrund aufstrahlten und wieder verloschen.’

<sup>143</sup> The contest is preceded by an assembly and count of the army (1.2.9) in which, however, Xerxes’ gaze is not mentioned. See also 1.7.10. On the semantics of θεωρία, see Nightingale 2004.

<sup>144</sup> Even if it does not specify the sense implied – Cyrus may have rather heard of the move than seen it – it is worth quoting the passage, as it is aligned with the passages in which a perception is linked with joy. The joyful tone is deepened when the army can cross the river by foot, according

Cyrus has his Persian noblemen help move the carts – quite a view as the narrator points out: ‘It then became possible to watch a fine piece of discipline.’ (‘ἐνθα δὴ μέρος τι τῆς εὐταξίας θεάσασθαι.’ 1.5.8). Cyrus is not named here as focalizing instance, but nevertheless he is the one who arranges the picturesque scene. Finally, Cyrus’ focalization is prominent in the battle of Cunaxa. In 1.8.14, he ‘looked in both directions, watching his enemies and his own men’ (‘κατεθεᾶτο ἐκατέρωσε ἀποβλέπων εἷς τε τοὺς πολεμίους καὶ τοὺς φίλους’), then he ‘saw that the Greeks defeated and pursued the unit opposite them and was pleased and some of his entourage were already doing homage to him as king’ (‘ὄρων τοὺς Ἕλληνας νικῶντας τὸ καθ’ αὐτούς καὶ διώκοντας, ἠδόμενος καὶ προσκυνούμενος ἤδη ὡς βασιλεὺς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀμφ’ αὐτόν’, 1.8.21).

The number of scenes with Cyrus as focalizing instance is striking. We can note a common thread: the gaze brings Cyrus joy and shows him as master of the situation, whether he watches an athletic contest, a parade of the army, the camp from which the enemy has just withdrawn (from above!) or the Greeks driving back his enemies. Cyrus’ gaze is an act of control. This semantics of the gaze is played out in the scene of Cyrus’ death: the regal army is in flight and pursuing them Cyrus ‘sees’ (‘καθορᾷ’) the King (1.8.26). This visual act is emphasized by his shout which repeats the *verbum videndi*, this time as *simplex*: ‘Without hesitating for a moment, he cried out: “I see the man!”, charged at him, strikes him on the chest and wounds him through his breastplate.’ (‘καὶ εὐθύς οὐκ ἠνέσχετο, ἀλλ’ εἰπὼν Τὸν ἄνδρα ὄρω ἴετο ἐπ’ αὐτόν καὶ παίει κατὰ τὸ στέρνον καὶ τιτρώσκει διὰ τοῦ θώρακος ...’, 1.8.26). The empowering aspect of Cyrus’ gaze which I have observed in the preceding part of the narrative culminates in this scene, as the object of his gaze becomes the object of his attack, in the sentence expressed through two parallel accusatives – seeing immediately leads to wounding the opponent. The tables are turned however in the next sentence: ‘As he is striking the blow, however, a javelin strikes him hard under the eye.’ (‘παίοντα δ’ αὐτόν ἀκοντίζει τις παλτῶ ὑπὸ τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν βιαίως.’ 1.8.27). While hitting, Cyrus gets hit himself – in the grammar of the sentence as in the action, he is transformed from subject to object. Significantly, he is hit just below the eyes. Thus, just as Cyrus’ gaze expressed his control, his death is brought about by a missile that destroys his eyesight.

The gaze of Cyrus is reminiscent of the gaze of Xerxes in Herodotus.<sup>145</sup> In particular the reviewing of the troops in contests aligns the two Easterners: Xerxes watches his men in a boat race (Hdt. 7.44), Cyrus gazes at the games set up by Xenias. Both contests are preceded by a mustering of the troops (Hdt. 7.44; *An.* 1.2.9). The joy overcoming Xerxes while watching the contest is echoed by the

---

to the residents of Thapsacus the first time that the river can be traversed without ships. This is seen as a divine sign in favour of Cyrus and his regal aspirations – wrongly, as it will turn out (1.4.18).

<sup>145</sup> On Xerxes’ gaze, see Grethlein 2009b: 209-13 and ch. 6.

joy that Cyrus feels when he sees the barbarians terrified by the Greek phalanx and in other scenes. The gaze in battles accentuates rather a distinction. Whereas Xerxes follows the battle at Salamis from a hill (8.86; 88.2), very much like Zeus viewing the plain of Troy from Mount Ida,<sup>146</sup> Cyrus watches the battle right from its centre. Nonetheless, both are characterized by their regard. Perhaps the similarity is only accidental and is owed to the parallel effort to express the great power and detachment of Eastern potentates, but an explicit mention of Xerxes in the *Anabasis* makes an allusion to Herodotus at least worth considering: Cyrus remains for thirty days at the city of Celaenae where Xerxes is said to have stayed on his retreat from Greece (1.2.9). The very reference to an Eastern king from the past may be modelled on Herodotus who reports that Xerxes stopped at Priam's Pergamum to inspect the ruins (7.43). Both Herodotus and Xenophon mention previous visits of the same places by earlier kings and thereby open up a space for intertextual play. The *Anabasis* evokes Xerxes and the Persian invasion as foil to Cyrus and his march just as Herodotus evokes Priam and the Trojan War as a foil to Xerxes and his march. An unsuccessful march East is compared with a failed expedition to the West.

#### *Internal focalization through Xenophon*

No matter how far we are willing to indulge in such intertextual plays, the dense net of references to Cyrus' gaze illustrates the heavy use that *Anabasis* makes of internal focalization. The most prominent instance of internal focalization is however not Cyrus, but Xenophon.<sup>147</sup> For this, it is important to keep in mind that Xenophon keeps his narratorial persona neatly separated from the persona of his character in the narrative. In narratological terms, the *Anabasis* is presented by a hetero-diegetic narrator. While Xenophon may ultimately report his own experiences, the perceptions ascribed to his own character are internally focalized.<sup>148</sup> Let me discuss three scenes that demonstrate the prominence of Xenophon as instance of internal focalisation. In the first two books, Xenophon is mentioned only in passing.<sup>149</sup> It is not until the killing of the Greek generals that he becomes the dominant character. His entrance into the narrative is highlighted in an elaborate scene: the Greek mercenaries are in deep despair. They find themselves stranded in the middle of Asia, not only deprived of the original goal of their march, namely to install Cyrus as king, but also without their Greek leaders, whom the Persian satrap Tissaphernes has lured into the Persian camp and executed. Only few bother to eat and make fire, the majority is even too depressed to sleep. Against this backdrop, the narrator has Xenophon enter the

---

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2009b: 209.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Flower 2012: 85-9.

<sup>148</sup> I elaborate on the significance of the *Anabasis*' hetero-diegetic narrator and its clandestine tendency to undermine the strict separation of character from narrator in Grethlein 2012.

<sup>149</sup> 1.8.15. Some manuscripts also have Xenophon instead of Theopompus in 2.1.12.

scene of his narrative: ‘There was in the army a man called Xenophon, from Athens ...’ (‘Ἦν δέ τις ἐν τῇ στρατιᾷ Ξενοφῶν Ἀθηναῖος ...’, 3.1.4).<sup>150</sup> He first reports how Xenophon came to join the expedition and goes into details about an oracle that Xenophon received from Delphi before he went East (3.1.4-10). After this lengthy introduction of Xenophon’s persona, the narrator turns to his state in the present misery – like the others, he is agitated and sleepless. But then he has a dream in which Zeus strikes the house of his father with lightning. While he takes the light from Zeus as a positive sign, he is disconcerted by the circle of fire which could indicate that he will not be able to escape from the land of the King. Xenophon asks himself (3.1.13-14):

Why am I lying here? The night is passing and at dawn the enemy will probably arrive. If we fall into the king’s hands, we’ll inevitably die, after witnessing all the most ghastly scenes, suffering all the most horrible pains and being tortured. Yet no one is showing the slightest interest in defence or doing anything practical about it; we’re just lying here as if we were in a position to take it easy. From what other city do I expect a general to come and organize things? How old do I have to be? I won’t get any older at all if I just surrender to the enemy today.

τί κατάκειμαι; ἡ δὲ νύξ προβαίνει· ἅμα δὲ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ εἰκὸς τοὺς πολεμίους ἦξειν. εἰ δὲ γενησόμεθα ἐπὶ βασιλεῖ, τί ἐμποδῶν μὴ οὐχὶ πάντα μὲν τὰ χαλεπώτατα ἐπιδόντας, πάντα δὲ τὰ δεινότατα παθόντας ὑβριζομένους ἀποθανεῖν; ὅπως δ’ ἀμυνόμεθα οὐδεὶς παρασκευάζεται οὐδὲ ἐπιμελεῖται, ἀλλὰ κατακείμεθα ὥσπερ ἐξὸν ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν. ἐγὼ οὖν τὸν ἐκ ποίας πόλεως στρατηγὸν προσδοκῶ ταῦτα πράξειν; ποίαν δ’ ἡλικίαν ἐμαυτῷ ἐλθεῖν ἀναμείνω; οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγ’ ἔτι πρεσβύτερος ἔσομαι, ἐὰν τήμερον προδῶ ἐμαυτὸν τοῖς πολεμίσις.

The narrator thus approaches Xenophon gradually, moving from the past to the present, from the outside to the inside, from indirect to direct rendering of his thoughts: he first gives his prehistory, then views him among the other Greeks before he reproduces his thoughts in a narratorial report that blends into direct presentation. The artful introduction of Xenophon as instance of internal focalization adumbrates the crucial role that he is to play in the further plot. The elaborate and extensive focalization including a divine sign also highlights the turning point in the action. The Greeks overcome their shock and start taking their fate into their own hands. Most important, the readers are made to view the action through the eyes of a historical agent and thereby learn about the past as if it were a present.

---

<sup>150</sup> On the Homeric ring, see Tuplin 2003: 126-7.

The action is also ultimately focalized through Xenophon in arguably the most famous scene of the *Anabasis* (4.7.21-5):

They reach the mountain on the fifth day. It was called Theches. When the first men got to the mountain [and saw the sea], a huge cry went up. Hearing this, Xenophon and the rearguard thought that the van too was under attack from another enemy force, as in the rear they were being followed by men from the land they were burning. The rearguard had killed some of them and had taken some prisoners in an ambush and gained about twenty wicker shields which were covered in untreated oxhide with the hair still on it. But when the cry kept getting louder and nearer and each successive rank that came up began to sprint towards the ones shouting out – the more men reached the front, the louder the cry became – it was apparent to Xenophon that it was something of special significance and, mounting a horse and taking Lycius and the cavalry, he rode up to lend assistance. And before long they hear that the soldiers are shouting ‘The sea! The sea!’, passing on the word. Then all men in the rear began running too, and the yoke-animals and the horses broke into a gallop. When everyone reached the top of the mountain, they immediately fell into one another’s arms, even the generals and the company commanders, with tears in their eyes.

καὶ ἀφικνοῦνται ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τῇ πέμπτῃ ἡμέρᾳ· ὄνομα δὲ τῷ ὄρει ἦν Θήχης. ἐπεὶ δὲ οἱ πρῶτοι ἐγένοντο ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους [καὶ κατεῖδον τὴν θάλατταν], κραυγὴ πολλὴ ἐγένετο. ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ξενοφῶν καὶ οἱ ὀπισθοφύλακες ᾤθησαν ἔμπροσθεν ἄλλους ἐπιτίθεσθαι πολεμίους· εἶποντο γὰρ ὀπισθεν ἐκ τῆς καιομένης χώρας, καὶ αὐτῶν οἱ ὀπισθοφύλακες ἀπέκτεινάν τε τινὰς καὶ ἐζώγησαν ἐνέδραν ποιησάμενοι, καὶ γέρρα ἔλαβον δασειῶν βοῶν ὠμοβόεια ἀμφὶ τὰ εἴκοσιν. ἐπειδὴ δὲ βοῇ πλείων τε ἐγίγνετο καὶ ἐγγύτερον καὶ οἱ αἰεὶ ἐπιόντες ἔθεον δρόμῳ ἐπὶ τοὺς αἰεὶ βοῶντας καὶ πολλῶ μείζων ἐγίγνετο ἢ βοῇ ὅσῳ δὴ πλείους ἐγίνοντο, ἐδόκει δὴ μείζον τι εἶναι τῷ Ξενοφῶντι, καὶ ἀναβὰς ἐφ’ ἵππον καὶ Λύκιον καὶ τοὺς ἱππέας ἀναλαβὼν παρεβόηθει· καὶ τάχα δὴ ἀκούουσι βοῶντων τῶν στρατιωτῶν Θάλαττα θάλαττα καὶ παρεγγυώντων. ἔνθα δὲ ἔθεον πάντες καὶ οἱ ὀπισθοφύλακες, καὶ τὰ ὑποζύγια ἠλαύνετο καὶ οἱ ἵπποι. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀφίκοντο πάντες ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον, ἐνταῦθα δὴ περιέβαλλον ἀλλήλους καὶ στρατηγούς καὶ λοχαγούς δακρύοντες.

The view of the sea is one of numerous false closing scenes of the *Anabasis* to be discussed in section IV. The Greeks are overjoyed, but they are still to face many hindrances, still to overcome several obstacles on their way back. The scene gains particular emphasis through internal focalization,

particularly the relation between auditive and visual impressions: hearing some ‘noise’ (‘κραυγή’, 4.7.21), Xenophon and the rearguard first suspect an attack. When the noise becomes louder and more articulate, a ‘shout’ (*bis* ‘βοή’), and a rush towards those ‘shouting’ (‘βοῶντας’) captures the army, Xenophon conjectures ‘that it is something of special significance’ (‘μεῖζόν τι εἶναι’, 4.7.23). Finally, they can make out the words of those ‘shouting’ (‘βοῶντων’) ‘The sea! The sea!’ (‘Θάλαττα θάλαττα’, 4.7.24). Besides bringing the reader close to the scene, the focalization through Xenophon and the rearguard serves as a retarding moment and helps to build up suspense.

It is striking that the narrative renders a visual experience primarily through auditive perception. In some codices, the narrator mentions the viewing of the sea once at the very beginning of the passage (4.7.21): καὶ κατεῖδον τὴν θάλατταν. Recent interpreters tend to adopt the reading of the *Codex Parisinus* in which even these four words are missing – in this case, the viewing itself is not mentioned at all but consequently conveyed through auditive signs.<sup>151</sup> Paradoxically, the absence of a reference to the visual experience itself throws into relief the view, leaving a blank to be filled by the readers’ imagination. Internal focalization and gradual disclosure, conveyed through sounds instead of sight, create suspense and irony which contribute much to the brilliance of the passage.

Let me add another similar passage to illustrate that internal focalization is not only to be found in such prominent passages, but also in the account of more mundane experiences during the march. On their march through Carduchia, the Cyreans are pressed very hard by the local population (4.1.17-22). Whenever Xenophon and the rearguard are attacked, they alarm Chirisophus who then waits with the main body of the army. ‘At that time’ (‘τότε’) however, Chirisophus did not wait, ‘so it was obvious that there was some kind of trouble, but there was no time to go up to the front and discover the reason for the haste’ (‘ὥστε δῆλον ἦν ὅτι πράγμα τι εἶη· σχολὴ δ’ οὐκ ἦν ἰδεῖν παρελθόντι τὸ αἴτιον τῆς σπουδῆς’, 4.1.17). Not only Xenophon and his men are clueless about the reason for the hurry of the others, but the reader is not informed either. Instead the narrator reports that the march turns into a flight and that two men, the Spartan Leonymus and the Arcadian Basias are killed, the first by an arrow that penetrates the shield and the garment, the second by a shot through the head (4.1.17-18).

We do not learn the reason for Chirisophus’ hurry until Xenophon arrives and is told by him that there is only one passable road through the mountains, which he tried to secure before the enemies would take them – in vain (4.1.20-1). The internal focalization through the rearguard exposes the readers to the same insecurity about the hurry as Xenophon and his men. The experiential quality of the scene is also enhanced by the presentation of Xenophon’s conversation with Chirisophus (4.1.19):

---

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Rood and Waterfield 2005: 213; Purves 2010: 189 n. 74.

Xenophon went straight to Chirisophus and remonstrated with him for not waiting, which left them no choice but to fight and retreat at the same time. And now two good, brave men have lost their lives and we couldn't recover their bodies or bury them.

εὐθύς ὡσπερ εἶχεν ὁ Ξενοφῶν ἐλθῶν πρὸς τὸν Χειρίσοφον ἠτιᾶτο αὐτὸν ὅτι οὐκ ὑπέμενεν, ἀλλ' ἠναγκάζοντο φεύγοντες ἅμα μάχεσθαι. καὶ νῦν δύο καλῶ τε καὶ ἀγαθῶ ἄνδρε τέθνατον καὶ οὔτε ἀνελέσθαι οὔτε θάψαι ἐδυνάμεθα.

The unmarked shift from indirect to direct speech gives the conversation much vividness.

It is also striking that most predicates of the account are in the imperfect. Many of the imperfect forms can be explained as expressing a duration or a repeated action (underlined); in some, however, this explanation does not seem to work and the imperfect signifies a single action (italics) (4.1.16-17):

καὶ οἱ πολέμιοι ἰσχυρῶς ἐπετίθεντο, καὶ στενῶν ὄντων τῶν χωρίων ἐγγύς προσιόντες ἐτόξευον καὶ ἐσφενδόνων. ὥστε ἠναγκάζοντο οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐπιδιώκοντες καὶ πάλιν ἀναχάζοντες σχολῆ πορεύεσθαι· καὶ θαμινὰ παρήγγελλεν ὁ Ξενοφῶν ὑπομένειν, ὅτε οἱ πολέμιοι ἰσχυρῶς ἐπικέοιντο. ἐνταῦθα ὁ Χειρίσοφος ἄλλοτε μὲν ὅτε παρεγγυῶτο ὑπέμενε, τότε δὲ οὐχ ὑπέμενεν, ἀλλ' *ἤγε* ταχέως καὶ *παρηγγύα* ἔπεσθαι, ὥστε δῆλον ἦν ὅτι πρᾶγμα τι εἶη.

The enemy launched a series of fierce assaults, and being close enough in the narrow passes, they fired their bows and slings from no great distance. This meant that the Greeks were forced to chase them off and then to withdraw, which slowed their progress. Xenophon often called for a halt during the worst of the enemy assaults, and though Chirisophus invariably halted when he received Xenophon's request, on one occasion he did not, but *led* the men *forward*<sup>152</sup> at rapid pace and *passed* the word *back* to Xenophon that he should keep up with them, so that it was obvious there was some trouble.

It is therefore tempting to follow Bakker's thesis that the imperfect not only expresses a temporal reference, but also a point of view.<sup>153</sup> Whereas the aorist envisages the past events from the distant vantage-point of the narrator in the present, the imperfect moves the reader close to the past events. Thus, the use

<sup>152</sup> Waterfield translates *ἤγε* with 'kept the men pushing forward' which would express a durative aspect of the imperfect, but qualified by *ταχέως* and standing between *ὑπέμενεν* and *παρηγγύα*, it is more likely to signify another single action.

<sup>153</sup> Bakker 1997. Cf. ch. 2 ???

of the imperfect in the battle description can be seen as an attempt to present the action to the reader as if she were right there. The immediacy of the representation is further enhanced through the historical present which in the sentence following upon the passage quoted reports the death of two men (‘ἀποθνήσκει’).<sup>154</sup>

As these examples illustrate, internal focalization is an important narrative device in the *Anabasis*. Its prominence is particularly obvious in episodes in which the consultation of the Greeks about what to do is far more extensive than the report of what actually happened. In 4.6.6-20, for one, the Greeks discuss at length how to get past the Chalybians, Taochians and Phasians controlling a mountain pass (4.6.6-20), whereas the actual fight is reported very briefly (4.6.21-7). Not much later in the narrative, more space is given to the preparations for a battle with the Colchians (4.8.9-14) than to the actual fighting (4.8.15-19). The concentration rather on experiences than on bare events is emblematic of a narrative that tries to restore presentness to the past.

## II. SPEECHES

It is widely agreed that most speeches in ancient historiography do not reproduce *verba ipsissima*. Particularly correspondences with the narratives in which they are embedded indicate the share of the historian in their composition. Nonetheless, the chapter on Thucydides has demonstrated that speeches are an important device for restoring presentness to the past. Like internal focalization, they make the readers see the past from the perspective of the historical agents. In addition, they can serve to convey information and especially evaluation without flagging the mediating presence of the narrator. A similar effect can be discovered in the *Anabasis* a considerable part of which is taken up by direct speech – about one fourth.<sup>155</sup> In this section, I will discuss two groups of examples. I will first look at the pair of speeches by Clearchus and Tissaphernes in 2.5 and then explore speeches by Xenophon in books 5 and 7. While the speeches of the first group look to the future, those of the second are mainly concerned with the past of the characters, but they all, as I hope to show, contribute to making the past of the narrative present.

### *Speeches of Clearchus and Tissaphernes*

After the death of Cyrus, the Greeks refuse to hand over their weapons, but make a truce with the King who promises to lead them out of the country. During the march, however, the tension between Greeks and royal army increases and Clearchus decides to discuss the situation with Tissaphernes. After highlighting the danger that mistrust may provoke a fight between two parties even if neither

---

<sup>154</sup> On the expression of immediacy through the historical present, see ch. 2 n. ???

<sup>155</sup> On speeches in the *Anabasis*, see Rood 2004a.

really wants it (2.5.3-5), Clearchus tries to demonstrate that Tissaphernes' suspicions are unjustified. His first and most important argument is the oath which binds the Greeks – under no circumstances would they want to provoke the ill will of the gods (2.5.7). Clearchus then points out that the Greeks depend on the Persians to overcome all the obstacles on their way back (2.5.8-10).<sup>156</sup> He adds that he personally takes a great interest in a good relationship with Tissaphernes who has taken over from Cyrus the role of a patron (2.5.11-12). After laying out the Greek motives for a peace with the King, Clearchus turns towards the benefits that await Tissaphernes, namely the support which he can expect from the Greeks in his wars with neighbours and enemies (2.5.13-14). In his conclusion, he asks for the names of those who denounce him (2.5.15).

Tissaphernes' reply is shorter. He welcomes Clearchus' insights (2.5.16) and then adduces basically two points to dispel the Greek mistrust. He first elaborates on the many opportunities the Persians would have if they were to destroy the Greeks (2.5.17-21). Then he mentions his desire to win the confidence of the Greeks as reason for why the Persians have not done so (2.5.22). Tissaphernes closes his speech with a slightly enigmatic image that hints at further aspirations for which he would need the Greeks: only the king can wear the tiara straight on his head, and yet the assistance of the Greeks would also allow another man to wear the tiara in his heart (2.5.23).

In all likelihood, the speeches do not reproduce what was actually said, and yet, through lending voice to the characters, they evoke the horizon of the past as a present. More specifically, the speeches by Clearchus and Tissaphernes re-establish the openness that the past had when it was still a present. The past is envisaged with its potential for various developments when Clearchus juxtaposes two scenarios: he and his men will travel safely under the King's guidance or they will have to face rivers hard to cross, adverse crowds and supply problems. In Tissaphernes' words this second scenario is spelt out further and becomes even more terrifying: the Persians could capitalize on the landscape, particularly if they occupy mountain passes and thereby block the way. There are streams they would not be able to cross without help. Finally, burning the country, the Persians could deprive the Greeks of any food. Retrospect inclines us to take the actual course of events for granted and to view the past teleologically. The characters' reflections on various possible developments, on the other hand, drive home that what for us is already past was still future and undecided.

The consideration of alternative options by Clearchus and Tissaphernes is given a special twist by the following action which the narrator sketches with broad strokes. Tissaphernes agrees to reveal the names of those who denounce Clearchus if he comes to him with the generals and company commanders (*lochagoi*) of the Greek army. When Clearchus and four other generals together with twenty company commanders follow this invitation, they are all executed.

---

<sup>156</sup> This corresponds with the thoughts of Clearchus in his speech to his fellow Greeks in 2.4.5-7.

The Persians send out horsemen who kill any Greeks they encounter on the plain (2.5.33):

The Greeks in their camp were surprised to see this riding from the camp, but they did not know what they were doing, until Nicarchus of Arcadia managed to escape and reached them, wounded in the guts and holding his entrails in his hands, and told them all that had happened.

οἱ δὲ Ἕλληνες τὴν τε ἵππασίαν ἐθαύμαζον ἐκ τοῦ στρατοπέδου ὀρῶντες καὶ ὃ τι ἐποίουν ἠμφεγνόουν, πρὶν Νίκαρχος Ἀρκὰς ἦκε φεύγων τετρωμένος εἰς τὴν γαστέρα καὶ τὰ ἔντερα ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν ἔχων, καὶ εἶπε πάντα τὰ γεγενημένα.

The gruesome detail of the messenger stands out in a largely summarizing passage and enhances the pathos of the scene.

The narrator's emphasis that Clearchus trusted Tissaphernes (2.5.24; 27) as well as the suspicion of some Greeks about the invitation (2.5.29) may slightly irritate perceptive readers, but nonetheless, after the reciprocal declaration of good will, Tissaphernes' intrigue comes as a surprise to the reader as to Clearchus. The openness of the past when it still was a present is not only indicated by the various scenarios entertained by the historical agents, but comes to the fore in the action itself. What Clearchus and Tissaphernes had only considered as an alternative course has become all of a sudden reality: the Greeks are in an open war with the Persians. They will have to traverse the country against the resistance of the royal army which will indeed occupy mountain heights (3.4.25-6), attack them at rivers (3.3.6-7) and pursue a scorched-earth strategy (3.5.3). What first appears as a road not to be taken turns out to have been a prolepsis.

Viewed against the backdrop of the course of events, the speeches acquire yet another function. Tissaphernes as well as Clearchus condemns the very act which he commits when he kills the Greek generals, namely perjury. The negative judgment in the speeches throws into relief the crime of the Persians and thereby serves as an implicit evaluation. The transgression of the Persians is obvious, but through the speeches of Clearchus and Tissaphernes the narrator highlights it without breaking up his narratorial reticence. Instead of commenting on it *sua voce*, he embeds an evaluation in the action. This has the twin effect we have already encountered in Thucydides:<sup>157</sup> it helps the narrator to fashion his narrative as objective, as just reproducing what happened. Simultaneously, it raises the experiential appeal of his narrative; while enriching the level of the action and conveying his own view, the narrator avoids an intervention that would draw attention to his mediation.

### *Xenophon's justificatory speeches*

---

<sup>157</sup> See ch. 2 ???

The function of providing an evaluation not only at the level of the action, but also for the orientation of the readers is particularly strong in Xenophon's justificatory speeches, to which I now turn.<sup>158</sup> At Cotyora, the soldiers become furious when the rumour spreads that Xenophon wants to deceive them, bringing them back to Phasis (5.7.1-4). Xenophon convenes an assembly and demonstrates the absurdity of the accusation. How should he as a single man be able to dupe an army of nearly 10,000 men into sailing where they do not want to go (5.7.5-11)? He continues to reprimand the soldiers for anarchic tendencies that have just led to much turmoil and pleads for a return to order (5.7.12-33). The army is swayed by his speech and decides to punish the guilty and also to call to account the generals for their conduct in the past.

This leads to a second justificatory speech by Xenophon who is charged with having beaten soldiers. In a dialogue with one of the accusers, Xenophon manages to show that he chastised the man for good reason – to prevent him from burying a comrade still alive (5.8.2-12). He only laid hands on soldiers for their own good, as when they were about to freeze and had to be forced to keep moving. Instead of blaming him, the soldiers should be grateful, but, alas, they tend to be forgetful about favours received (5.8.13-26).

A third long justificatory speech comes in book 7. The Cyreans have become disenchanted with Seuthes who fails to pay their wage. When the Spartans offer to hire them for their expedition against Tissaphernes, they point out that they would have joined them before if not for Xenophon who, for selfish reasons, has talked them into serving Seuthes (7.6.7-10). In response to this accusation, Xenophon reminds the Cyreans that they joined the Thracians by their own will. In their desperate situation, this arrangement suited them well whereas he, far from benefiting from Seuthes, has incurred his hatred for defending their interests (7.6.11-38).

The speeches just mentioned figure prominently in readings of the *Anabasis* as an apologetic work with which Xenophon the author wanted to clear himself from blame.<sup>159</sup> For my argument, the impact on the economy of the narrative is noteworthy. Instead of making a judgment *sua voce*, the narrator evaluates the main character through his presentation in the plot which includes attempts by this character to justify his conduct. Once more, the assessment seems to emerge from the facts themselves and thereby contributes both to the authorial self-fashioning as objective and the experiential quality of the narrative.

That the kind of evaluation voiced by Xenophon could also be presented by the narrator himself is illustrated by the correspondences between Xenophon's justificatory speeches and the obituaries given by the narrator for Cyrus (1.9) and

---

<sup>158</sup> Rood 2004a: 324 notes the didactic aspect of the speeches.

<sup>159</sup> E.g., Dürrbach 1893: 375-8; Erbse 1966: 499.

the killed generals (2.6).<sup>160</sup> Several charges from which Xenophon clears himself such as abuse of soldiers concern points that loom large in the narratorial evaluation of the generals.<sup>161</sup> These similarities drive home the parallel between the narratorial evaluations and Xenophon's justification speeches and reveal that the latter, in addition to their function in the plot, offer the readers an assessment of the main character which, however, is embedded in the action itself. This is part of a larger dynamic in the *Anabasis* on which I elaborate in a separate paper:<sup>162</sup> as already mentioned, Xenophon has chosen a hetero-diegetic narrator who is neatly separated from himself as participant in the march of the Ten Thousand. And yet, once Xenophon the character enters the plot, he starts arrogating narratorial privileges, thereby subtly blurring the neat separation. This, I argue, contributes to the characterization of Xenophon. For my argument here, it is crucial that the embedded evaluation strengthens the level of the action and permits the narrator to keep a low profile.

In sum it can be said that the speeches enhance the experiential character of the *Anabasis*. They present the characters' assessment of the situation, including their views of their past and future. Internal focalization can also refer to the past or the future, but often concentrates on the present situation. Speeches, on the other hand, lend themselves to embedding the events narrated in their own future and past as envisaged by the historical agents. This raises the presentness of the account, as a present is always defined by its own temporal horizon. More specifically, the sketching of alternative scenarios reveals the openness of a given moment in the past for various developments and breaks the spell of teleological constructions that come easily with hindsight. The integration into the action of comments on, and evaluations of, what has just happened, allows the narrator to remain hidden while at the same time conveying his view, perhaps even more persuasively than through narratorial intervention. Speeches, we can conclude, may not faithfully render what was actually said, but are nonetheless crucial to restoring presentness to the past.

---

<sup>160</sup> On the evaluation of Clearchus, see Roisman 1985, who argues that there are tensions between Clearchus' role in the narrative and his evaluation, and Braun 2004: 97-107, who sees in him a 'dangerous liaison'. For a different take, see Tritle 2004, who diagnoses Clearchus as a victim of post-traumatic stress disorder. On the obituary for Cyrus, see Sage 1991, who explores its relation to the *Cyropaedia*, and Braun 2004: 107-30.

<sup>161</sup> In 5.8.2-26, Xenophon justifies his way of disciplining soldiers with which the assessment of Clearchus (2.6.9-10) and of Proxenus (2.6.19-20) can be compared. The same comparison, albeit with different accentuation, is used to express the soldiers' relation to Xenophon and Clearchus. Xenophon compares himself implicitly to a father or teacher when he argues that he should be held accountable for his beatings for a good purpose in the same way that parents or teachers are (5.8.18). Later he claims that in tough times the soldiers called him a father (7.6.38). In Clearchus' case, the relation between pupils and teachers is used to illustrate that the soldiers coped with his roughness when they were under pressure, but that, due to his unpleasant nature, he was unpopular in good times (2.6.12).

<sup>162</sup> Grethlein 2012.

### III. 'SIDESHADOWING': THE MOTIVE OF COLONIZATION

Developments that were possible, but ultimately did not take place, are not only pondered by characters in speeches, but are also encapsulated in the narrative of the action. When, for example, a small troop of Carduchians takes the Cyreans by surprise, the narrator adds: 'If they [i.e. the Carduchian band] had been larger, a substantial number of men would probably have been killed.' ('εἰ μὲντοι τότε πλείους συνελέγησαν, ἐκινδύνευσεν ἂν διαφθαρῆναι πολὺ τοῦ στρατεύματος.' 4.1.11). The counterfactual is limited to a single sentence, but already in ancient historiography virtual history can extend over more than one sentence as illustrated by Livy's famous speculation about what would have happened had Alexander turned west and attacked Rome (9.17-19).<sup>163</sup> Besides other functions such as the evaluation of causal links, counterfactuals can be used to highlight the openness of the past for various developments. Even in elaborate counterfactuals, however, the unreal condition is a forceful reminder that history did *not* take the alternative course. More experiential are so-called 'Beinahe'-episodes which we have already encountered in the Thucydides chapter:<sup>164</sup> the action veers off in a direction that it ultimately does not take, thereby indicating another possible development. Let me give an example from the initial stage of the march before the death of Cyrus. At Charmande, a quarrel arises between Meno's and Clearchus' men. The latter, judging that one of Meno's men has acted unjustly, has him flogged. Later on the same day, Clearchus rides through Meno's camp (1.5.12):

One of Meno's soldiers was chopping wood when he saw Clearchus passing by, and he threw his axe at him. And this man missed, but someone else threw a stone, and then yet another, finally many with loud screaming.

τῶν δὲ Μένωνος στρατιωτῶν ξύλα σχίζων τις ὡς εἶδε Κλέαρχον διελαύνοντα, ἴησι τῇ ἀξίνῃ. καὶ οὗτος μὲν αὐτοῦ ἤμαρτεν· ἄλλος δὲ λίθῳ καὶ ἄλλος, εἶτα πολλοί, κραυγῆς γενομένης.

Back in his own camp, Clearchus calls his men to arms and returns with Thracians and about forty horsemen to Meno's camp. Meno's men get terrified and start arming themselves. In this tit-for-tat escalation of violence, a clash within the Greek army seems unavoidable. However, Proxenus intervenes and just when Clearchus tells him to get out of his way, Cyrus turns up and settles the

---

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Morello 2002. On counterfactuals in Thucydides, see Flory 1988; on counterfactuals in Tacitus, see O'Gorman 2006. On the controversial role of counterfactuals in modern historiography, see Ferguson 1997; Weinryb 2009 and, for a fuller bibliography, Walter 2009: 43 n. 56. See also the balanced reflections on counterfactuals and historical explanation in Pelling (forthcoming).

<sup>164</sup> On 'Beinahe'-episodes in Thucydides, see ch. 2 ???.

dispute. In this scene, the narrative steers an alternative course that is averted only in the last moment. How close an armed clash was is highlighted by the emphasis on the chance nature of Proxenus' intervention: 'For by chance he had fallen behind and approached the Greek encampment along with a unit of hoplites.' ('ἔτυχε γὰρ ὕστερος προσιῶν καὶ τάξις αὐτῶ ἐπομένη τῶν ὀπλιτῶν.' 1.5.14). Had Proxenus not happened to arrive in the right moment, Cyrus would have come too late to prevent a fight among the Greeks.

There are numerous other 'Beinahe'-episodes in the *Anabasis*. Here, I would like to concentrate on the most prominent alternative scenario, a 'Beinahe' that 'sideshadows' the major thread of the plot. After the death of Cyrus, the nostos becomes the major goal of the soldiers and the telos of the narrative, but the possibility that the Greeks settle down in Asia comes to the fore at different junctures with varying force.

#### *A colony as Persian fear and last resort of the Greeks*

The idea of a colony is already introduced in book 2, however, only as a fear of the Persians who are worried that the Greeks may fancy the fruitful Tigris area and settle down (2.4.14-24). The theme of colonization recurs in the long speech with which Xenophon addresses the soldiers after the killing of the generals (3.2.8-32). In his assessment of the situation, he argues that even if the rivers prove uncrossable and no guide will lead them, they should not despair. They could still settle down just as the Mysians, Pisidians and Lycaonians who live in the King's land. Xenophon thus adduces the possibility of a colony as an argument that is meant to encourage and instil hope in the Greeks. He then gives it a different twist and proposes pretending to settle down. This, he argues, would pressure the King into guiding them out of the country. As in book 2, the foundation of a colony appears as a worry of the King. Xenophon finally ponders on and discards the temptation of a settlement (3.2.25):

I am afraid though that once we've become accustomed to a life of idleness and luxury, and to the company of Median and Persian women and girls, who are tall and beautiful, we'll become as oblivious of our homeward journey as the lotus-eaters were.

ἀλλὰ γὰρ δέδοικα μή, ἂν ἅπαξ μάθωμεν ἀργοὶ ζῆν καὶ ἐν ἀφθόνοις βιοτεύειν, καὶ Μήδων δὲ καὶ Περσῶν καλαῖς καὶ μεγάλας γυναιξὶ καὶ παρθένους ὀμιλεῖν, μὴ ὥσπερ οἱ λωτοφάγοι ἐπιλαθώμεθα τῆς οἴκαδε ὁδοῦ.

It should be the Cyreans' primary goal to return and to show 'to the Greeks that their poverty is self-inflicted. They could bring here those who are now living a hard life there and watch them prosper.' ('τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ὅτι ἐκόντες πένονται,

ἐξὸν αὐτοῖς τοὺς νῦν [οἴκοι] σκληρῶς ἐκεῖ πολιτεύοντας ἐνθάδε κομισαμένους πλουσίους ὄραν', 3.2.26).

This is a complex passage. The allusion to the *Odyssey* evokes the Homeric world as a foil to the Cyreans and sets the heroic tone which will be characteristic of the march to the sea.<sup>165</sup> Xenophon's concluding remark is so general that scholars have been tempted to see here Panhellenic reflections that are pertinent to the world of the narrator.<sup>166</sup> Or should the idealizing view of life in Persia rather be understood rhetorically, as Xenophon's effort to lift the spirits of the soldiers?<sup>167</sup> Or, to entertain yet another possibility, does the positive description serve as backdrop against which Xenophon's later aspirations as oecist are to be seen? Whatever we make of it, the idea of a settlement does not cast a strong 'sideshadow' yet; it is not something close to realization, but figures again merely as a concern to the King and, in addition, as *ultima ratio* for the Greeks. At the same time, the option of a colony is more prominent than in book 2, as it is brought into play by a Greek and discussed in direct speech.

#### *Xenophon's aspirations as oecist*

In his first speech to the soldiers Xenophon argues against staying in Asia; later when the mercenaries have reached the Pontus and are at Cotyora, 'it seemed good to him to acquire extra land and resources for Greece and to found a city' ('καλὸν αὐτῷ ἐδόκει εἶναι χώραν καὶ δύναμιν τῇ Ἑλλάδι προσκτήσασθαι πόλιν κατοικήσαντας.' 5.6.15). He sacrifices in order to clarify the chances for such an endeavour before he turns towards the soldiers. However, the seer Silanus who performs the sacrifice leaks Xenophon's plan to the army. The majority of the Greeks do not want to settle down. The money, however, promised by Sinope and Heracleia does not materialize and the generals approach Xenophon to express their regrets, suggesting the foundation of a colony in Phasis. Xenophon tells them to discuss this with the army, but the generals decide that each should inform his company commander first (5.6.35-7). Somehow the soldiers learn about the plan and start rebelling. The reproaches levelled at Xenophon (5.7.1-4) lead to his two long defensive speeches discussed above.

The justification brought forward by Xenophon is prepared and supported by the narrative. The narrator makes Silanus misrepresent his plans – while Xenophon seeks land and power for Greece, Silanus imputes selfish desire for glory and power to him (5.6.17). There is an additional ironic touch, for the narrator points out that Silanus himself is driven by egoistic motives: he wants to return as fast as possible to save the three thousand darics that Cyrus has awarded

---

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Dillery 1995: 69-77. See, however, also Tuplin 2003: 142-54, who is sceptical about the heroic stance of the Cyreans.

<sup>166</sup> E.g., Cawkwell 1976: 65. For a critical discussion of such an interpretation, see Dillery 1995: 61-3; Rood 2004a: 316.

<sup>167</sup> Ma 2004: 339.

him (5.6.18; cf. 1.7.18). Later Xenophon gets the better of Silanus when the assembly supports his motion to punish those who try to desert (5.6.34). The accusation that Xenophon is trying to deceive the army is disproved when he tells the generals to discuss their Phasis plan with the soldiers (5.6.37). Thus, the explicit justification in Xenophon's speeches ties in with the implicit exculpation of Xenophon in the narrative.

For my reading of the idea of a colony as an alternative scenario, it is important to notice that the 'sideshadow' is far more forceful than before. It has become a plan of the central character of the narrative. Its failure is narrated *en détail* and even after Xenophon has renounced his project of a colony, it surfaces again when the generals suggest sailing to Phasis. Although the plan fails at a very early stage, actually when Xenophon tries to establish whether or not he should pursue it at all, it gains weight from an embedded sketching of its possible development. Timasion and Thorax tell the Heracleean and Sinopean traders (5.6.19-20):

Xenophon is very insistent that when the ships arrive we should suddenly say to the troops: 'Men, it's just occurred to us that you lack the means either to get hold of provisions during the voyage home or to help those at home if you do in fact get back there. But if you want, you can pick any place you like on the inhabited coastline around the Euxine and seize it, and then anyone who wants to go home can do so, but those who want to stay can stay. You do of course have the ships to enable you to make sudden raids wherever you want.'

βούλεται γὰρ Ξενοφῶν καὶ ἡμᾶς παρακαλεῖ, ἐπειδὴν ἔλθῃ τὰ πλοῖα, τότε εἰπεῖν ἐξαίφνης τῇ στρατιᾷ· Ἄνδρες, νῦν μὲν ὀρώμεν ὑμᾶς ἀπόρους ὄντας καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀπόπλω ἔχειν τὰ ἐπιτήδεια καὶ ὡς οἴκαδε ἀπελθόντας ὀνῆσαι τι τοὺς οἴκοι· εἰ δὲ βούλεσθε τῆς κύκλω χώρας περὶ τὸν Πόντον οἰκουμένης ἐκλεξάμενοι ὅποι ἂν βούλησθε κατασχεῖν, καὶ τὸν μὲν ἐθέλοντα ἀπιέναι οἴκαδε, τὸν δ' ἐθέλοντα μένειν αὐτοῦ, πλοῖα δ' ὑμῖν πάρεστιν, ὥστε ὅπη ἂν βούλησθε ἐξαίφνης ἂν ἐπιπέσοιτε.

Due to the army's resistance, this will never happen; nonetheless, the warning sketches a potential next step, rendering the scenario vivid through direct speech, and thereby lengthens the 'sideshadow' of the colonization project.

While the previous references to a possible colony are attributed to characters, in book 6 it is the narrator who first evokes the alternative scenario through a detailed description of Calpes.<sup>168</sup> He does not explicitly point out that

---

<sup>168</sup> See also the fascinating suggestion of Dillery 1995: 90 to link the Scyllus digression with Xenophon's aspiration as oecist: 'But perhaps the quiet and ordered life we see in this bucolic description is a capsule or miniature of the life he had hoped to lead as a prominent settler in Asia.'

Calpes would have been ideal for a colony, but its description follows the viewpoint of a colonizer:<sup>169</sup> having a natural harbour, Calpes lies in the middle between Heraclea and Byzantium and would offer a spot where Greeks could land without falling into the hostile hands of the Thracians (6.4.1-2). The place is easy to defend: a rock of about 35 meter towers over the sea and a narrow neck of about 120 meter separates the cape from the mainland (6.4.3). A fountain supplies the cape with fresh water and there is plenty of wood, much of it well-suited for ship-building (6.4.4). The hinterland is fruitful and has some inhabited villages (6.4.5). The focus on the bay of Calpes as a spot for a settlement of the mercenaries is explicit in the narrator's observation that 'the headland itself, beyond the neck, is large enough to accommodate ten thousand people' ('τὸ δ' ἔντος τοῦ ἀυχένος χωρίον ἱκανὸν μυρίοις ἀνθρώποις οἰκῆσαι.' 6.4.3).

The qualities of the place do not escape the Cyreans who refuse to camp on the place where the city could have been built – so great is the fear of a scheme hatched by those intending to settle down (6.4.7). When for several days the Greeks do not manage to perform sacrifices that augur a successful departure, the rumour arises that the seers have been corrupted by Xenophon who wants to found a colony (6.4.14). Merchants from Greek cities arrive who have heard that a colonization project is about to be initiated and neighbours inquire about treaties of friendship (6.6.2-3). There is, however, no narratorial confirmation about plans of Xenophon and others to establish a colony. The vagueness of the references to such plans contrasts with the extended description of the qualities of Calpes Bay for a settlement. It seems that the idea of a colony has shifted from the level of the action to the level of the narrative. Perhaps Xenophon the narrator is at pains to exculpate Xenophon the general from the charge of acting against the will of the army, while nonetheless wishing to mark the opportunity for a colony. After failing to realize his dream on the march, he grants it existence in his narrative.

The idea of the Ten Thousand as colonizers comes up again when the Greeks have already left Asia, at Byzantium. Under the leadership of Xenophon, the Cyreans leave the city, but, frustrated about not being paid by the Spartan commander Anaxibius, suddenly flock back into town (7.1.21):

When the soldiers spotted Xenophon, a lot of them rush over to him and say: 'Xenophon, now is your chance to prove yourself a real man. You have a city, you have triremes, you have money, and you have plenty of troops. Now, if you so choose, you can do us good and we can make you great.'

οἱ δὲ στρατιῶται ὡς εἶδον Ξενοφῶντα, προσπίπτουσι πολλοὶ αὐτῷ καὶ λέγουσι· Νῦν σοι ἔξεστιν, ὦ Ξενοφῶν, ἀνδρὶ γενέσθαι. ἔχεις πόλιν, ἔχεις τριήρεις, ἔχεις χρήματα, ἔχεις ἄνδρας τοσοῦτους. νῦν ἄν, εἰ

<sup>169</sup> It is thereby reminiscent of the description of the island opposite the coast of the Cyclopes in *Od.* 9.116-51, cf. Dillery 1995: 89 n. 72.

βούλοιο, σύ τε ἡμᾶς ὀνήσαις καὶ ἡμεῖς σὲ μέγαν ποιήσαιμεν.

In order to prevent uncontrolled looting, Xenophon pretends to accept the suggestion, but rejects it once the soldiers have laid down the weapons. If they took Byzantium, which itself is innocent, he warns, they would make the Spartans their enemies and fare just as the Athenians in the Peloponnesian War (7.1.25-31): ‘And justly so, if after deliberately refraining from occupying any barbarian city even though we came as their conquerors, we ransack the first Greek city we’ve come to.’ (‘... καὶ δικαίως, εἰ βάρβαρον μὲν πόλιν οὐδεμίαν ἠθελήσαμεν κατασχεῖν, καὶ ταῦτα κρατοῦντες, Ἑλληνίδα δὲ εἰς ἣν πρώτην ἦλθομεν πόλιν, ταύτην ἐξαλαπάξομεν.’ 7.1.29). When the soldiers who stood in the way of the colonization plans earlier finally consider it, the time for it has passed.

The foundation of a colony not only ‘sideshadows’ the major plot-line of the *Anabasis*, the nostos, but also comes to the surface of the narrative several times. Its shadow is, as we have seen, first not strongly developed: the idea of a settlement in Asia is introduced as a concern to the King and then figures as last resort in a speech of Xenophon before it gains force in the action in book 5. After the failure of Xenophon’s plan, the idea of a colony plays no major role in the action. References to a colonization project in the Pontus area are very vague and when the soldiers finally suggest settling in Byzantium, Xenophon quickly rules this out. At the same time, the idea of a colony gains weight in the narrative through the extended description of Calpes. The colonization project is a powerful ‘sideshadow’: it builds upon the polis-like features of the mercenaries,<sup>170</sup> but simultaneously establishes a strong contrast to the march.<sup>171</sup> The expedition of the Cyreans quickly gained fame in Greece, so ancient readers would be familiar with its outcome.<sup>172</sup> Nonetheless, in alerting the reader to a very different possible development, the motif of the colony helps to challenge the teleological tendency of historical narrative and forcefully drives home the openness of the past.

#### IV. NARRATIVE CLOSURE AND HISTORICAL TELOS

The ending is a crucial point of narratives. Our ‘reading for the plot’ is driven by the desire for closure.<sup>173</sup> Its role in historiography is particularly delicate, as Fowler notes: ‘More than any other genre, history may need to suggest the simultaneous presence of a “proper” ending and the continuance of the

---

<sup>170</sup> On the army of the Ten Thousand as a polis, see Dalby 1992.

<sup>171</sup> Another contrast is highlighted by Dillery 1995: 87-90, who interprets the idea of a colony as a utopia which opposes a reality full of strife through a vision of order.

<sup>172</sup> See, however, Bradley 2001: 74 n. 31, who assumes that Xenophon’s original audience will not have been familiar with all the details of the march.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Brooks 1984.

historical process.<sup>174</sup> Closure permits us retrospectively to master contingency whose rule we often experience painfully in our lives. At the same time, the ongoing flux of time will challenge any closural moment. We will explore some of this tension in the second part of this study, as the closure of histories often marks the *telos* from which the events are viewed: Herodotus destabilizes his closure by envisaging a later *telos*, Polybius extends his account, noting that the *telos* of his history has shifted. But what about the *Anabasis*? While it cannot escape an ending, it pursues a strategy that, chiming in with its emphasis on experience, denies the march a *telos* and the narrative a closure. The *Anabasis* builds up a strong narrative dynamic towards a *telos* that, however, fades at the end of the narrative. In this section, I will explore how Xenophon plays with the reader's desire for closure and thereby underscores the openness of the past.

### *Nostos and narrative dynamic*

The *Anabasis* does not start with a proem, Xenophon plunges straight into the history of Persia's royal family. The reader therefore depends on the narrative to conjecture about the subject of the work that first seems to deal with the struggle between the King and his brother Cyrus.<sup>175</sup> The first chapters convey the impression that the success or failure of Cyrus' plan to overthrow the king could be the *telos* of the narrative. Cyrus, however, dies before the end of the first book and the narrative thereby loses what has seemed to be its *telos*. After Cyrus' death it is unclear what the Greeks' new aim will be and the narrative is allowed to wander without a goal for a couple of chapters. Clearchus first proposes to Ariaeus that the mercenaries will make him king of Persia (2.1.4), but the Persian general does not feel up to this challenge (2.2.1). When in addition the sacrifices do not encourage another battle with Artaxerxes, the Greeks decide to retreat (2.2.3). However, they are first concerned only with where to find provisions and it is not until the negotiation with Tissaphernes that the idea of a return to Greece is introduced. Tissaphernes offers to try to 'get permission from the King to escort you safely home to Greece' ('παρὰ βασιλέως αἰτήσασθαι δοῦναι ἔμοι ἀποσῶσαι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα', 2.3.18), Clearchus cautiously agrees that the Greeks 'would make their way home if nobody harasses us' ('πορευοίμεθα δ' ἂν οἴκαδε, εἴ τις ἡμᾶς μὴ λυποίῃ', 2.3.23) and when Tissaphernes has got the King's *placet*, the march back begins – the narrative has a new *telos*.<sup>176</sup>

<sup>174</sup> Fowler 1989: 117. On closure in historiography, see Marincola 2005. On closure in Herodotus, see Boedeker 1988; Dewald 1997; on closure in Sallust *BJ*, see Levene 1992: 53-5.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Bradley 2001: 65-9.

<sup>176</sup> The *telos* of a return home is already mentioned in 1.4.13, where Cyrus 'promised to give each man five *mnas* of silver when they reached Babylon, and to pay the Greeks their full wages right up until he got them back to Ionia' ('ὑπέσχετο ἀνδρὶ ἐκάστῳ δώσειν πέντε ἀργυρίου μνᾶς, ἐπὶ εἰς Βαβυλῶνα ἦκωσι, καὶ τὸν μισθὸν ἐντελεῖ μέχρι ἂν καταστήσῃ τοὺς Ἕλληνας εἰς Ἴωνίαν πάλιν').

The goal of the return to Greece gains special significance from epic intertexts. In many passages, Odysseus is evoked as a foil for the endeavour of the Greek mercenaries to overcome all hindrances and finally reach their homes in Greece. I have already quoted the speech in which Xenophon warns against the temptation to stay in Persia and the danger of becoming ‘as oblivious of our homeward journey as the lotus-eaters were’ (‘ὥσπερ οἱ λωτοφάγοι ἐπιλαθώμεθα τῆς οἴκαδε ὁδοῦ’, 3.2.25). Later, when the Greeks have reached Trabzon and discuss how to continue their journey, Leon says (5.1.2):

Speaking for myself, men, by now I’m fed up with packing my baggage, walking and running, carrying my arms and armour, marching in formation, standing guard, and fighting. Now that we’ve reached the sea, I want to put all this hard work behind me, sail the rest of the way and arrive in Greece flat on my back, like Odysseus.

Ἐγὼ μὲν τοίνυν, ἔφη, ὦ ἄνδρες, ἀπείρηκα ἤδη ξυσκευαζόμενος καὶ βαδίζων καὶ τρέχων καὶ τὰ ὄπλα φέρων καὶ ἐν τάξει ὦν καὶ φυλακὰς φυλάττων καὶ μαχόμενος, ἐπιθυμῶ δὲ ἤδη παυσάμενος τούτων τῶν πόνων, ἐπεὶ θάλατταν ἔχομεν, πλεῖν τὸ λοιπὸν καὶ ἐκταθεῖς ὥσπερ Ὀδυσσεὺς ἀφικέσθαι εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

These explicit comparisons of the mercenaries’ katabasis with the wandering of Odysseus reinforce the numerous more subtle allusions to the *Odyssey*.<sup>177</sup>

Much emphasis is placed on how hard the telos will be to reach. Even before the execution of the generals causes the soldiers ‘distress and longing for homes, parents, wives, and children, whom they no longer expected ever to see again’ (‘ὑπὸ λύπης καὶ πόθου πατρίδων, γονέων, γυναικῶν, παίδων, οὓς οὔποτε ἐνόμιζον ἔτι ὄψεσθαι’, 3.1.3), Phalinos, in whose judgment Clearchus puts confidence since he is Greek, rules it out that the army stands a chance to be rescued if they do not submit to the Persian King (2.1.19). His view is later echoed by the Lydian soldier who speaks with a Boeotian accent (3.1.26) and by Mithradates (3.3.4). Both of them may be biased and have an interest in the army’s capitulation, but nonetheless their statements, combined with the preceding evaluations of the situation, call to mind the immense challenge Xenophon and the mercenaries are facing. This impression is also fostered by the dream Xenophon has when he enters the plot of the *Anabasis*, the lightning striking his father’s house (3.1.12):

---

<sup>177</sup> See especially Tuplin 2003, who emphasizes that the two explicit references to the *Odyssey* are at crucial junctures in the plot (117-18). See also Lossau 1990; Marincola 2007b: 31-3. On possible allusions to the *Iliad*, see Rinner 1978; Dalby 1992; Tsagalis 2002.

He was terrified, for it seemed to him that the dream was from Zeus the King, and it seemed that the fire had cast its light all around so that he might not be able to escape from the king's territory, but might be hemmed in on all sides by various difficulties.

τῇ δὲ καὶ ἐφοβεῖτο, ὅτι ἀπὸ Διὸς μὲν βασιλέως τὸ ὄναρ ἐδόκει αὐτῷ εἶναι, κύκλω δὲ ἐδόκει λάμπεσθαι τὸ πῦρ, μὴ οὐ δύναίτο ἐκ τῆς χώρας ἐξελθεῖν τῆς βασιλέως, ἀλλ' εἴργοιτο πάντοθεν ὑπὸ τινῶν ἀποριῶν.

The doubts which are raised against the feasibility of the telos create suspense and lend dynamic to the narrative which will spell out how the Greeks fare.

### *False Endings*

Several false endings add to the suspense. Time and again, the Greek characters expect that they are facing the last hindrance on their way home and that their rescue is close. After Tissaphernes has lured the generals into his camp and killed them, the army is first plunged into confusion and despair. In his encouraging speech, Chirisophus summarizes the depressing situation and then presents the fight against Tissaphernes as the decisive hurdle on their way home (3.2.3). In a similar vein, Xenophon juxtaposes their destruction in case of a defeat with salvation through a victory (3.2.7; 29), and not much later, when the Greeks encounter the Persians on the battlefield, he addresses his soldiers (3.4.46): 'Men, be aware that this contest is about Greece, that it is now about your children and wives, that, with a bit of effort now, we will march the rest without battles.' ('Ἄνδρες, νῦν ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα νομίζετε ἀμιλλᾶσθαι, νῦν πρὸς τοὺς παῖδας καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας, νῦν ὀλίγον πονήσαντες ἀμαχεῖ τὴν λοιπὴν πορευσόμεθα.' 3.4.46). However, as Xenophon and the army will learn, the threat from Tissaphernes is minor compared to the attacks, toils and risks awaiting them.

While in these passages only the leaders call the present danger the last hurdle, the scene on Mount Theches shows the whole army overwhelmed by the belief that they can grasp the return with their hands. We have already seen how the play with the senses of sight and hearing as well as the internal focalization through Xenophon renders the scene very dramatic and formally expresses the emotional intensity of the moment.<sup>178</sup> The soldiers give the guide rich gifts and make a great cairn, 'on which they placed, as dedications, a number of untreated oxhides, some sticks they had used for walking, and the shields they had captured' ('ἐνταῦθα ἀνέτιθεσαν δερμάτων πλῆθος ὠμοβοείων καὶ βακτηρίας καὶ τὰ

---

<sup>178</sup> See above ???

αἰχμάλωτα γέρρα’, 4.7.26). This *tropaion* signifies not a specific victory, but celebrates the joy that the long toilsome march has come to an end.<sup>179</sup>

However, ‘thalatta, thalatta is something of a false dawn: the army’s troubles are by no means over when they see the sea.’<sup>180</sup> It is not long before the next hindrance appears: hostile Colchians. Once more, Xenophon motivates his men by envisaging this resistance as the final challenge (4.8.14): ‘The enemy troops you can see are all that stands between us and the place we have for so long been determined to reach. We must, if we can, eat them alive.’ (‘οὔτοί εἰσιν οὐς ὀρᾶτε μόνοι ἔτι ἡμῖν ἐμποδῶν τὸ μὴ ἤδη εἶναι ἔνθα πάλαι σπεύδομεν· τούτους, ἦν πως δυνώμεθα, καὶ ὤμους δεῖ καταφαγεῖν.’ 4.8.14). The resistance of the Colchians turns out to be insignificant and, after surviving sickening honeycomb, the army arrives at the Greek town Trabzon. There the mercenaries make a big sacrifice and organize games (4.8.25-8). Competitions in wrestling, running, boxing, pancratium and a horse race offer the soldiers a kind of relief that is true to the heroic spirit of the march through Carduchia and Armenia. What is a moment of rest for the soldiers serves as a closural element in the narrative. As the funeral games for Patroclus in *Iliad* 23 illustrate, the distance from the strains of everyday life and the similarities between military and athletic performances render games apt to cap accounts of war.<sup>181</sup> In the *Anabasis*, the ‘shouts, laughter, and cheers’ (‘κραυγὴ καὶ γέλως καὶ παρακέλευσις’, 4.8.28) release the tension of the preceding march.<sup>182</sup>

The sense of closure is reinforced when the Greeks reach Cerasunt (5.3.3):

They conducted a review of the men under arms and found, on counting them, that there were 8,600 in total. These were the men left alive, while the rest had been killed by their enemies, by the snow, and in a few cases by illness.

καὶ ἐξέτασις σὺν τοῖς ὅπλοις ἐγίγνετο καὶ ἀριθμὸς, καὶ ἐγένοντο ὀκτακισχίλιοι καὶ ἑξακόσιοι. οὔτοι ἐσώθησαν. οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι ἀπώλοντο ὑπὸ τε τῶν πολεμίων καὶ χιόνος καὶ εἴ τις νόσῳ.

The digression inserted here on Xenophon’s later settlement in Scillus is a still life that contrasts strongly with the toils of the march and conveys peace and harmony (5.3.4-13).<sup>183</sup> The impression that the Cyreans have come through their ordeal is strengthened by the greeting from a delegate of Sinope (5.5.8):

<sup>179</sup> See Purves 2010: 184-5 on the *tropaion*. On the passage on Mount Theches as possible end for the *Anabasis*, see Bradley 2001: 62.

<sup>180</sup> Tuplin 2003: 140 n. 81.

<sup>181</sup> See, e.g., Dunkle 1981; Grethlein 2007.

<sup>182</sup> See also Purves 2010: 185, who observes that the race course is measured in stades and argues that ‘in running this race and the longer dolichos (a distance of between six and 24 stades), the Ten Thousand get back into the practice of performing their Greek identity, as it were, by recovering the physical memory of traversing a Greek unit of space’.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Dillery 1995: 90.

Soldiers, the citizens of Sinope sent us to congratulate you on your victory – a victory of Greeks over barbarians – and to say that they share your joy at having survived all the appalling dangers we’ve heard about and at being here.

Ἔπεμψεν ἡμᾶς, ὧ ἄνδρες στρατιῶται, ἢ τῶν Σινοπέων πόλις ἐπαινέσοντάς τε ὑμᾶς ὅτι νικᾶτε Ἕλληνας ὄντες βαρβάρους, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ ξυνησθησομένους ὅτι διὰ πολλῶν τε καὶ δεινῶν, ὡς ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν, πραγμάτων σεσωσμένοι πάρεστε.

Two long speeches in which Xenophon then justifies his conduct review some of the past adventures and thereby add to the feeling of closure (5.7.5-33; 5.8.3-26).

### *Nostos dissipated*

However, the expedition is not over and the narrative has not come to an end – several trials, numerous chapters still lie ahead. The equilibrium of Scillus belongs to the future and imperfect tenses indicate that it was only a temporary haven.<sup>184</sup> After the arrival of the Greeks at the Pontus, the motif of the *nostos* loses its prominence, but is still evoked occasionally. Xenophon tells the Mossynoecians that it is their goal to return safely to Greece (5.4.5), and in 6.1.17 the narrator remarks: ‘They seemed to be close to Greece now, and the men began to wonder, with more urgency than before, how they might actually return to their homes with something in hand.’ (‘ὡς δὲ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐδόκουν ἐγγύς γίγνεσθαι, ἤδη μᾶλλον ἢ πρόσθεν εἰσῆι αὐτούς ὅπως ἂν καὶ ἔχοντές τι οἴκαδε ἀφίκωνται.’). When the Greeks encounter Pharnabazus’ cavalry, Xenophon reminds his men that they are ‘at the threshold of Greece’ (‘ἐπὶ ταῖς θύραις τῆς Ἑλλάδος’, 6.5.23).<sup>185</sup> Not much later, the uniform notion of a return has given way to the various destinations of the individuals. When the Cyreans threaten to enter a conflict with the Spartans, Agasias says: ‘Don’t make this a reason to incur the Spartans’ hostility; now each of you must get back, alive and well, to his chosen destination.’ (‘τούτου ἔνεκα μήτε πολεμεῖτε Λακεδαιμονίοις σῶζεσθέ τε ἀσφαλῶς ὅποι θέλει ἕκαστος.’ 6.6.18).<sup>186</sup> Cleandrus may offer the mercenaries that he will lead them to Greece (6.6.34-6) and Heraclides may assure Timasion that Seuthes, if successful, will bring him home a rich man (7.3.18), but the discussion whether or not to join Seuthes implies that a return to Greece is not

<sup>184</sup> Cf. Ma 2004: 341; Rood 2007a: 161.

<sup>185</sup> See also 6.6.12 where Xenophon says that ‘the Greek cities are not far away’ (‘εἰσὶ μὲν γὰρ ἐγγύς αἱ Ἑλληνίδες πόλεις.’). Here, however, he does not consider their return, but the risks they would run if they made the Spartans, as strongest Greek party, their enemies.

<sup>186</sup> See also 7.6.37, where Xenophon attests to the Greeks that they are well off and could sail ‘where you have long desired to go to’ (‘ἔνθα δὴ ἐπιθυμεῖτε πάλα’).

what *all* are aspiring to: ‘Now that it was winter, those who wanted to sail back home could not do so.’ (‘χειμῶν γὰρ εἶη καὶ οὔτε οἴκαδε ἀποπλεῖν τῷ τοῦτο βουλομένῳ δυνατὸν εἶη’, 7.3.13). The closer the soldiers get to Europe, the vaguer the idea of a return and the weaker the *telos* built up in the first books become until it evaporates once the soldiers have crossed the Bosphorus.

The *telos* of the *nostos* is also undermined by the plans for the foundation of a colony discussed above and the increasing disintegration of the army. Xenophon emphasizes the need to stay together (5.6.12-13; 32) and, after the failure of his aspirations as oecist, warns against anarchic tendencies in the army (5.7.12-31). This warning notwithstanding, the Arcadians and Achaeans leave the rest of the army at Heraclea and for a short while the army is split up into three groups (6.2.12-13). Once the Cyreans are reunited they decree that any attempts at leaving the army will be punished (6.4.11), but the disintegration cannot be stopped. Soldiers older than 45 are left at Calpes (6.5.4) and later at Byzantium there is not only disagreement between the generals where to go (7.2.3),

but as time went by many of the soldiers either sold their arms and armour and found some way to set sail for their various homes or began to get involved in the life of the nearby communities.

διατριβομένου δὲ τοῦ χρόνου πολλοὶ τῶν στρατιωτῶν, οἱ μὲν τὰ ὄπλα ἀποδιδόμενοι κατὰ τοὺς χώρους ἀπέπλεον ὡς ἐδύναντο, οἱ δὲ καὶ εἰς τὰς πόλεις κατεμίγνυντο.

Four hundred of the soldiers staying in Byzantium are sold into slavery and Neon continuously tries to win troops over for his plan to go to the Chersonese (7.2.11; 7.3.7). Moreover, Xenophon attempts no less than five times to leave the army, the first time at Heraclea (6.2.15), then three times at Byzantium (7.1.4; 7; 38), and finally in Thrace after he has helped the soldiers to get their pay from Seuthes (7.7.57). While the plans for settling in Asia illustrate an alternative end of the expedition that might close the narrative, the gradual disintegration of the army deprives the narrative of the closure it had initially envisaged.

As we see, after the battle of Cunaxa, the narrative forcefully builds up the *telos* of a homecoming, but the idea of a *nostos* starts to dissipate gradually with the arrival of the Cyreans at the Pontus. The narrative nourishes in the reader strong expectations about its goal, but denies her the closure it has suggested. It does not provide another marked closure, but ends with the rest of the Ten Thousand on their way to join the Spartan Thibron who mobilizes troops against Tissaphernes.<sup>187</sup> This is not an obvious ending point for an account of the march of the Ten Thousand. Diodorus, for example, follows the Cyreans to the Bosphorus

---

<sup>187</sup> On the open closure of the *Anabasis*, see Bradley 2001: 81-3; Tuplin 2003: 129, who speaks of ‘partial closure’; Purves 2010: 191; Flower 2012: 45-7; 108-112.

which marks the boundary between Asia and Europe and therefore suggests itself as endpoint of the account (14.31). The ending of the *Anabasis*, on the other hand, seems rather chosen to challenge the idea of a linear development. The remaining Cyreans are not only at Pergamum, very close to the starting point of their march, but also embark on a second expedition against the Persians.<sup>188</sup> The idea of a linear action may also be subverted by the final episode of the *Anabasis*, Xenophon's raid on a Persian nobleman. Ma suggests: 'At the end, Xenophon, hoping to go home, embarks on a foray which leads to an odd mini-*Anabasis*, an expedition against an eminent Persian, with a messy fight, and again, Greeks trapped by Persian forces.'<sup>189</sup> Instead of a telos, the end of the *Anabasis* produces a *mise-en-abime*.

Even before this ending, the narrative seems to follow the form of a spiral when the Greeks find themselves in the service of another barbarian prince who is trying to become King (7.2.32-3). Despite the differences between Seuthes and Cyrus, there are some details that highlight the repetition: both engage the mercenaries secretly, hoping to take their enemies by surprise (7.3.35). Heraclides' advice to Xenophon that the more he gives to Seuthes, the more he will receive from him (7.3.20) is reminiscent of Cyrus' philosophy of always outshining his friends in generosity (1.9.10-11). Seuthes as well as Cyrus shares his food at banquets with the guests (7.3.22).<sup>190</sup>

It is worth reconsidering the dream that marks Xenophon's entry into the plot in the light of this ending. Xenophon is worried because the circle in which the fire seems to burn may indicate that 'he might not be able to escape from the King's territory, but might be hemmed in on all sides by various difficulties' ('οὐ δύναίτο ἐκ τῆς χώρας ἐξελθεῖν τῆς βασιλείας, ἀλλ' εἴργοιτο πάντοθεν ὑπὸ τινῶν ἀποριῶν', 3.1.12). The narrator adds: 'The true meaning of a vision such as this can be judged by the events which followed the dream.' ('ὅποῖόν τι μὲν δὴ ἐστὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον ὄναρ ἰδεῖν ἔξεστι σκοπεῖν ἐκ τῶν συμβάντων μετὰ τὸ ὄναρ.' 3.1.13). Perhaps the 'events which followed the dream' only refer to the ensuing chapters, namely Xenophon's meeting with the company commanders of Proxenus, but it is tempting to read the dream as a frame for the entire narrative that follows. As indicated by prolepses, Xenophon will return to Greece, but the encirclement of the fire nicely visualizes the structure of a narrative that is caught in a spiral – it evades closure and ultimately leads back to its beginning.

The artful play with closure in the *Anabasis* contributes to the presence of the past. In the introduction, I have argued that experience and teleology are not without links. The goals pursued by the characters embed in the action a structure that is homologous to teleology. The Cyreans' desire for a nostos instils in the reader the expectation that the arrival in Greece will close the *Anabasis*. The goal

<sup>188</sup> Cf. Gauthier 1986: 245; Lossau 1990: 51; Ma 2004: 335.

<sup>189</sup> Ma 2004: 335.

<sup>190</sup> For further similarities not all of which I find compelling, see Howland 2000: 882-3.

of the Cyreans, however, as prominently as it is flagged, does not become the telos of the narrative; the closer the soldiers get to Greece, the more the notion of a nostos wanes. Nor does the *Anabasis* offer another pervasive telos from which to envisage the march of the Ten Thousand. There are two references to Xenophon's later exile (5.3.7; 7.7.57), but they do not suffice to establish it as a vantage-point. No direct link is established to the action of the *Anabasis* and while the references are so perfunctory that historians still discuss the date and circumstances of the trial against Xenophon,<sup>191</sup> the stay at Scillus seems itself to have become a past for the narrator.<sup>192</sup> The *Anabasis* thus denies the expedition a clearly defined end and itself a closure. Narratives have to end at some point and so does the *Anabasis*, but its open closure mimics the continuous flux of time in life.

## V. THE LIMITS OF MIMESIS

We have seen that Xenophon uses description, internal focalization, speeches, 'sideshadowing' and open closure to restore presentness to the events narrated in the *Anabasis*. Even Dionysius who criticizes Xenophon for lacking decorum with respect to characters admits that he is σαφής καὶ ἐναργής (in the epitome of *De imit.* 3.2.426 Usener). Nonetheless, there are features that interrupt the mimesis of the narrative to which I wish to turn in the final section of this chapter: unequal distribution of information between readers and characters, prolepsis, narratorial intervention, alternative versions and source citations.

### *Distribution of knowledge and prolepsis*

Not only do readers of historical works, especially on such famous events as the march of the Ten Thousand, tend to know more than the agents,<sup>193</sup> but in some passages the narrator of the *Anabasis* provides them with information unknown to the characters. Right at the beginning, for example, the readers are privileged over the characters. While the narrator informs the reader about the goal of the march at the outset (1.1.4), it is first kept secret from the Greek mercenaries whom Cyrus engages for his plans. Only Clearchus is in the know right from the beginning (3.1.10), the other Greeks are first told that the march is against other minor enemies including the Pisidians (1.1.11) and Abrocomas (1.3.20). It is not until the army has reached the River Euphrates that Cyrus officially unveils his true goal, the throne of Persia (1.4.11).<sup>194</sup> Internal

<sup>191</sup> Erbse 1966: 490-3 argues that Xenophon was exiled on account of attacking the Persian King.

<sup>192</sup> On Xenophon's exile, see Rahn 1981; Tuplin 1987; Green 1994.

<sup>193</sup> See, however, n. ??? (Bradley 2001: 74 n. 31).

<sup>194</sup> However, when the army learns that Cyrus is marching against the King, they reproach their generals for having known this from the start (1.4.12). See also 1.3 for the mutiny of the soldiers suspecting that the march would be against the King.

focalization is prominent in the *Anabasis*, but its beginning illustrates that the narrative is not consistently focalized through the Cyreans.

In other passages, the narrator flashes his superior knowledge through prolepses, most prominently in the Scillus digression (5.3.4-13) and the mention of the exile in 7.7.57.<sup>195</sup> In 4.6.3, the narrator adds that Pleisthenes loved the son of an Armenian mayor who had served the Greeks as guide and continued to rely on him after his return (4.6.3). The foreshadowing implies that the Cyreans, at least Pleisthenes, will be saved. At the same time, the brief remark serves an *effet de réel*:<sup>196</sup> It does not contain anything of importance to the plot, but the very lack of a function underscores the narrative claim to be true to reality. Another prolepsis can be found in 5.1.15 where the Greeks entrust Dexippus with a ship sent from Trabzon:

But he ignored the job of collecting merchant ships and sneaked out of the Euxine with the ship. But he got what he deserved later: for at the court of Seuthes in Thrace he became involved in some intrigue or other and was killed by Nicander of Sparta.

οὗτος ἀμελήσας τοῦ ξυλλέγειν πλοῖα ἀποδράς ᾤχετο ἔξω τοῦ Πόντου, ἔχων τὴν ναῦν. οὗτος μὲν οὖν δίκαια ἔπαθεν ὕστερον· ἐν Θράκῃ γὰρ παρὰ Σεύθῃ πολυπραγμονῶν τι ἀπέθανεν ὑπὸ Νικάνδρου τοῦ Λάκωνος.

The prolepsis is as striking as the narratorial evaluation; together, they help to single out Dexippus. More specifically, they prepare the reader for the negative role that Dexippus will play when he denigrates Xenophon both at Calpes and at Byzantium (6.1.32; 6.4.1-6; 6.6.11; 15).

While the examples mentioned illustrate that there are prolepses in the *Anabasis*, it is striking how rare they are. Moreover, most of them are external prolepses, i.e. they refer to a time outside the frame of the narrative. They thus do not create an imbalance between the reader's and the characters' knowledge about the future plot. Whereas Herodotus adumbrates for the reader events that will surprise the characters, Xenophon by and large strives to present the action as it was experienced by the historical agents. The difference shows in the narrative use of divine signs. In chapter 6, I will discuss omens and oracles in the *Histories*.<sup>197</sup> In many cases they are misunderstood by the historical agents, but provide the readers with insights into the future, thereby creating a gap between the levels of action and reception. In the *Anabasis*, there is no shortage of divine

---

<sup>195</sup> On anachronies in the *Anabasis*, see Rood 2007a: 158-62.

<sup>196</sup> Cf. Barthes (2002) [1968].

<sup>197</sup> Cf. ch. 6 ???

signs, ranging from Xenophon's dreams to birds, and yet they tend to be as clear or obscure for the readers as for the characters.<sup>198</sup>

### *Narratorial interventions and ambiguity*

That we do not have direct access to the events themselves is also highlighted by narratorial interventions. Gray has shown that Xenophon uses them in particular to express praise for historical agents.<sup>199</sup> Accordingly, the narratorial voice comes to the fore in the obituaries for Cyrus and the killed Greek generals which form a large block interrupting the account of the march in the first two books. Before and after, however, the narrator seldom steps forward; as I have pointed out, Xenophon, after his entry in the action, arrogates such narratorial privileges as evaluating the action. On the whole, the Xenophontian narrator is very reticent, as Marincola observes: 'In Xenophon we see an extreme application of the Thucydidean model. The narrator in Xenophon (both *Hellenica* and *Anabasis*) is not only unintrusive: he is practically anonymous.'<sup>200</sup>

Besides narratorial interventions, the unresolved juxtaposition of two differing versions also alerts the reader to the mediation of the events.<sup>201</sup> I will argue that Sallust and especially Tacitus use ambiguity to mimetic effect, but in general the narrator's uncertainty highlights to the reader the gap separating her from the event. Instances of this in the *Anabasis* are rare and only refer to details: whether Cyrus was accompanied by three or four men besides his translator when he rode along the battle line at Cunaxa (1.8.12), whether the distance between the Greek and Persian armies was three or four stades when the Greeks struck up the paean (1.8.17) or whether some soldiers overheard Anaxibius' offer to receive pay from Cyniscus on the Chersonese or learnt it from a company commander (7.1.14).

### *Source citations*

A further unresolved juxtaposition of two versions concerns the circumstances of the death of two of Meno's company commanders (1.2.25):

---

<sup>198</sup> Xenophon's dreams: 3.1.12-13; 3.4.38; bird at Ephesus: 6.1.22-4. There are also signs that are misunderstood: in 1.4.18, for example, Cyrus' army is able to walk through the Euphrates that is normally only passable for ships: 'And this was held to be a miracle; it seemed clear that the river had yielded before Cyrus since he was destined to be King.' ('ἔδόκει δὴ θεῖον εἶναι καὶ σαφῶς ὑποχωρῆσαι τὸν ποταμὸν Κύρῳ ὡς βασιλεύσουσι.'). This turns out to be a misinterpretation, but the narrator does not point it out nor has he anticipated the death of Cyrus at Cunaxa.

<sup>199</sup> Gray 2003. See also Gray 2004: 134-8 for a list of different devices of narratorial intrusion.

<sup>200</sup> Marincola 1997: 10.

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Gray 2004: 145-6.

Some said they had been annihilated by the Cilicians while they were out foraging, others that they had fallen behind and got lost, and died without being able to find the rest of the army.

οἱ μὲν ἔφασαν ἀρπάζοντάς τι κατακοπῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν Κιλικίων, οἱ δὲ ὑπολειφθέντας καὶ οὐ δυναμένους εὐρεῖν τὸ ἄλλο στράτευμα οὐδὲ τὰς ὁδοὺς εἶτα πλανωμένους ἀπολέσθαι.

The alternative versions are here ascribed to anonymous sources. ‘Some’ and ‘others’ are not identified, but the use of the past tense suggests that they signify soldiers trying to explain the absence of the two commanders. While highlighting a mediating instance, such citations of past sources embed it in the action. The information is internally focalized as in other passages without alternative versions: when, for instance, the narrator notes that ‘the sources [i.e. of the Euphrates] were said to be close’ (‘ἔλεγοντο δ’ οὐδὲ πηγαὶ πρόσω εἶναι’) instead of writing ‘the sources were close’, he locates the information at the level of the action (4.5.2). This facilitates narratorial reticence just as in the following passage (5.4.34): ‘The soldiers agreed that, of all those whose lands they passed through, the Mossynoecians were the most alien and the most remote from Greeks in their customs.’ (‘τούτους ἔλεγον οἱ στρατευσάμενοι βαρβαρωτάτους διελθεῖν καὶ πλεῖστον τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν νόμων κεχωρισμένους.’ 5.4.34). The narrator does not assess the Mossynoecians *sua voce*, but embeds the judgment in the action. We can thus see that references to past sources have the capacity of both undermining and enhancing the mimetic spell of the narrative. They can call attention to the mediation of the information, but also strengthen internal focalization and help the narrator to maintain his reticence.<sup>202</sup>

The complex relation between past source quotations and the mimetic dimension of the narrative is nicely illustrated by a longer embedded story, the end of the Persian nobleman Orontas whose intrigue against Cyrus is uncovered (1.6). The narrator reproduces the report about the interrogation and conviction of Orontas which Clearchus, the only Greek present, gives his fellows afterwards: interrogating Orontas, Cyrus has him first confirm the truth of a list of charges, including earlier crimes as well as the present intrigue. He then asks Clearchus for his opinion on how to proceed with Orontas. When the Persians confirm Clearchus’ suggestion of immediate execution, Orontas is led to the tent of Artapatas and killed. The direct speech and dialogue make the account highly mimetic. The mediating instance of Clearchus is only present at the beginning (1.6.6: ἔφη) and at the end of the interrogation (1.6.10 *bis*: ἔφη). In between, the

---

<sup>202</sup> There are further important aspects to source quotations in the past: Gray 2003 emphasizes that due to the high esteem for eyewitnesses such citations underscore the reliability of the report. In some case, they allow the historian to mention unbelievable or even doubtful facts such as a sexual relation between Cyrus and Cilissa (1.2.12) without vouching for them.

narrative not only loses sight of it, but also superimposes the perspective of the narrator when it refers to Clearchus in the third person (1.6.9).

Thus, although the narrator does not pretend to report the past itself, but only reproduces a past report, the account of Orontas' death is highly mimetic. Even an acknowledgment of factual gaps contributes to the mimesis (1.6.11):

He was taken into the tent of Artapatas, the most loyal of Cyrus' staff-bearers, and no one ever again saw Orontas alive or dead, nor could anyone say with certainty how he died, although people came up with various conjectures. No one ever saw his grave either.

ἐπεὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν Ἀρταπάτου σκηνὴν εἰσήχθη, τοῦ πιστοτάτου τῶν Κύρου σκηπτούχων, μετὰ ταῦτα οὔτε ζῶντα Ὀρόνταν οὔτε τεθνηκότα οὐδείς εἶδε πώποτε, οὐδὲ ὅπως ἀπέθανεν οὐδείς εἰδῶς ἔλεγεν· εἴκαζον δὲ ἄλλοι ἄλλως· τάφος δὲ οὐδείς πώποτε αὐτοῦ ἐφάνη.

The invisibility at the end, emphasized by the numerous negations, contrasts with the introductory explanation of why Clearchus could share his experience with the Greeks: 'for it was not secret', literally 'for it was not to be spoken of' ('οὐ γὰρ ἀπόρρητον ἦν', 1.6.5). It is tempting to read the contrast between tellability and invisibility as an implicit reflection on the limits of narrative representation in general, but on a first level it helps characterise the specific episode at hand: the disappearance of Orontas increases the mysteriousness of the proceedings of the Persians who touch Orontas' belt to vote for the death penalty and still prostrate themselves before him when he is led away to his death. The uncertainty about the end of Orontas also deepens the immersion of the reader who is invited to fill the blank. Finally, admitting uncertainty about details may also serve the historian's self-fashioning – it underlines the narrator's reliability and throws into relief the credibility of what he vouches for.

Besides citations of past sources, there are also quotes in the present tense such as λέγεται and λέγουσι.<sup>203</sup> They are more forceful in calling attention to the narratorial mediation, as they are not embedded in the action, but belong to the world of the narrator. We do not find many such citations in the *Anabasis*, but there is a striking cluster of them in the account of the battle at Cunaxa: 'Some say that they [i.e. the Greeks] also clashed the shafts of their spears against their shields to frighten the horses.' ('λέγουσι δὲ τινες ὡς καὶ ταῖς ἀσπίσι πρὸς τὰ δόρατα ἐδούπησαν φόβον ποιοῦντες τοῖς ἵπποις.' 1.8.18). The narrator reports that Cyrus and 600 men attacked and put to flight 6,000 enemies 'and it is said that he even killed their commander, Artagerses, with his own hand' ('καὶ

---

<sup>203</sup> In some cases, it may be hard to find a difference (cf. Westlake 1977: 349), but in general it is important whether a comment is situated in the past or in the present (cf. Gray 2003: 117)

ἀποκτεῖναι λέγεται αὐτὸς τῇ ἑαυτοῦ χειρὶ Ἀρταγέρσην τὸν ἄρχοντα αὐτῶν’, 1.8.25). Cyrus’ attack against the King himself is qualified by ‘as Ctesias the doctor says, who adds that he himself treated the wound’ (‘ὡς φησι Κτησίας ὁ ἰατρός, καὶ ἰᾶσθαι αὐτὸς τὸ τραῦμά φησι.’ 1.8.26). Ctesias is invoked once more: ‘How many of the King’s men died, Ctesias says; for he was with him.’ (‘... ὅποσοι μὲν τῶν ἀμφὶ βασιλέα ἀπέθνησκον Κτησίας λέγει· παρ’ ἐκείνῳ γὰρ ἦν.’ 1.8.27). Finally (1.8.28-9),

it is said that when Artapatas, the most loyal of his staff-bearers saw that Cyrus had fallen, he leapt off his horse and threw himself on the body. Some say that the King ordered one of his men to butcher Artapatas on Cyrus’ body, but according to others Artapatas butchered himself, drawing his dagger. He carried a golden dagger, and also wore all the usual accoutrements that noble Persians wear, such as a torque and armlets. For Cyrus held him in high honour on account of his loyalty and reliability.

Ἀρταπάτης δ’ ὁ πιστότατος αὐτῶ τῶν σκηπτούχων θεράπων λέγεται, ἐπειδὴ πεπτωκότα εἶδε Κῦρον, καταπηδήσας ἀπὸ τοῦ ἵππου περιπεσεῖν αὐτῶ. καὶ οἱ μὲν φασὶ βασιλέα κελεῦσαί τινα ἐπισφάξαι αὐτὸν Κῦρω, οἱ δ’ ἑαυτὸν ἐπισφάξασθαι σπασάμενον τὸν ἀκινάκην· εἶχε γὰρ χρυσοῦν· καὶ στρεπτὸν δ’ ἐφόρει καὶ ψέλια καὶ τᾶλλα ὥσπερ οἱ ἄριστοι Περσῶν· ἐτετίμητο γὰρ ὑπὸ Κῦρου δι’ εὐνοίαν τε καὶ πιστότητα.

Not only is the number of citations striking, but this is also the only passage in the *Anabasis* with a citation whose author is named. The battle of Cunaxa featured prominently in many accounts, as Plutarch writes (*Artax.* 8.1).<sup>204</sup> This, however, does not explain why Xenophon repeatedly refers to these sources here. Ctesias, Sophanetus and others will have covered other events narrated in the *Anabasis*, but outside the account of the Cunaxa battle, citations are very rare. I thus suspect that the dense net of citations concerns not so much Xenophon’s research as his narrative presentation. Citations of anonymous sources in the present may be used by ancient historians in order to mention something without vouching for it, in some cases even to express disbelief.<sup>205</sup> Gray, on the other hand, has argued that Xenophon uses such citations to validate details that are hard to believe.<sup>206</sup> I am not sure if this explanation does justice to Xenophon’s manifold use of citation in general, but it works well for the reference to Ctesias.

<sup>204</sup> For a comparison of Xenophon’s account with that of Ctesias, see Flower 2012: 83.

<sup>205</sup> Pauw 1980; Fowler 1996: 78 (on Herodotus); Oakley 1997: *ad Liv.* 6.33.5 emphasize the distancing function of citations, whereas Westlake 1977: 362 notes for Thucydides that ‘they do not necessarily indicate disbelief but rather claim that, while he cannot vouch for the trustworthiness of his information from personal knowledge or observation, at least it has the authority from some source, oral or written, which he has consulted’.

<sup>206</sup> Gray 2003.

The validating character of the citation comes to the fore when the narrator adds that Ctesias says he treated the wound and that he was with the King, thereby emphasizing his status as eyewitness.<sup>207</sup> Thus, instead of expressing caution, the references to Ctesias and anonymous sources in the Cunaxa narrative rather reinforce the credibility of details.

It is noteworthy that a string of citations features in a passage that, as we have seen, otherwise is highly mimetic. While being short and not introducing extensive interruptions, the citations signal the gap between *res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum* and break the mimetic spell of the narrative. As in the Thucydides chapter,<sup>208</sup> we can see the need for the historian to balance his striving for vividness with other goals, notably credibility. The Cunaxa narrative combines both aspects in striking fashion: internal focalisation and elaborate descriptions render it mimetic just as the source citations provide Xenophon's credentials. The convergence in a single passage indicates a deeper link: while going against each other, mimetic devices and narratorial self-fashioning also depend on each other. The mimetic quality of an incredible account is worth little and a high degree of credibility, on the other hand, falls flat if it does not make the scene come alive.

## VI. XENOPHON, EPIGONE OF THUCYDIDES?

Xenophon's historiographic works are usually deemed to be epigonic. Concerning the experiential quality of his narrative, however, Xenophon easily stands comparison with his eminent predecessor Thucydides. We have seen that he uses the same devices, notably internal focalization, description, speeches and composition to render his account mimetic. We do not have the ending of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, but I daresay that the *Anabasis*' play with closure is an original attempt at evading the temptation of teleology. While by and large Thucydides and Xenophon employ the same arsenal of narrative devices to restore presentness to the past there are also differences. We have seen, for example, that Thucydides permanently shifts between the vantage-points of the Athenian and the Spartan camps, sometimes choosing the perspective of an unattached observer. The action of the *Anabasis* is also internally focalized through different characters, but focalization mostly rests with the Greeks and, more specifically, with Xenophon. Both authors use internal focalization to put their readers right on the spot of the action, and yet the viewpoint of the central agent on the one hand, and adopting the positions of various or even unattached observers on the other, yield rather different perspectives. The present evoked by Xenophon is more emotional and gripping than the sketch we encounter in Thucydides.

---

<sup>207</sup> Gray 2004: 144. See also Flower 2012: 86-7 on the validating character of the reference to Ctesias.

<sup>208</sup> See chapter 2 ???

Consider also the role of the speeches: in Thucydides, speeches are an important means of engaging the reader intellectually; the Mytilinean and Plataean Debates, for example, raise tricky questions about ethics and politics without giving clear-cut answers. Other speeches invite the reader to assess the situation and conjecture about the future as when the chances and risks of the Sicilian expedition are discussed in the Athenian assembly.<sup>209</sup> This reading experience can be fruitfully viewed, I suggest, in light of Thucydides' claim to usefulness. As Thucydides hopes, his account will prove useful 'for those who will wish to look at the plain truth about both past events and those that at some future time, in accordance with human nature, will recur again in similar or comparable ways' ('ὅσοι δὲ βουλήσονται τῶν τε γενομένων τὸ σαφὲς σκοπεῖν καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ποτὲ αὖθις κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον τοιούτων καὶ παραπλησίων ἔσεσθαι', 1.22.4). This usefulness is manifold and embraces both the content and method of Thucydides' work. Yet another aspect is, I think, the reading experience, notably the consistent challenge to assess the situation and conjecture about the future that offers some kind of training for activities crucial to everyday as well as political life.<sup>210</sup>

In the *Anabasis*, speeches are also crucial to putting readers into the shoes of the characters, but they are less loaded intellectually. Moreover, Xenophon's long speeches in the second part look to the past rather than to the future as he tries to defend himself against the accusations raised by the soldiers and Seuthes. The overall goal of the *Anabasis* is controversial, but it is hard not to see in these speeches justificatory purposes. Thus, where Thucydides uses speeches to engage the reader and bring out fully the complexity of the past, the speeches in the *Anabasis* are intellectually less challenging and serve to set the record straight. In both authors the speeches help make the past present, albeit with different nuances and goals. Such differences in voice and focalization are minor, however, compared with the very different take on mimesis which we will now encounter in Plutarch.

---

<sup>209</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 242-8.

<sup>210</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 277-9.

#### 4. Plutarch, *Alexander*

Biography does not qualify as historiography *stricto sensu*. Plutarch himself occasionally juxtaposes the two; and yet in other passages, he seems to consider his *Lives* as history and thereby illustrates that the distinction between the two genres was less clear-cut than much modern scholarship has assumed.<sup>211</sup> More importantly, the issue of futures past is not limited to historiography in a narrow Thucydidean sense, but worth exploring in a wider range of narratives about the past. Biography's focus on the life of an individual is conducive to both experience and teleology: experiences are socio-culturally mediated, but it is nonetheless the individual human being that has an experience. On the other hand, death provides an obvious telos from which a life can be assessed.

Plutarch affords a particularly interesting case. I have already quoted his appraisal of the two authors discussed in the preceding chapters: he extolls Thucydides and Xenophon for their *enargeia* that grips the reader emotionally and gives her the sense of witnessing the events while they are unfolding (*De gloria Atheniensium* 347a; *Artax.* 8.1). Plutarch not only notices and appreciates vividness in other authors, but is himself admired for his 'great set-pieces told with tremendous ἐνάργεια'.<sup>212</sup> Another modern scholar even hails him as 'one of the most evocative reconstructors of the past' and claims: 'Few writers (perhaps only Livy among the ancients, and in a much more limited way) display such zest as Plutarch for the colourfulness of history and the excitement of action and adventure.'<sup>213</sup>

In this chapter, the *Alexander* will illustrate the *enargeia* of Plutarch's narrative as well as the crucial differences from the experiential character of the *Anabasis* and the *History of the Peloponnesian War*. These differences are due not so much to the focus of biography on an individual's life as to the ulterior goal of Plutarch's writing. An exemplary reading of a vivid scene, the Gaugamela battle (I), will be complemented by the exploration of an aspect that makes the *Alexander* particularly mimetic: its hero's penchant for performance and presentation (II). At the same time, the mimetic quality of the *Alexander* is affected by a very visible narrator (III) and a strongly teleological design (IV). The episodic structure of the *Alexander* and other *Lives* will help us qualify both their teleology and *enargeia* (V), before I describe Plutarch's take on futures past in light of his own reflections and link it to his moralism (VI).

---

<sup>211</sup> Plutarch prominently proclaims in *Alex.* 1.2: 'For it is not Histories that I am writing, but Lives.' ('οὔτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους ...'). This passage, however, ought not be read as a general distinction between two genres; cf. Duff 1999: 17-22, who also discusses passages in which Plutarch speaks of his own work as history. On the less than clear-cut distinction between history and biography in antiquity, see Gentili and Cerri 1988 and Schepens 2007. On the oscillation in the uses of βίος and ἱστορία, see Valgiglio 1987. On the fluent notion of historiography as genre, see Marincola 1999a and Pelling 1999.

<sup>212</sup> Mossman 1995 (=1988): 225.

<sup>213</sup> Russell 1995a (=1966): 76; 81.

## I. ENARGEIA IN THE GAUGAMELA NARRATIVE

Although Plutarch proclaims in the proem (1.2-3) that he will focus rather on small anecdotes than on big events and battles, the *Alexander* features several elaborate battle scenes. The account of Gaugamela in particular teems with *enargeia*.<sup>214</sup> After mentioning the time and place (31.6-8), Plutarch juxtaposes the two camps and turns towards the Greeks (31.8-9). While Parmenion and others suggest surprising the Persians by night, Alexander points out that he ‘won’t steal the victory’ (‘οὐ κλέπτω τὴν νίκην’, 31.12). The next morning, he sleeps so fast and long that he needs to be woken up by Parmenion (32.1-4). Plutarch touches upon a skirmish of the cavalries (32.5-7) and goes on to describe in much detail Alexander’s armour and his battle preparations (32.8-33.3). When the Greek phalanx starts to move, the Persians flee (33.4). Alexander tries to catch Darius, but is finally recalled by Parmenion who asks for support (33.5-11).

### *Narrative speed*

The most striking aspect of this battle account may be its treatment of narrative speed. Plutarch takes a long time to get to the actual encounter on the battlefield which he reports in a single sentence – ‘But before the foremost ranks were engaged the Barbarians give way, and were hotly pursued ...’ (‘πρὶν δὲ συμμείξαι τοὺς πρῶτους, ἐξέκλιναν οἱ βάρβαροι, καὶ διωγμὸς ἦν πολὺς ...’, 33.4) – before he slows down narrative time again for the chase of Darius. Two scenes in particular retard the action and help to build up suspense: Alexander’s sleep and the description of his armour. Alexander is sleeping long – which is out of character – and it is getting so late that the generals themselves give the command for the troops to have breakfast (32.1). Parmenion, who finally enters Alexander’s room, has to call his name two or three times. Asked why he would sleep as if he had already won the battle, Alexander counters that they are now freed from the burden of having to chase Dareius (32.3), thereby showing himself, as Plutarch points out, as ‘great and firm in his confident calculations’ (‘μέγαν καὶ συνεστηκότα τῷ λογίζεσθαι καὶ θαρρεῖν ἑαυτόν’, 32.4). Highlighting Alexander’s coolness, the retardation of the narrative mimics the impatience of

---

<sup>214</sup> On the vividness of Plutarch’s *Lives*, see Frazier 1992; Soares 2007; Beck 2007: 399. Wardman 1974: 10 claims: ‘This [i.e. *enargeia*] is a quality for which he advises Thucydides (*Nic.* 1.1) and disavows as his own objective.’ This is a misinterpretation of the *Nicias* proem where Plutarch points out that he will not try to rival Thucydides: ‘... I feel that jealous rivalry with other writers in matters of diction is altogether undignified and pedantic, and if it be practised toward what is beyond all imitation, utterly silly.’ (‘ἐμοὶ δ’ ὄλως μὲν ἢ περὶ λέξιν ἄμιλλα καὶ ζηλοτυπία πρὸς ἑτέρους μικροπρεπὲς φαίνεται καὶ σοφιστικόν, ἂν δὲ πρὸς τὰ ἀμίμητα γίγνηται, καὶ τέλεως ἀνάισθητον.’ 1.4). Such rivalry can lead to distorted accounts as the examples scorned at in 1.1-4 illustrate, but this does not mean that Plutarch thinks little of skilful presentation.

the Greeks: soldiers and readers alike are eagerly awaiting the beginning of the battle.

While the delay through Alexander's indulgence in sleep is part of the action, the description of his weapons freezes narrated time (32.8-12). As already pointed out, such descriptions interrupt the mimesis of narrated through narrative time, but prompt the reader to visualize the scene. Besides retarding the action and stimulating the reader's imagination, the passage on Alexander's weapons has a further function: Plutarch lists helmet, corselet, breastplate, sword and belt. This is not exactly an epic arming scene, as Alexander is already wearing most of it and is only putting on his helmet. Nor does the order in which the objects are mentioned tie in with the arming scenes in Homer:<sup>215</sup> the helmet, for example, which Plutarch mentions first, is put on last by the Homeric heroes before they take the spears.<sup>216</sup> Nonetheless, together with some Homeric words,<sup>217</sup> the attention bestowed on material, producers and origin of the armour, gives the passage a Homeric ring and underscores Alexander's heroic character.<sup>218</sup>

The passage that links the sleeping scene with the description of Alexander's armour causes significant problems (32.5-7). When under attack by the Bactrian cavalry, Parmenion is worried that the Persians will lay hands on their baggage and sends a messenger to Alexander, who, however, sneers at this warning: if victorious, they would capture the enemies' goods, while the baggage would be of no concern to them in the case of defeat. A γάρ introduces the passage as an illustration of the coolness of Alexander that Plutarch has just pointed out. Since the battle preparations have still to be narrated, Plutarch seems to jump forward in narrative time to give evidence of Alexander's character.<sup>219</sup> However, the subsequent description of Alexander's weapons begins with ταῦτ' ἐπιστείλας Παρμενίωνι ('after sending this message to Parmenion', 32.8). Given that Alexander will be putting on his helmet before the beginning of the battle, this implies that the skirmish of the cavalry takes place before the battle proper. The tension, I think, cannot be resolved, but no matter whether the skirmish is a prolepsis or a pre-battle encounter, it adds, like Alexander's conversation with the Greeks and his prayer (33.1-3), to the retardation.

### *Internal focalization*

---

<sup>215</sup> The four major arming scenes are in *Il.* 3.330-8; 11.15-64; 16.131-44; 19.369-91. Cf. Arend 1933: 92-5; Armstrong 1958.

<sup>216</sup> Plutarch's account here parallels Alc. fr. 140 V that also mentions the helmet first.

<sup>217</sup> E.g., στίλβειν (32.9) and ἔργον in the meaning of 'work of war' (32.11).

<sup>218</sup> The retarding function of the description also parallels the same use of arming scenes in Homer. On epic colouring and its significance in the *Alexander*, see Mossman 1995 (=1988).

<sup>219</sup> This is pointed out by Hamilton 1969: *ad* 32-3.

The mimesis of the account is further buttressed by internal focalization. The sight as well as the noise of the Persians intimidates the Greeks and prompts them to suggest a night attack (31.10-11):

Meanwhile the older among his companions, and particularly Parmenion, when they saw the plain between the Niphates and the Gordyaeon mountains all lit up with the barbarian fires, while an indistinguishably mingled and tumultuous sound of voices arose from their camp as if from a vast ocean, were astonished at their multitude and argued with one another that it was a great and grievous task to repel such a tide of war by engaging in broad day-light. They therefore waited upon the king when he had finished his sacrifices, and tried to persuade him to attack the enemy by night, and so to cover up with darkness the most fearful aspect of the coming struggle.

οἱ δὲ πρεσβύτεροι τῶν ἐταίρων καὶ μάλιστα Παρμενίων, ὡς τὸ μὲν πεδίον τὸ μεταξὺ τοῦ Νιφάτου καὶ τῶν ὄρων τῶν Γορδυαίων ἅπαν ἑωρᾶτο καταλαμπόμενον τοῖς βαρβαρικοῖς φέγγεσιν, ἀτέκμαρτος δέ τις φωνὴ συμμεμειγμένη καὶ θόρυβος ἐκ τοῦ στρατοπέδου καθάπερ ἐξ ἄχανοῦς προσήχει πελάγους, θαυμάσαντες τὸ πλῆθος καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους διαλεχθέντες, ὡς μέγα καὶ χαλεπὸν ἔργον εἶη συμπεσόντας ἐκ προφανοῦς τοσοῦτον ὤσασθαι πόλεμον, ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν γενομένῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ προσελθόντες, ἔπειθον αὐτὸν ἐπιχειρῆσαι νύκτωρ τοῖς πολεμίοις καὶ τῷ σκότῳ τὸ φοβερῶτατον συγκαλύψαι τοῦ μέλλοντος ἀγῶνος.<sup>220</sup>

In the battle, focalization rests first with Alexander who ‘sees’ (‘κατεῖδε’, 33.5) the King and then switches to the Persians through a participle that transforms Alexander from the subject to the object of seeing: ‘But when they saw Alexander close at hand and terrible, and driving those who fled before him upon those who held their ground, they were smitten with fear and scattered, for the most part.’ (‘ἀλλὰ δεινὸς ὄφθεις ἐγγύθεν Ἀλέξανδρος, καὶ τοὺς φεύγοντας ἐμβαλὼν εἰς τοὺς μένοντας, ἐξέπληξε καὶ διεσκέδασε τὸ πλεῖστον.’ 33.6). Focalization is then narrowed down to Darius, from whose perspective the chaos of the routed Persians is described (33.8). Plutarch’s focus moves here like a camera that switches sides and first gives a pan shot before it adopts the perspective of an individual. Besides the detailed description that renders the situation graphic, the use of tenses is noteworthy: the imperfect tense in *συνείχοντο*, *ἐξήλλοντο* and *συνετάραττον* as well as the perfect and present

---

<sup>220</sup> The sea-metaphor in *καθάπερ ἐξ ἄχανοῦς προσήχει πελάγους* is later echoed (‘ἐπικυμαίνειν τὴν φάλαγγα’, 33.3), marking a reversal: while the maritime imagery first highlights the terrifying impression that the Persian army makes on the Greeks, it then signifies the force of their attack.

participles draw up a vivid background from which Darius' flight stands out, made dramatic through the present tense ('ἀπολείπει'). Together with the reference to an anonymous source ('ὡς φασί'), the aorist of ἔφυγε closes the mimetic account of the *mêlée*.

Focalization is not limited to sense perception, but also includes mental activity.<sup>221</sup> Fearing the numerical superiority of the Persians, Parmenion and the older Macedonians first propose attacking at night (31.11). Then during the skirmish of the cavalries Parmenion is worried that the Persians will take the baggage and asks Alexander to guard it (32.5-7). Both suggestions have no bearing on the course of events – Alexander neither opts for a night battle nor does he come to protect the baggage – but nonetheless help the readers view the situation from the perspective of the characters, driving home its openness. Internal focalization also extends to evaluation of the course taken. While Alexander's decision to battle at daytime strikes some as foolish, others find it reasonable (31.12-14):

But he gave them the celebrated answer, 'I do not steal my victory'; whereupon some thought that he had made a vainglorious reply, and was jesting in the presence of so great a peril. Others, however, thought that he had confidence in the present situation and estimated the future correctly, not offering Darius in case of defeat an excuse to pluck up courage again for another attempt, by laying the blame this time upon night and darkness, as he had before upon mountains, defiles, and sea. For Darius would not give up the war for lack of arms or men when he could draw from so great a host and so vast a territory, but only when he had lost courage and hope, under the conviction brought by a downright defeat in broad day-light.

ὁ δὲ τὸ μνημονεύομενον εἰπὼν 'οὐ κλέπτω τὴν νίκην', ἐνίοις μὲν ἔδοξε μειρακιώδη καὶ κενὴν ἀπόκρισιν πεποιῆσθαι, παίζων πρὸς τοσοῦτον κίνδυνον, ἐνίοις δὲ καὶ τῷ παρόντι θαρρεῖν καὶ στοχάζεσθαι τοῦ μέλλοντος ὀρθῶς, μὴ διδοῦς πρόφασιν ἡττηθέντι Δαρείῳ πρὸς ἄλλην αὐτίς ἀναθαρρῆσαι πείραν, αἰτιωμένῳ τούτων νύκτα καὶ σκότος, ὡς ὄρη καὶ στενὰ καὶ θάλασσαν τῶν προτέρων. οὐ γὰρ ὄπλων οὐδὲ σωμαίων ἀπορία παύσεσθαι πολεμοῦντα Δαρεῖον ἀπὸ τηλικαύτης δυνάμεως καὶ χώρας τοσαύτης, ἀλλ' ὅταν ἀφῆ τὸ φρόνημα καὶ τὴν ἐλπίδα, δι' ἐμφανοῦς ἡττης κατὰ κράτος ἐξελεγχθεῖς.

Having the characters judge Alexander's strategy permits the narrator to have his cake and eat it: he evaluates the strategy *and* keeps a low profile.

The end of the battle narrative features a counterfactual (33.9).<sup>222</sup>

---

<sup>221</sup> Cf. ch. 2 ???

<sup>222</sup> On counterfactuals in Plutarch, see Frazier 1996: 22-4. See also ch. 3 ???

However, it seemed then that he [i.e. Darius] would not then have made his escape, had not fresh horsemen come from Parmenion summoning Alexander to his aid, on the ground that a large force of the enemy still held together there and would not give ground.

οὐ μὴν τότε γ' ἂν ἐδόκει διαφυγεῖν, εἰ μὴ πάλιν ἦκον ἕτεροι παρὰ τοῦ Παρμενίωνος ἵππεῖς μετακαλοῦντες Ἀλέξανδρον, ὡς συνεστώσης ἔτι πολλῆς δυνάμεως ἐκεῖ καὶ τῶν πολεμίων οὐκ ἐνδιδόντων.

Again, for the third time, poor Parmenion cuts a sorry figure that throws into relief Alexander's dashing performance. After proposing the less than heroic night battle and asking Alexander to take care of the baggage in vain, he deprives him of the battle's crown, the capture of Darius. The counterfactual reminds the reader that the course of events was not as inevitable as it may seem in retrospect: Alexander could have caught Darius at Gaugamela ...

#### *Further vivid scenes*

Plutarch notes critically that Alexander's march through Pamphylia 'has afforded many historians material for terrifying and bombastic description' ('πολλοῖς γέγονε τῶν ἱστορικῶν ὑπόθεσις γραφικὴ πρὸς ἔκπληξιν καὶ ὄγκον', 17.6) as well as objecting to those who dramatized Alexander's death and 'invented in tragic fashion a moving finale for a great action' ('ὡσπερ δράματος μεγάλου τραγικὸν ἐξόδιον καὶ περιπαθὲς πλάσαντες', 75.5). This and similar polemics in other *Lives* notwithstanding,<sup>223</sup> Plutarch's own narrative is imbued with *enargeia*, as the Gaugamela account has shown. Vivid accounts are by no means limited to battle reports: at the beginning of the *Alexander*, for example, Plutarch narrates in much detail the taming of Bucephalas, an anecdote to which I will return (VI). The wedding of Philip with Cleopatra features an argument between father and son that escalates. When Philip draws his sword and then stumbles, Alexander quips: 'Look now, men! here is one who was preparing to cross from Europe into Asia; and he has come undone in trying to cross from couch to couch.' ('οὗτος μέντοι ... ἄνδρες εἰς Ἀσίαν ἐξ Εὐρώπης παρεσκευάζετο διαβαίνειν, ὅς ἐπὶ κλίνην ἀπὸ κλίνης διαβαίνων ἀνατέτραπται.' 9.10). Alexander's encounter with Diogenes is another story that is short, but vividly narrated (14.2-5) just as an anecdote about the chase of Darius (42.6-10): exhausted and suffering from thirst, Alexander and his men encounter Macedonians carrying water from the river. Alexander first takes the helmet of water they offer him, but then returns it: 'For ... if I should drink of it alone, these horsemen of mine will be disheartened.' ('ἂν γὰρ αὐτὸς ... πίω μόνος, ἀθυμήσουσιν οὗτοι.' 42.9). The account of the murder of Cleitus features direct speech as well as close descriptions of the feelings involved. The killing itself is

<sup>223</sup> Cf. Wardman 1974: 172-9; Desideri 1992: 4542 n. 19; Liddel 2008: 131.

highlighted by a historical present (‘διελαύνει’, 51.10). Following upon the catastrophic march through the Gedrosian desert, Plutarch elaborates on the revel of the Greeks through Carmania (67.4):

And you would not have seen a shield, nor a helmet, nor a spear, but throughout the whole march with cups and drinking-horns and flagons the soldiers kept drawing wine from huge casks and mixing-bowls and toasting one another, some as they marched along, others lying down.

εἶδες δ’ ἂν οὐ πέλτην, οὐ κράνος, οὐ σάρισαν, ἀλλὰ φιάλαις καὶ ῥυτοῖς καὶ θηρικλείοις παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἅπασαν οἱ στρατιῶται κυαθίζοντες ἐκ πίθων μεγάλων καὶ κρατήρων ἀλλήλοις προέπινον, οἱ μὲν ἐν τῷ προάγειν ἅμα καὶ βαδίζειν, οἱ δὲ κατακείμενοι.

The apostrophe to the reader deepens the immersive quality of the detailed description.<sup>224</sup> This survey may suffice to illustrate the *enargeia* showcased in the *Alexander*. The examination of its episodic structure will provide important qualifications of the mimetic character of Plutarch’s narrative (V), but first a specific feature of the *Alexander*’s vividness deserves our attention.

## II. THE DRAMA OF ALEXANDER

Elaborate scenes, brimming with details and highly picturesque, can be found in more or less all of Plutarch’s biographies. Think, for instance, of Volumnia’s entreaty to her son in the *Coriolanus*. A slow build-up generates suspense: Plutarch first has Valeria go to Volumnia, reporting their conversation in two direct speeches. Volumnia harbours doubts about the prospect of approaching Coriolanus – ‘For I know not whether the man will have any regard for us, since he has none for his country, which he once set before mother and wife and children.’ (‘οὐκ οἶδα γὰρ εἴ τινα ποιήσεται λόγον ἡμῶν ἐκεῖνος, εἴ γε μηδένα ποιεῖται τῆς πατρίδος, ἣν καὶ μητρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς καὶ τέκνων προετίμησεν.’ 33.9) – but finally, accompanied by Coriolanus’ children, Vergilia and the other women, she goes to the Volscians’ camp. Coriolanus first reacts with silence to Volumnia’s long speech and only yields when, after another speech, ‘she throws herself at his feet, together with his wife and children’ (‘προσπίπτει τοῖς γόνασιν αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῆς γυναικὸς ἅμα καὶ τῶν παιδίων’, 36.4). There is little direct introspection into Coriolanus’ feelings, but the spare description of his reaction to seeing his mother strikingly evokes his agitation (34.3):

---

<sup>224</sup> Already [Longin.] *Subl.* 26.2 comments on the immersive effect of apostrophe in historiography. Cf. Gilmartin 1975.

When, accordingly, he saw the women approaching, he was amazed; and when he recognized his mother, who walked at their head, he would have persisted in his previous inflexible and implacable course, but, mastered by his feelings, and confounded at what he saw, he could not endure to remain seated while they approached him, but descended quickly from the tribunal and ran to meet them.

ὡς οὖν εἶδε προσιούσας τὰς γυναῖκας, ἐθαύμασεν· ἐπιγνοὺς δὲ τὴν μητέρα πρώτην βαδίζουσας, ἐβούλετο μὲν ἐμμένειν τοῖς ἀτρέπτοις ἐκείνοις καὶ ἀπαραιτήτοις λογισμοῖς, γενόμενος δὲ τοῦ πάθους ἐλάττων καὶ συνταραχθεὶς πρὸς τὴν ὄψιν, οὐκ ἔτλη καθεζομένῳ προσελθεῖν, ἀλλὰ καταβὰς θᾶπτον ἢ βᾶδην καὶ ἀπαντήσας ...<sup>225</sup>

Volumnia's speeches vividly present her own perception of the situation and chart the points that must have weighed on Coriolanus, thereby letting the reader view the situation from the perspective of the characters.

To give another, more graphic example, the end of the *Antony* features a series of scenes with strong visual appeal: Antony, fatally wounded after trying to kill himself on the assumption that Cleopatra is dead, is drawn up with ropes to a window of the tomb in which Cleopatra hides: 'Smear'd with blood and struggling with death ... stretching out his hands to her even as he dangled in the air.' ('πεφυρμένος γὰρ αἵματι καὶ δυσθανατῶν ... τὰς χεῖρας ὀρέγων εἰς ἐκείνην καὶ παραιωρούμενος.' 77.3). Then, after Antony's death, Proculius, sent from Octavian, manages to enter the tomb through the same window and prevents the suicide that Cleopatra attempts when she sees him (79). Meeting Octavian, Cleopatra 'throws herself at his feet; her hair and face in terrible disarray, her voice trembling, and her eyes sunken' ('προσπίπτει, δεινῶς μὲν ἐξηγριωμένη κεφαλὴν καὶ πρόσωπον, ὑπότρομος δὲ τῇ φωνῇ καὶ συντετηκυῖα ταῖς ὄψεσιν', 83.1). The narrative of Cleopatra's death is particularly engaging: after her libations to Antony, rendered in direct speech (84.4-7), she receives two baskets. The close description of how the guardians check the baskets and let them pass intimates their special character, but Plutarch does not put his readers in the picture and artfully delays the denouement: he first turns to Octavian who receives the letter in which Cleopatra asks him to bury her together with Antony. Only then, *fait accompli*, does the narrator represent her in a tableau (85.6-7):

They found Cleopatra lying dead upon a golden couch, arrayed in royal state. And of her two women, the one called Iras was dying at her feet, while Charmion, already tottering and heavy-headed, was trying to arrange the diadem which encircled the queen's brow.

... εὗρον αὐτὴν τεθνηκυῖαν ἐν χρυσοῦ κατακειμένην κλίνην κεκοσμημένην βασιλικῶς. τῶν δὲ γυναικῶν ἡ μὲν Εἰρὰς λεγομένη πρὸς τοῖς ποσὶν

<sup>225</sup> Plutarch mentions Coriolanus' extraordinary adoration for his mother in *Cor.* 4.5-7.

ἀπέθνησκεν, ἡ δὲ Χάρμιον ἤδη σφαλλομένη καὶ κερηβαροῦσα κατεκόσμη τὸ διάδημα τὸ περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς.

*Enargeia* can be found in all *Lives*, and yet the *Alexander* stands out through the large number of vivid scenes. In this section, I would like to elaborate on a feature of Alexander that is highly conducive to the *enargeia* of the account. This feature is made explicit in one of *Alexander's* visually most appealing scenes: when Alexander falls severely ill in Cilicia, only the Acarnanian Philip dares to treat him. Parmenion's warning against this doctor notwithstanding, Alexander swallows his potion (19.6-7):

When the appointed time was at hand, and Philip came in with the king's companions, carrying the medicine in a cup, Alexander handed him the letter, while he himself took the medicine from him with readiness and no sign of suspicion. It was an amazing sight, then, and one well worthy of the stage, – the one reading, the other drinking, and then both together turning their eyes upon one another, but not with the same expression; for Alexander, by his glad and open countenance, showed his good will towards Philip and his trust in him ...

ὡς δὲ τοῦ καιροῦ παρόντος εἰσῆλθε μετὰ τῶν ἐταίρων ὁ Φίλιππος, τὸ φάρμακον ἐν κύλικι κομίζων, ἐκείνῳ μὲν ἐπέδωκε τὴν ἐπιστολήν, αὐτὸς δὲ τὸ φάρμακον ἐδέξατο προθύμως καὶ ἀνυπόπτως, ὥστε θαυμαστήν καὶ θεατρικὴν τὴν ὄψιν εἶναι, τοῦ μὲν ἀναγινώσκοντος, τοῦ δὲ πίνοντος, εἴθ' ἅμα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀποβλεπόντων οὐχ ὁμοίως, ἀλλὰ τοῦ μὲν Ἀλεξάνδρου φαιδρῶ τῶ προσώπῳ καὶ διακεχυμένῳ τὴν πρὸς τὸν Φίλιππον εὐμένειαν καὶ πίστιν ἀποφαίνοντος ...

The assonances pave the way for the highly stylized description of the two in which the syntactic parallelism mimics their spatial juxtaposition and renders the scene highly graphic.<sup>226</sup> Its picturesque and theatrical aspects are pointed out explicitly: 'an amazing sight ... well worthy of the stage'. Judith Mossman has made a case that Plutarch draws on the frame of tragedy as well as of epic in his *Alexander* narrative.<sup>227</sup> What I find striking is that a strong theatrical dimension already imbues the level of the action, more precisely, that Alexander has a strong penchant for presentation.<sup>228</sup> As we will see in the remainder of this section, it comes to the fore in his enthusiasm about theatre, his self-fashioning and concern with fame; in some cases, it leads to a blurring of the boundaries between play and

<sup>226</sup> The parallel account of Curtius Rufus (3.6) throws into relief the quality of the anecdote in Plutarch. Curtius' version includes an interior monologue in which Alexander ponders whether or not to drink the potion (3.6.2) and two direct speeches by Philip and Alexander (3.6.10-13), but falls flat compared with Plutarch's narrative economy and striking visuality.

<sup>227</sup> Mossman 1995 (=1988).

<sup>228</sup> On theatrical features in *Demetrius* and *Antony*, see Pelling 1988: 21-2; 2002g (=1986): 355.

reality, between performance and life that can be hard to disentangle even for Plutarch. I am not going to inquire about how much of this goes back to the historical Alexander – he seems in fact to have been much invested in his appearance – but I will merely trace these features in Plutarch’s narrative in order to demonstrate that the extraordinary *enargeia* of the vita is firmly rooted in the character of the hero as Plutarch sees him. It is Alexander’s infatuation with performance and fame that imbues the vita with *enargeia* just as his entwinement of play and reality helps to close the gap between events and their narrative representation.

### *Theatre and self-fashioning*

To start with, Alexander indulges in theatre: he quotes from Euripides (10.7; 53.2; 4), dotes on actors (29.3-6; 67.8), has the works of the three great Attic tragedians brought to him in Asia (8.3) and organizes dramatic performances at several places (4.11; 29.1; 72.1). More importantly, Alexander’s self-stylization has a theatrical touch. When he comes to Parthia, he starts donning an oriental garb that mixes Persian and Median elements (45.1-2). The initial restriction of this wardrobe to meetings with barbarians and old companions at his own place makes it hard not to think of an actor putting on a costume for his performance (45.3). Alexander’s ability to play different roles with Greeks and barbarians is praised in another passage in which Plutarch also interprets the legend of Alexander’s divine origin as a strategy to legitimize his rule over barbarians (28).

Even Alexander’s interaction with his own troops bears histrionic features. At Opis, the Macedonians protest angrily against his plan to discharge old and mutilated soldiers without further ado and suggest that he send back all of them. Alexander is so upset that he dismisses his Macedonian guard and engages Persians instead. This makes the Macedonians repent and come to Alexander’s tent, without weapons, clad only in chitons. Although the sight ‘softens’ Alexander (‘μαλασσόμενος’, 71.7), he plays hard-to-get and lets them weep. Only after two full days and nights does he come out – and weep himself (71.7-8).<sup>229</sup>

An important aspect of Alexander’s self-fashioning is his use of an epic model. Plutarch not only casts Alexander in a heroic mould, but has Alexander stylize himself as an Achilles *redivivus*.<sup>230</sup> Alexander, called Achilles by his teacher Lysimachus (5.8), honours the tomb of his heroic idol at Troy with oil and garlands (15.8). Later he models his grief at Hephaestion’s death on Achilles’

<sup>229</sup> On the overtone of this episode evoking the idea of a *paraklausithyron*, see Carney 2000a: 276-7.

<sup>230</sup> The occurrence of this point in different Alexander traditions suggests that the historical Alexander modelled himself on Achilles. On Alexander and Achilles, see Edmunds 1971: 372-3; Stewart 1993: 78-86; Cohen 1995; Carney 2000b. For Alexander’s love of Homer in Plutarch’s *Alexander*, see 8.2; 26.1-5.

mourning over Patroclus, prepares a splendid burial for his intimus and butchers the Cossaeans as an Ἡφαιστίωνος ἐναγισμός, just like Achilles who indulges in a pitiless massacre of the Trojans in his rage over Patroclus' death (72.3-8). A hero who is as obsessed with performance and self-fashioning as Plutarch's Alexander invariably produces scenes that lend itself to an account thick with *enargeia*.

### *Concern with fame*

Alexander's Achilles-imitation reveals that he uses his performative talent not only as a political instrument, but also with an eye to posthumous fame. In addition to poignant gestures, Plutarch's Alexander is deeply concerned with the representation and memory of his deeds, thereby paving the way for a vivid record of his character as we find it in the *Alexander*. Alexander praises Achilles, who had a faithful friend while alive and after his death found 'a great herald' of his fame ('μεγάλου κήρυκος', 15.8). The following anecdote illustrates Alexander's concern with his afterlife (15.9):

As he was going about and viewing the sights of the city [i.e. Troy], someone asked him if he wished to see the lyre of Alexander. He said to care little for that lyre, but to look for the one of Achilles, to which he used to sing the glorious deeds of brave men.

ἐν δὲ τῷ περιιέναι καὶ θεᾶσθαι τὰ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἐρομένου τινὸς αὐτόν, εἰ βούλεται τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου λύραν ἰδεῖν, ἐλάχιστα φροντίζειν ἐκείνης ἔφη, τὴν δ' Ἀχιλλέως ζητεῖν, ἣ τὰ κλέα καὶ τὰς πράξεις ὕμνει τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐκεῖνος.<sup>231</sup>

This anecdote bears significance at different levels. Let us first look at the mention of Alexander's Trojan namesake and then at Achilles and his fame: there may be more to the mention of the mythical Alexander than the pun on the name. Alexander is not the first to visit the ruins of Troy on a military expedition. Herodotus has Xerxes do the same on his way to Europe (7.43.1).<sup>232</sup> Yet, whereas Xerxes visits the ruins of 'Priam's Pergamum', Alexander, in claiming the heritage of Achilles, not Paris, aligns himself with the Achaeans. The further Alexander invades Asia, though, the more Persian elements infiltrate his identity; finally, he envisages himself as the heir of the Persian Kings.<sup>233</sup> In Persepolis, for

---

<sup>231</sup> On the significance of the lyre, see Mossman 2006: 287-8. Arrian does not have the incident, but reports how Alexander exchanges his armour against one that he assumes to be from the Trojan War (1.11).

<sup>232</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2009b: 210-11 and ch. 6 ???. See also ch. 3 ???, where I propose that Xenophon may evoke Xerxes' invasion of Europe as a foil to Cyrus' expedition against the King.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Whitmarsh 2002 on Alexander's increasing adoption of barbarian traits, but see also Mossman 2006, who shows that there is no clear-cut linear development.

example, he still ponders whether or not to re-erect the statue of Xerxes (37.5-6). Later on, in Pasargadae he punishes the robbers of Cyrus' tomb and adds a Greek translation of the grave inscription (69.1-4). The allusion to his Trojan namesake and the parallel in Herodotus may adumbrate this development and intimate the wavering of Alexander's identity between East and West. That Plutarch may insinuate a parallel between Alexander and the son of Priam is suggested by the rendering of the same anecdote in *De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute* (331d7): here, it is noteworthy, Plutarch refers to him as Paris, not as Alexander.

Alexander obviously alludes to *Iliad* 9 where the embassy meets Achilles who has withdrawn from the battle and is playing the lyre and singing the fame of men (9.186-91).<sup>234</sup> Alexander will not only imitate the withdrawal of Achilles more than once, but the best of the Achaeans offers him a model of somebody who does great deeds and makes them famous. Achilles may not sing of his own deeds; and yet, he encapsulates the combination of martial excellence with poetic activity that parallels the simultaneity of heroic performance and concern with fame in Alexander. Plutarch seems to play with this when he writes after the Hydaspes battle: 'The producer of the battle himself has said this in his letters.' (ἑταῦτα μὲν οὖν ὁ τῆς μάχης ποιητῆς αὐτὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς εἶρηκεν.' 60.11). The unusual metaphor ὁ τῆς μάχης ποιητῆς deploys the word 'poet' as vehicle to signify Alexander as general. The metaphorical superimposition of the notions of general and author is reinforced by the context, namely that Alexander is writing about his own deeds. Time and again, Plutarch relies on the testimony of these letters and thereby grants voice to Alexander's own presentation of his deeds.<sup>235</sup>

While not discussing Alexander's engagement of historians, Plutarch mentions further media which secure the circulation of his glory: after the battle at Granicus, Alexander has pictures of the fallen comrades made and sends an inscription together with spoils to Athens (16.16-17). Bronze figures at Delphi representing a hunt at which Alexander engaged in a single-handed fight with a lion (39.5)<sup>236</sup> further illustrate that he extends his self-fashioning both spatially and temporally far beyond his own presence.

Alexander takes his concern with fame to another level at the geographical limits of his expedition. When even a round of sulking seclusion fails to bring the army to cross the Ganges, Alexander (62.6-7)

... resorts to many deceitful and fallacious devices for the enhancement of his fame. For instance, he had armour prepared that was larger than usual,

<sup>234</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2006a: 140-3.

<sup>235</sup> On the role of the letters in the narrative, cf. Desideri 1992: 4551-2; on their authenticity, see Hamilton 1969: xlix-lx.

<sup>236</sup> On Alexander and lions in Plutarch's biography, see Sansone 1980: 73-4.

and mangers for horses that were higher, and bits that were heavier than those in common use, and left them scattered up and down.

... πολλὰ πρὸς δόξαν ἀπατηλὰ καὶ σοφιστικὰ μηχανώμενος. καὶ γὰρ ὄπλα μείζονα καὶ φάτνας ἵππων καὶ χαλινούς βαρυτέρους κατασκευάσας ἀπέλιπέ τε καὶ διέρριπεν.

Even after leaving the stage, Alexander makes sure that it attests to his grandeur – and Plutarch hurries to confirm that it still does, as the altars he erected ‘are revered by the kings of the Praesii down to the present time’ (‘μέχρι νῦν οἱ Πραισίων βασιλεῖς διαβαίνοντες σέβονται’, 62.8). The manipulation of a site for the sake of memory is again reminiscent of Xerxes who at Thermopylae has the dead Persians buried and leaves about a thousand of the 20,000 corpses of Persian soldiers with all 4,000 dead Greeks (8.25).<sup>237</sup> While Xerxes manipulates the battleground, Alexander prepares the ground where he would have liked to do battle in order to impress his enemies. Despite the difference, Alexander is aligned with Xerxes in making himself the archaeologist of his own deeds.

If we follow Pelling’s suggestion that Zonaras has preserved the ending of the *Alexander*, a similar attempt to generate fame would conclude the biography.<sup>238</sup> In the anecdote reported by the Byzantine chronicler (4.14 p. 304), Alexander, sensing that he is about to die, tries to drown himself secretly in the Euphrates to give rise to the legend of his deification. Roxane, however, finds out about this plan and impedes it. While at the Ganges Alexander artificially creates traces, at the end of his life he would try to annihilate them, in both cases with the intention of manipulating the memory of his life. Here as in other scenes, Plutarch’s desire for striking tableaux is anticipated by Alexander’s strife for memorable gestures that will secure his fame.

### *Play and reality*

Alexander’s infatuation with presentation and performance goes so far that it challenges the boundaries between play and reality. This, I will argue, underscores indirectly the mimetic claim of Plutarch’s account. At a tragic contest held at Tyre, Alexander’s favourite, Thessalus, is defeated by another actor named Athenodorus. Alexander respects the decision of the arbiters, but says that he would have given a part of his kingdom to see Thessalus win (29.1-4). What is at first glance only a hyperbolic expression of the adoration felt for the actor, nicely illustrates Alexander’s willingness to mix the real world with the stage. As he considers directly converting material into artistic capital, he subtly intertwines life and drama. This tendency is continued in one of the following anecdotes: ‘When Lycon of Scarphea, who was acting successfully, inserted into the comedy

---

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2009b: 213 and ch. 6 ???.

<sup>238</sup> Pelling 1973; cf. 2002h (=1997): 380.

a verse containing a request for ten talents, Alexander laughed and gave them to him.’ (‘Λύκωνος δὲ τοῦ Σκαρφέως εὐημεροῦντος ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ καὶ στίχον εἰς τὴν κωμῳδίαν ἐμβαλόντος αἴτησιν περιέχοντα δέκα ταλάντων, γελάσας ἔδωκε.’ 29.6). In answering a request spoken by an actor in performance, Alexander erases the borderline between stage and audience.

The blurring of the distinction between play and reality extends beyond theatre. In his elaboration on Alexander’s generosity, Plutarch reports an anecdote about Serapion, one of the young men with whom Alexander plays ball. Since Serapion has never requested gifts, Alexander has not given him any (39.5):

Accordingly, whenever Serapion had the ball, he would throw it to others, until the king said: ‘Won’t you give it to me?’ ‘No’, said Serapion, ‘because you don’t ask for it’, whereat the king burst out laughing and made him many presents.

ὡς οὖν εἰς τὸ σφαιρίζειν παραγενόμενος ὁ Σεραπίων ἄλλοις ἔβαλλε τὴν σφαῖραν, εἰπόντος δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως ‘ἐμοὶ δ’ οὐ δίδως;’ ‘οὐ γὰρ αἰτεῖς’ εἶπε, τούτῳ μὲν δὴ γελάσας πολλὰ δέδωκε.

Playing ball is more than just a game – when Serapion uses the game to point to Alexander’s reticence in real life, it becomes an inverse mirror of reality. Through the gifts prompted by the game, but given in reality, Alexander blends together the two realms.

Alexander also inverts the relation between human beings and their representations in art. Despite their extraordinary beauty, he abstains from laying hands on Darius’ wife and other Persian prisoners: ‘Displaying in rivalry with their fair looks the beauty of his own sobriety and self-control, he passed them by as though they were lifeless images for display.’ (‘ἀντεπιδεικνύμενος δὲ πρὸς τὴν ιδέαν τὴν ἐκείνων τὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐγκρατείας καὶ σωφροσύνης κάλλος, ὥσπερ ἀψύχους εἰκόνας ἀγαλμάτων παρέπεμπε.’ 21.11). Not much later, Alexander stands in front of a fallen statue of Xerxes (37.5)

... and accosting it as if it had been alive, said: ‘Shall we pass on and leave you lying there, because of your expedition against the Hellenes, or, because of your magnanimity and virtue in other ways, shall we set you up again?’

... καὶ καθάπερ ἔμψυχον προσαγορεύσας ‘πότερόν σε’ εἶπε ‘διὰ τὴν ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἕλληνας στρατείαν κείμενον παρέλθωμεν, ἢ διὰ τὴν ἄλλην μεγαλοφροσύνην καὶ ἀρετὴν ἐγείρωμεν;’

While regarding the women as if they were ‘lifeless’ (‘ἄψυχοι’) images, Alexander addresses the statue of Xerxes like somebody ‘alive’ (‘ἔμψυχος’). The inversion ties in nicely with his proclivity to intertwine reality and play.

Alexander's skills as performer and director make it hard for Plutarch to assess some events. In Persepolis, a hetaira, Thais, advances at a symposium the idea of setting fire to Xerxes' palace in revenge for the burning of Athens. The guests shout encouragement and Alexander, a torch in his hand, leads a *komos* to the palace: 'This is the way the deed was done, according to some writers; but others say it was premeditated. However, it is agreed that Alexander speedily repented and gave orders to put out the fire.' ('οἱ μὲν οὕτω ταῦτα γενέσθαι φασίν, οἱ δ' ἀπὸ γνώμης ὅτι δ' οὖν μετενόησε ταχὺ καὶ κατασβέσαι προσέταξεν, ὁμολογεῖται.' 38.8). Plutarch does not support either version – with a character like Alexander who has transformed the world into a stage it is hard to tell where the *mise-en-scène* starts.<sup>239</sup>

The convergence of different strains of the Alexander tradition indicates that the historical Alexander was in fact deeply invested in his self-fashioning, but no matter to what degree Plutarch's Alexander is faithful to the historical personality or builds on the lore made up by earlier writers, the obsession of his Alexander with performance produces many scenes that in themselves are very graphic and furnish abundant material for an account that aims at *enargeia*. It may be due not least to the narrative's hero that the *Alexander* ranks very high, if not foremost, in its mimetic appeal among the *Parallel Lives*.

Alexander's interweaving of reality and fiction provides not only rich material for narrative *enargeia*, but also buttresses Plutarch's mimetic claim from another angle. When the events themselves are already encoded, when Alexander, for example, models his behaviour on Achilles, the gap between life and *Life* is felt less strongly. As recorder of Alexander's *vita*, Plutarch merely continues what Alexander has already started in his life. Alexander's blurring of the difference between statues and living humans erases the wall separating reality from its representation. Applied to the *Alexander* itself, this tendency closes the gap between *res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum* and paves the way for narrative mimesis.

### III. PLUTARCH'S NARRATORIAL PRESENCE

The *Alexander* nicely illustrates Plutarch's striving for a vivid and engaging narrative. At the same time, its mimesis is seriously qualified by a strong narratorial voice, which I shall discuss in the section, and frequent foreshadowing, to be treated in the subsequent section. While the reticence of the narrator in Thucydides and Xenophon enhances the experiential quality of their

---

<sup>239</sup> Arr. 3.18.12 and Strabo 15.3.6 narrate the burning of Persepolis as an act of revenge for the sack of Athens, whereas in Ath. 13.576d (= Cleitarchus 137 F 11 *FGrH*); Diod. 17.72 and Curt. 5.7.2-11 it is the culmination of a symposium. For a brief survey, see Flower 2000: 113-15.

accounts, Plutarch's narrator frequently interrupts the mimesis of the narrative.<sup>240</sup> His voice is most conspicuous in the proems and concluding *synkriseis*. The *Lives of Alexander-Caesar* is one of four pairs in the *Vitae parallelae* that lack a formal *synkrisis* at the end,<sup>241</sup> but nevertheless Plutarch's introductory reflections on his goals establish a distinct narratorial voice. More strikingly, the narrator makes his presence felt in the following narrative. In order to highlight this aspect that undermines the experiential quality of Plutarch's narrative, I will briefly discuss digressions, references to the present, citations and diverging versions.

### *Digressions and references to the present*

Time and again, Plutarch interrupts the flow of the narrative in order to discuss points that arouse his interest. In Babylonia, for example, Alexander encounters naphtha, the inflammatory nature of which is impressively showcased by the Babylonians, who illuminate with it the path to Alexander's quarters by night (35.1-4).<sup>242</sup> In a bizarre experiment, a singer is anointed in naphtha, set on fire and survives only with severe burns (35.5-9). Plutarch adds the suggestion that Medea used naphtha in order to inflame the crown and robe of Glaucus, and speculates about its origin (35.10-15): Babylon's soil, he points out, is very fiery so that grains of barley jump out of the ground and the people sleep on skins filled with water. For the same reason, Harpalus did not succeed in planting ivy that thrives in cool places ('φιλόψυχρος', 35.15). Like other astonishing phenomena, naphtha prompts Plutarch to interrupt the narrative for some general reflections. In the case of naphtha, Plutarch even justifies this narratorial practice, further deepening the rupture of the mimesis through the self-reference: 'However, if such digressions are kept within bounds, perhaps my impatient readers will find less fault with them.' ('τῶν μὲν οὖν τοιούτων παρεκβάσεων, ἂν μέτρον ἔχωσιν, ἤττον ἴσως οἱ δύσκολοι κατηγορήσουσιν.' 35.16).

The presence of the narrator is also made visible within the narrative, for example through references to his own time, the narratorial present. We have already encountered an instance of this in the story of the soldiers' mutiny at the Ganges, where Plutarch points out that the altars erected by Alexander are still revered (62.8). In a similar vein, the reader is jolted out of the narrated past when Plutarch remarks that in the nymphaeum turned into a school by Philip the seats and walkways of Aristotle are still exhibited to that day (7.4). While here and in

<sup>240</sup> On Plutarch's narratorial voice, see Pelling 2004. I strongly disagree with Desideri 1992: 4556 who airs 'l'impressione che Plutarco voglia in tutti i modi minimizzare l'importanza del narratore e far sì che gli attori, in particolare il protagonista, si muovano sulla scena in assoluta libertà'.

<sup>241</sup> *Phocion-Cato Minor*, *Themistocles-Camillus*, *Pyrrhus-Marius* are the others. Cf. Costanza 1956: 134-53 on the *Alexander-Caesar*, but see also Pelling 2002h (=1997): 378-82; Duff 1999: 254-5 on the possibility that the *Alexander-Caesar* did not have a *synkrisis* at the end. On *synkrisis*, see n. ??? below.

<sup>242</sup> On naphtha and its significance for characterising Alexander, see Sansone 1980.

other cases still visible traces of the past let Plutarch highlights his narratorial present,<sup>243</sup> the following interruption of the mimesis in the account of the foundation of Alexandria is motivated by a change (26.6):

Accordingly, he rose up at once and went to Pharos, which at that time was still an island, a little above the Canobic mouth of the Nile, but now it has been joined to the mainland by a causeway.

εὐθὺς οὖν ἐξαναστὰς ἐβάδιζεν ἐπὶ τὴν Φάρον, ἢ τότε μὲν ἔτι νῆσος ἦν τοῦ Κανωβικοῦ μικρὸν ἀνωτέρω στόματος, νῦν δὲ διὰ χώματος ἀνείληπται πρὸς τὴν ἥπειρον.

#### *Citations and alternative versions*

As I have already argued in the Xenophon chapter, references to sources remind the readers that they are not following the events themselves, but a reconstruction that itself draws on other accounts.<sup>244</sup> Plutarch attributes to Chares, for instance, an anecdote from Alexander's expedition against the Arabs: Alexander falls behind with Lysimachus and has to spend the night separated from the army, in immediate vicinity of the enemies, from whom he steals fire in a prank (24.10-14). Plutarch's readiness to acknowledge the channels of transmission comes to the fore in the account of Alexander's death (77.3):

But those who affirm that Aristotle counselled Antipater to do the deed, and that it was entirely through his agency that the poison was provided, mention one Hagnothemis as their authority, who professed to have heard the story from Antigonus the King.

οἱ δ' Ἀριστοτέλην φάσκοντες Ἀντιπάτρῳ σύμβουλον γεγενῆσθαι τῆς πράξεως καὶ ὄλως δι' ἐκείνου κομισθῆναι τὸ φάρμακον Ἀγνόθεμιν τινα διηγεῖσθαι λέγουσιν ὡς Ἀντιγόνου τοῦ βασιλέως ἀκούσαντα.

Three instances separate Plutarch from the event. Like the last of the three instances, some citations are anonymous: in the account of Gaugamela, for example, Plutarch qualifies the flight of Xerxes on a young horse with ὡς φασι (33.8). The narratorial mediation is similarly flagged in another graphic scene, Alexander's encounter with Diogenes ('λέγεται', 14.5). It is problematic to generalize about such citations in ancient historiography and biography – they are often used where an author does not want to vouch for the truth of an episode, but sometimes they rather seem to buttress claims through invoking an authority.<sup>245</sup> If,

---

<sup>243</sup> See also 9.3; 24.9; 69.8.

<sup>244</sup> On Plutarch's source citations, see Desideri 1992, who sees in their frequency an argument that Plutarch should be taken seriously as historian (4538). See also Scardigli 1995: 25-6.

<sup>245</sup> See the literature in ??? (ch. 3 Pauw 1980).

for instance, the citation concerning Xerxes' flight implies an estimation of its reliability at all, it seems not so much to express disbelief as to back up a detail in the narrative.<sup>246</sup> No matter what the exact use of citations for the narrator's self-fashioning is, they highlight the act of mediation and mark the gap that separates Plutarch's account from the events.

The mimetic spell of the narrative is also disturbed by the juxtaposition of, and sometimes discussion of, alternative versions. Even where Plutarch favours one version, the mimesis is interrupted, and the many cases in which he withholds judgment underscore the fact that he has no direct access to the past: some say that Alexander's illness in Cilicia was due to a disease, others that it was triggered by fatigue and yet others that it was a consequence of a bath in the icy river Cydnus (19.2). While the sources here remain anonymous, Plutarch names the numbers that Aristobulus, Duris and Onesicritus give for the financial resources with which Alexander starts his expedition (15.2). We find the longest list of sources in the discussion of the visit of the Amazon, where Plutarch names five historians in favour of its historicity and nine against it.<sup>247</sup>

The juxtaposition of different versions is not bound to citations. Plutarch also offers different possibilities when he talks about the motivation of individuals. Alexander spares Athens since he either has satiated his *thymos* or he wants to follow up the cruel destruction of Thebes with a decent deed (13.2); his oriental dress is an attempt to appease the barbarians or alternatively to get the Macedonians used to *proskynesis* (45.2);<sup>248</sup> and he first hesitates to tackle Philotas, either trusting Parmenion's benevolence or fearing his reputation and power (49.2). Most of these disjunctions apply to the state of mind of Alexander, but they also foreground other characters including Parmenion, whose less than helpful interventions at Gaugamela may be due to either his age or his envy (33.10).<sup>249</sup> Besides instilling belief in the narrator's trustworthiness and engaging the reader who is called upon to ponder the different versions, the narrator's uncertainty impinges like the other features discussed on the mimesis of the narrative.

#### IV. FORESHADOWING AND TELEOLOGY

Neither Thucydides nor Xenophon fully evades hindsight; the evaluation of Pericles as well as the Scyllus ekphrasis reveals the narrator's retrospect. At the

---

<sup>246</sup> Its major effect may be along different lines and, for example, help the mimetic narrative to wind down.

<sup>247</sup> See, for example, also the critique levelled at historians who embroider and dramatize the march through Pamphylia (17.6) and Alexander's death (75.5). Different versions mentioned by Plutarch can also be found in 2.6-9 (the conception of *Alexander*); 18.3-4 (Gordian knot); 27.9-11 (journey to Siwah); 38.8 (burning of Persepolis); 55.9 (death of Callisthenes); 60.6-12 (Hydaspes battle); 61.1 (death of Bucephalus).

<sup>248</sup> On the two explanations and the ambivalence of the passage, see Mossman 2006: 290.

<sup>249</sup> See also the motivation of Philip's abstinence from his wife in 2.6.

same time, both authors by and large avoid prolepses in order to enhance the experiential quality of their accounts. Plutarch, on the other hand, uses not only a strongly visible narrator, but also interrupts the mimesis of his account through frequent foreshadowing. A look at prolepses and teleology in this section will strengthen the impression that Plutarch's *enargeia* is different from the experiential quality to be found in Thucydides and Xenophon.

### *Foreshadowing*

Let me start with a couple of simple instances in which Plutarch supplies information in retrospect. When Philip bans Harpalus, Nearchus, Erigyius and Ptolemaeus, he adds that there were men 'whom Alexander afterwards recalled and held in the highest honours' ('οὺς ὕστερον Ἀλέξανδρος καταγαγὼν ἐν ταῖς μεγίσταις ἔσχε τιμαῖς', 10.4). The prolepsis is short, but nonetheless privileges the reader over the characters. This kind of foreshadowing can also extend beyond the end of the biography as when Plutarch mentions that Thais, instigator of the burning of Persepolis, would be the hetaira of King Ptolemaeus (38.2). The fright that Alexander instils in Cassander is illustrated by an anecdote from the time after Alexander's death: seeing a statue of Alexander in Delphi, Cassander, now himself king, starts shuddering and trembling (74.6).

A more intricate prolepsis closes the account of the destruction of Thebes (13.3-4):

In later times, moreover, as we are told, the calamity of the Thebans often gave him remorse, and made him milder towards many people. And certainly the murder of Cleitus, which he committed in his cups, and the cowardly refusal of his Macedonians to follow him against the Indians, whereby they as it were robbed his expedition and his glory of their consummation, he was wont to attribute to the vengeful wrath of Dionysus.

ὕστερον μέντοι πολλάκις αὐτὸν ἢ Θηβαίων ἀνιᾶσαι συμφορὰ λέγεται καὶ πράοτερον οὐκ ὀλίγοις παρασχεῖν. ὅλως δὲ καὶ τὸ περὶ Κλεῖτον ἔργον ἐν οἴνῳ γενόμενον, καὶ τὴν πρὸς Ἰνδοῦς τῶν Μακεδόνων ἀποδειλίασιν, ὥσπερ ἀτελῆ τὴν στρατείαν καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ προεμένων, εἰς μῆνιν ἀνῆγε Διονύσου καὶ νέμεσιν.<sup>250</sup>

This foreshadowing not only supplies some information about the future, but attempts to establish a historical explanation by viewing a later event in light of the one narrated. Plutarch does not make this link *sua voce*, but has it internally focalized through the later Alexander, thereby encapsulating in his own narratorial prospect a character's retrospect. This entwinement highlights the dynamic of the

<sup>250</sup> Cf. Pelling 2002e (=1999): 202 on this passage.

futures past: while the historian envisages the events that he narrates against the backdrop of later events, the agent can establish this link only later, after these events have taken place.<sup>251</sup>

### *Teleology: capture of Persia*

At the same time, Plutarch implements a teleological view already in the world of the historical agents. He inserts the future into the present of his characters through dreams, signs, omens and oracles. Let me illustrate this through the analysis of what is arguably the climax of the *Alexander*, the overthrow of the Persian empire.<sup>252</sup> We have already seen the prominence given by Plutarch to the final victory over Darius at Gaugamela through devoting to it an elaborate scene. The sense that the capture of Persia forms a telos of the narrative is strengthened when the Corinthian Demaratus sees Alexander under Darius' canopy and says 'that those Hellenes were deprived of great pleasure who had died before seeing Alexander seated on the throne of Darius' ('μεγάλης ἡδονῆς ἔστεροῖντο τῶν Ἑλλήνων οἱ τεθνηκότες πρὶν ἰδεῖν Ἀλέξανδρον ἐν τῷ Δαρείου θρόνῳ καθήμενον', 37.7).<sup>253</sup> Thais starts her proposal to burn Persepolis in a similar vein: 'She said, namely, that for all her hardships in wandering over Asia she was being requited that day by thus revelling luxuriously in the splendid palace of the Persians.' ('ἔφη γάρ, ὧν πεπόνηκε πεπλανημένη τὴν Ἀσίαν, ἀπολαμβάνειν χάριν ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας, ἐντρυφῶσα τοῖς ὑπερηφάνοις Περσῶν βασιλείοις.' 38.3) In his quarrel with Alexander, Cleitus takes the opposite stance which nevertheless bespeaks that the annexation of Persia provides a telos in the narrative (51.2):

'Nay, Alexander', said Cleitus, 'not even now do we enjoy impunity, since such are the rewards we get for our toils; and we pronounce those happy who are already dead, and did not live to see us Macedonians thrashed with Median rods, or begging Persians in order to get audience with our king.'

'ἀλλ' οὐδὲ νῦν' ἔφη 'χαίρομεν Ἀλέξανδρε, τοιαῦτα τέλη τῶν πόνων κομιζόμενοι, μακαρίζομεν δὲ τοὺς ἤδη τεθνηκότας, πρὶν ἐπιδεῖν Μηδικαῖς ῥάβδοις ξαινομένους Μακεδόνας, καὶ Περσῶν δεομένους ἵνα τῷ βασιλεῖ προσέλθωμεν.'

The success of Alexander's expedition against the King is not only identified as a climax after the victory, but is adumbrated right from the beginning

---

<sup>251</sup> For further narratorial prolepses, see 7.6-7; 44.2; 51.7; 55.

<sup>252</sup> Edmunds 1971: 365 argues that the overthrow of the Persian empire was originally the goal of the expedition.

<sup>253</sup> Demaratus repeats his point in 56.1.

of the narrative. Before Alexander's conception, both parents have dreams that foretell a great future (2.3-4). Philip then receives the news of his son's birth just after he has captured Potidaea, together with messages announcing the defeat of the Illyrians at Parmenion's hands and an Olympic victory in horse-racing. Nor was that all, 'the seers raised his spirits still higher by declaring that the son whose birth coincided with three victories would be always victorious' ('ἔτι μᾶλλον οἱ μάντιες ἐπῆραν, ἀποφαινόμενοι τὸν παῖδα τρισὶ νίκαις συγγεγεννημένον ἀνίκητον ἔσεσθαι', 3.9). On the brink of the expedition against Persia, Alexander goes to Delphi to consult the oracle. When he arrives during inauspicious days and the Pythia refuses to receive him, he trespasses into the temple and is greeted by the Pythia with the words: 'You are invincible, my son ...' ('ἀνίκητος εἶ ὦ παῖ ...', 14.7). Further signs include the sweating of an image of Orpheus made of cypress, interpreted by Aristander as predicting that Alexander 'was to perform deeds worthy of song and story, which would cost poets and musicians much toil and sweat to celebrate' ('ὡς ἀοιδίμους καὶ περιβοήτους κατεργασόμενον πράξεις, αἱ πολὺν ἰδρῶτα καὶ πόνον ὕμνοῦσι ποιηταῖς καὶ μουσικοῖς παρέξουσι', 14.9).

In Lycia, a fountain allegedly emits bronze tablets saying that Persian rule would be overthrown by Greeks (17.4). Coming to Phrygia, Alexander cuts the Gordian knot, the loosing of which was supposed to be preserved for the 'king of the *oikumene*' ('βασιλεῖ ... τῆς οἰκουμένης', 18.2-4). On the other side, Darius dreams that, with the Macedonian phalanx on fire, Alexander, donning the courier dress that he himself used to wear, serves him and then enters the temple of Belus to disappear. The *magoi* persuade Darius that this dream portends his triumph over Alexander, but Plutarch spells out how it predicts a victory of Alexander who is, however, to die soon after (18.6-8). The strongest indicator of divine support seems to be the help Alexander receives on his way to the oasis Siwa: 'In a way, the oracles obtained credence in consequence of such assistance.' ('τρόπον δέ τινα καὶ τοῖς χρησιμοῖς ἢ πίστις ἐκ τούτων ὑπῆρξε.' 27.1). Finally, at Gaugamela a show-fight between two camp-followers, one named Alexander, the other Darius prefigures the outcome of the battle (31.2-5). Immediately before the battle, with the armies facing each other and Alexander making a last prayer, the seer Aristander points out an eagle soaring above his head and the flight directed straight toward the enemies (33.2-3).

As we see, the first part of the narrative is permeated by a dense web of signs that anticipate the triumph over Darius. Admittedly, the foreshadowing tends to be vague and in some cases Alexander employs trickster-like devices: he takes the Pythia's comment on his brazenness as an omen pertaining to his expedition and at Gordium, in none of the versions offered by Plutarch does Alexander loose the knot *lege artis*. In some cases, Plutarch is also sceptical about foreboding anecdotes: while he does not commit himself on the bronze tablets in Lycia ('λέγουσιν', 17.4), he goes further and challenges the report that the sea

made way for Alexander in Pamphylia (17.6). Nonetheless, Plutarch not only envisages Alexander's expedition from the vantage-point of his triumph over Persia, but also encapsulates this horizon through manifold signs in the world of the story.

### *Alexander and other Lives*

The same applies both to smaller episodes as well as to the remainder of the narrative. Tyre causes Alexander much trouble as it steadfastly resists his siege, but dreams of Alexander and the Tyreans leave no doubt that the city will finally yield (24.4-9). Just when Alexander is about to reduce his efforts, an extraordinarily favourable sacrifice promises an immediate capture – following this encouragement, Alexander in fact takes the city. His death, the endpoint of the biography, is also anticipated by various means.<sup>254</sup> On the pyre, Calanus predicts that he would see Alexander 'in a short while in Babylon' ('ὀλίγον χρόνον ἐν Βαβυλῶνι', 69.6). The passing of Hephaestion, stylized as Patroclus, intimates that Alexander's death is close (72).<sup>255</sup> Before Alexander comes to Babylon, Chaldaeans advise him to stay away from the city, a fight between ravens does not forebode well and sacrifices yield frightening results (73.1-5). Most shockingly, one day Alexander finds a silent stranger in regal attire on his throne (73.7-9).

The multitude and variety of omens gives the *Alexander* a special teleological design, but omens also loom large in other *Lives* – just think of *Alexander's* opposite pair, the *Caesar*, which may even be richer in omens.<sup>256</sup> Most *Lives* start on a strongly teleological note: the proem surveys the entire career to underline the similarity of the two characters. Then, the treatment of childhood and youth often reveals traits that will be crucial, with some anecdotes foreshadowing specific incidents. Teleology can also take other forms and look beyond the character's *Life*. The measures of Lycurgus, for example, are seen against the backdrop of later developments of the Spartan constitution. The *Theseus-Romulus* pair furnishes a particularly interesting case as Pelling has shown:<sup>257</sup> when the Athenians start revolting against Theseus who 'shut them all up in a single city' ('εἰς ἓν ἄστυ συνείρξαντα πάντας', 32.1), it is not hard to detect resonances of Athens in the fifth century BCE, notably of Pericles, who assembled the entire population in the city, admittedly under different circumstances, but provoking similar outrage. By the same token, Romulus'

---

<sup>254</sup> For a possible and early foreshadowing, see the birth of a lamb 'which had upon its head what looked like a tiara in form and colour, with testicles on either side' ('περὶ τῆ κεφαλῆ σχῆμα καὶ χρώμα τιάρας ἔχοντα καὶ διδύμους ἐκατέρωθεν αὐτῆς', 57.4). Alexander refers this portent to his successor who may be impotent.

<sup>255</sup> Cf. Pelling 2002h (=1997): 379, who elaborates on the morbid atmosphere of the final chapters.

<sup>256</sup> Cf. Pelling 2002h (=1997): 380.

<sup>257</sup> Pelling 2002d: 181-5.

becoming a king evokes Caesar who, like him, donned special garb and used a throne (26). This illustrates that Plutarch chooses various vantage-points from which to view the lives of his heroes. As prominent and manifold as teleology in the *Lives* is, it needs to be qualified by an aspect to which I now turn.

## V. EPISODIC STRUCTURE

The prominence of oracles, dreams and signs aligns the *Alexander* biography with Herodotus' *Histories*, particularly the first book, in which most major events are adumbrated in one way or another.<sup>258</sup> In Herodotus, however, the foreshadowing embedded in the action has a rather different narrative function. Signs are ambivalent and tend to be ignored or misinterpreted by the characters, as when Croesus assumes that the empire to be overthrown will be that of his enemies (1.53.3). The signs thus open up a rift between readers and characters that endows the narrative with a peculiar dynamic.<sup>259</sup> The tension between the intentions of the latter and the knowledge of the former creates suspense as to how the anticipated end is coming about. In the *Alexander*, the *magoi* bend their interpretation of Darius' dream so that it comes to portend a Persian triumph, but otherwise the predictions tend to be clear-cut and to be understood correctly. While the asymmetry between characters and readers instils a good deal of suspense in Herodotus' account of Lydian and Persian history, the signs in *Alexander* do not produce a comparable dynamic. This is emblematic of the episodic structure of the *Lives* which I will discuss in this section, first tackling its impact on teleology, then on experience.

### *Episodic structure and teleology*

The *Alexander* biography in general does not have a strong plot-line with a tightly knit sequence of events that forcefully strives towards an end. Plutarch's account is teleological in that incidents foreshadow or encapsulate later events, but there is little suspense about the development. After the beginning that deals with Alexander's birth, character and education in summary fashion,<sup>260</sup> the narrative has a chronological frame, and yet its temporal organisation is loose.<sup>261</sup> Plutarch does not pay much attention to dating and links the events rather vaguely through adverbs, e.g. τότε (33.1), μετὰ ταῦτα (18.1), or participles summarizing

---

<sup>258</sup> On oracles in Herodotus, see ch. 6.

<sup>259</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 196-202.

<sup>260</sup> Cf. Frazier 1992: 4492-3 on the synchronic nature of Plutarch's treatment of Alexander's childhood and youth.

<sup>261</sup> Russell 1995c (=1963); Pelling 2002b (=1980) have elaborated on the manifold manipulation of time in the *Lives* that includes abridgement, compression, expansion and transposition. While they are mostly interested in Plutarch's treatment of his sources, I am here concerned with the surface of the story and its temporal arrangement.

the preceding action such as Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ τὴν ἐντὸς τοῦ Εὐφράτου πᾶσαν ὑφ' ἑαυτῷ ποιησάμενος ('But to return to Alexander, when he had subdued all the country on this side of the Euphrates ...', 31.1).<sup>262</sup>

In many cases, the temporal link between consecutive events is downplayed. Take, for example, the story of Philotas (48-9): Plutarch starts with a description of Philotas, who is very popular among the Macedonians and indulges in grand self-fashioning. In a flashback, he reports earlier occasions on which Philotas' inclination to slander Alexander did not provoke a reaction, and then narrates the line of events that finally lead to Philotas' death: he twice fails to report a conspiracy against Alexander and then, denounced by his enemies, becomes himself a suspect and is executed. Place and time of these happenings are hard to figure out. Plutarch does not write where they take place, the reader can only conjecture that the army is still in Parthia (45.1). As to the time, only after the portrait of Philotas and the flashback do we find a vague ἐν δὲ τῷ τότε χρόνῳ ('meanwhile', 49.3). The story of Philotas is not firmly embedded in a time sequence; following upon Alexander's mediation between Hephaestion and Craterus and preceding the Cleitus narrative, it is rather one of several stories that illustrate Alexander's treatment of Macedonians.<sup>263</sup>

The foundation of Alexandria is another case in point; here, the temporal link is even replaced by a thematic connection: after reporting the capture of Damascus, Tyre and Gaza (24.4-25), Plutarch zooms in on a precious chest that was brought to Alexander from Darius' possessions.<sup>264</sup> After quizzing his friends about what could be worth storing in the chest, Alexander opts for an edition of the *Iliad*. The enthusiasm for Homer leads Plutarch to another anecdote: a white-haired man appears in one of Alexander's dreams reciting the verses from the *Odyssey* that mention the island of Pharos. Following this dream, Alexander decides to found Alexandria on the land facing Pharos. The temporal movement from Gaza to Egypt is nearly entirely elided – if at all, it is touched upon in the participle τῆς Αἰγύπτου κρατήσεως ('after his conquest of Egypt', 26.4); instead, the foundation of Alexandria is introduced via a thematic link, as another story that attests Alexander's love for Homer. The thematic link is more important to Plutarch than the temporal sequence.

The Philotas and Alexandria episodes have their place in the temporal sequence of the narrative, even if this is scarcely marked. In other passages, chronology is abandoned in favour of a thematic ordering. The prominence of non-chronological ordering in the *Lives* has been emphasized by Weizsäcker.<sup>265</sup>

---

<sup>262</sup> Cf. Frazier 1996: 54.

<sup>263</sup> On this series of anecdotes that also includes the death of Callisthenes, see Stadter 1996: 300-2.

<sup>264</sup> Hamilton 1969: *ad* 26.1 suggests plausibly that the chest came from Damascus where Alexander took Persian possessions (24.1), but the exact circumstances as well as when and where the scene takes place are characteristically vague.

<sup>265</sup> Weizsäcker 1931. See also Russell 1973: 102-3; 115-16; Moles 1988: 9; Stadter 1989: xxxv-xxxviii; Frazier 1996, who uses the term 'collage' (4518); Beck 2007: 398.

Against Leo's juxtaposition of Suetonius' descriptive with Plutarch's narrative biographies, he traced in the *Pericles* and other biographies a strong 'eidological', i.e. descriptive, principle that coexists with the 'chronographic' principle. Weizsäcker's efforts to divide the narrative neatly according to the two principles goes against their artful entwinement, as Stadter notes: 'Plutarch's skill as a biographer in part consists of his ability to avoid this dichotomy, to shift back and forth between the two, to allow anecdotal material to permeate the historical.'<sup>266</sup> That being said, it is Weizsäcker's merit to have drawn attention to the prominence of descriptive and non-chronological elements in the *Lives*.

Let us briefly look at a passage in the *Alexander* that is not arranged chronologically: Alexander's restraint regarding the beautiful wife of Darius and other Persian prisoners prompts Plutarch to give two undated anecdotes that also prove this attitude as well as a memorable dictum of Alexander saying that sleep and sex make him conscious of his mortality (22.1-6). From sexual restraint Plutarch shifts to Alexander's restraint concerning food evidenced by another anecdote (22.7-10) and followed up by a brief discussion of his drinking habits that were not as bad as is often assumed (23.1). A concluding remark on Alexander's abstinence from all kinds of questionable distractions leads to his pastimes and daily regime (23.2-10).

There are further digressions from the chronological frame of the *vita* in which Plutarch explores attitudes and character traits of Alexander thematically: the visit to Siwa, notably rumours that Alexander was received as Ammon's son, triggers a discussion of Alexander's own assumptions about his propagated divine origin (23). Alexander's generosity is illustrated by a wealth of anecdotes that are strung together without temporal links (39) and followed by a similar series of stories about the care Alexander took for his friends and others (41.4-42.4).<sup>267</sup> Another set of anecdotes showcases Alexander's courage and unfaltering resoluteness with which he plunged into great dangers (58).<sup>268</sup>

Vagueness of time, downplaying of temporal links and outright thematic ordering undermine a straight plot-line and give the *Alexander*, despite its chronological frame, an episodic character.<sup>269</sup> A particularly striking instance of this episodic tendency in the *Lives* can be found in the *Alcibiades*. Russell has demonstrated that the first sixteen chapters of this biography consist of a series of anecdotes about Alcibiades' childhood, youth and early career. Their temporal

---

<sup>266</sup> Stadter 1996: 297.

<sup>267</sup> Hamilton 1969: xlii speaks of a single 'great digression' from 39-42.4; see also Weizsäcker 1931: 71: 'eine Diata-Schilderung deutlich periodaler Art'. While the anecdotes about generosity and care of friends clearly belong together, it is more accurate to speak of two digressions as 40-41.3 treats, if in summary fashion, the situation after the capture of Susa.

<sup>268</sup> The transition from the attack of Nyse to the reception of messengers (58.6-7) is so abrupt that Ziegler marks a lacuna (1935: 383) which, however, is disputed by Hamilton 1969: *ad loc.* If Hamilton is correct, this would be a particularly strong case of incoherence in thematic sets of anecdotes.

<sup>269</sup> Frazier 1996: 4493 aptly speaks of 'une fragmentation de la narration en séquences'.

relation to each other is vague, causal links are absent.<sup>270</sup> The Herodotean *Histories* illustrate that a strong teleological stance can result in the build-up of suspense concerning the how of the plot. As we have seen, teleological design looms large in Plutarch's *Lives*, but their episodic structure undermines the kind of suspense that we know from Herodotus.

### *Episodic structure and experience*

The episodic structure of the *Lives* also qualifies their mimesis and constitutes a major difference from the experiential appeal that we have found in Thucydides and Xenophon. In the next and final section of this chapter, I shall trace the difference back to the ulterior goal of Plutarch's biographies; in the remainder of this section, I will explore the impact of the episodic structure on *enargeia* in the *Lives*.

At the beginning of this chapter, I examined the vividness which Plutarch, building upon Alexander's theatrical self-fashioning, applies to his narrative. *Enargeia*, however, is limited to select scenes – many passages of the narrative are rather summary as a comparison with other Alexander narratives reveals. In 25.5, for example, Plutarch briefly relates that, in accordance with a prediction of Aristander, Alexander captures Gaza after being wounded. Curtius Rufus, on the other hand, tells us in detail how an Arab approaches Alexander, pretending to supplicate him, and, once close, tries to strike him. Alexander turns and evades the blow, but, Curtius Rufus continues, fate is inescapable, and Alexander is later hit by an arrow in his shoulder. His doctor, Philip, removes the arrow and Alexander continues to fight, losing so much blood that he finally faints (4.15-20). The march through the Gedrosian desert is another case in point: where we find in Arrian a full-blown narrative including a description of the desert (6.21.4-26),<sup>271</sup> Plutarch contents himself with listing the hardships of the army (66.4-6).

In select scenes such as the Gaugamela battle Plutarch showcases the graphic quality for which he extols Thucydides and Xenophon, but he does not make his readers witnesses of the past in the same way. Thucydides in particular forces his readers to assess situations from the vantage-point of the characters and conjecture about what is to come. *The History of the Peloponnesian War* illustrates that temporal sequence is crucial to the experiential quality of narrative: if narrative time is made to mimic narrated time and the perspective of the reader is aligned with that of the characters, the former has the chance to re-experience the experiences of the latter in the frame of 'as-if'. Plutarch, on the other hand, does little to recreate the temporal dynamic of the past. The elaborate scenes and

---

<sup>270</sup> Russell 1995b (=1966) with the qualifications of Duff 2003 for the chapters 2-3.

<sup>271</sup> Interestingly, Arrian's narrative includes an anecdote that we find in similar form in Plutarch as part of the chase of Darius: Alexander foregoing the opportunity to drink water in front of his thirsty men (42.5-10). Cf. Hamilton 1969: *ad loc.* for further accounts of this anecdote. On the march through the Gedrosian desert, see also Strabo 15.2.4-7.

series of anecdotes in the *Lives* tend to stand by themselves; the downplaying of temporal links de-emphasizes the notion of sequence and, together with prolepses, weakens the experiential appeal of the narrative. Hence the *Lives* do not generate the narrative dynamic which exposes readers to the presentness that the past had for the historical agents.

Besides teleological design and episodic arrangement, two points contribute to this difference between Thucydides and Xenophon on the one hand and Plutarch on the other. In the *History of the Peloponnesian War* and the *Anabasis*, speeches are crucial to letting readers see the past through the eyes of the characters. The *Alexander* biography abounds with pithy sayings, but does not feature speeches.<sup>272</sup> The dicta make for memorable anecdotes, but do not restore to the past its temporal horizon. Another important device for restoring presentness to the past is internal focalization. Plutarch also counts internal focalization among the arrows in his narrative quiver, as we have seen in the Gaugamela account; at the same time, compared with Thucydides and Xenophon, he gives little introspection.<sup>273</sup> The *Lives* tend to be brief on the motives of their character. While adding to the succinctness of his narrative, this does not enhance its experiential quality.

A comparison of parallel accounts in Thucydides and Plutarch may illustrate the difference between the two authors.<sup>274</sup> The rendering of the Athenians' decision to invade Sicily in the *Nicias* (12) differs in some minor points from Thucydides' narrative, but essentially seems to be a compressed version of it.<sup>275</sup> In Thucydides, three speeches, two by Nicias, one by Alcibiades, dissect the risks and chances of an expedition to Sicily (6.9-26). Additionally, a parallel pair of three speeches delivered in Syracuse sheds light on the situation (6.33-41).<sup>276</sup> Plutarch is of course much briefer – he devotes only a single chapter to the Athenians' decision – but the comparison is nonetheless illuminating: Thucydides invites the reader to consider the situation thoroughly from the perspective of the characters when Nicias and Alcibiades present the pros and cons of the expedition. The debate in Syracuse and subtle echoes of the speeches in the narrative provide a background that throws the situation into relief and

---

<sup>272</sup> On the scarcity of long speeches in Plutarch's *Lives*, see Wardman 1974: 7; Russell 1995c (=1966): 360; Beck 2007: 403.

<sup>273</sup> Cf. Brenk 1992: 4426.

<sup>274</sup> For comparisons of the treatment of the same material in Thucydides and Plutarch, see, e.g., de Romilly 1988; Pelling 2000: 44-60; 2002c (=1992), the former more sympathetic with Thucydides, the latter with Plutarch.

<sup>275</sup> Cf. Marasco 1976: 117. A detailed parallel to Thucydides can, for example, be found in Nicias' warning against the private greed and ambitions of Alcibiades (12.4). προφάσεις λέγοντα in 12.6 verbally echoes προφασίζεσθαι in Thuc. 6.25.1. On the other hand, Plutarch seems to speak only of a single Egestaeon and Leontinian (12.1) embassy where Thucydides has two (6.6; 6.8) and mentions Demostratus who is anonymous in *The History of the Peloponnesian War* (6.25.1). See also Gomme, Andrewes and Dover 1941-81: I: 71-2 for a comparison.

<sup>276</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 242-8 for an examination of the two speech pairs.

further engages the reader in its assessment.<sup>277</sup> Plutarch, on the other hand, gives the reader little food for thought and only touches upon the arguments discussed in the Assembly. While Thucydides reports the enthusiasm of the Athenians for the expedition only after the debate, thereby emphasizing the openness of the situation at the beginning of the assembly (6.24.3), Plutarch points it out at the very beginning of his account (12.1).<sup>278</sup> The differences are certainly due to the different focus of history and biography, but simultaneously illustrate that Plutarch has little interest in making his reader view the situation from the perspective of the historical agents.

*Vividness and teleology: the taming of Bucephalas*

That Plutarch's *enargeia* does little to restore the temporal dynamic of the past shows in the convergence of vividness with teleology in episodes. As argued in the introduction, experience and teleology are at loggerheads: the more a narrator strives to recreate the openness of the past, the less teleological his account can be, whereas a strong teleological design undermines a narrative's experiential quality. The weak temporal component in Plutarch's vivid episodes, on the other hand, harmonizes with a teleological view. Let me illustrate this through a reading of the taming of Bucephalas (6).<sup>279</sup> after sketching the background, namely Philip's annoyance at the failure of all attempts to break the immensely expensive horse, Plutarch reports a brief dialogue between son and father, in which Alexander bets the price of the horse that he will be able to tame him (6.1-4). He succeeds (6.5-7) and impresses the spectators including his father who, Plutarch closes, is reported to have said: 'My son, seek out a kingdom equal to yourself; Macedonia has not room for you.' ('ὦ παῖ ... ζήτει σεαυτῷ βασιλείαν ἴσην· Μακεδονία γάρ σ' οὐ χωρεῖ.' 6.8).

The scenery itself is very vague,<sup>280</sup> but nonetheless 'the story is vividly told, as if by an eyewitness, and sticks in the imagination'.<sup>281</sup> In addition to the direct speech in which the dialogue between father and son is rendered, the detailed description of the taming endows the scene with *enargeia*. Plutarch uses a long string of compound verbs, many of them rare, whose prefixes create a strong spatial deixis: Alexander 'runs to' the horse ('προσδραμών'), 'takes up' the reins ('παρᾶλαβών') and 'turns' the horse 'towards' the sun ('ἐπέστρεψε'), since he has noticed that Bucephalas is disturbed by his 'shadow falling in front of him'

<sup>277</sup> On the echoes of the speeches in the narrative, see Grethlein 2010a: 244.

<sup>278</sup> The difference is highlighted by ὥρμητο (12.3) that may be a verbal echo from Thuc. 6.24.2. In Plutarch, the Athenians hope to capture also Libya, an ambition that in Thucydides only Alcibiades ascribes to them (6.90.2-3).

<sup>279</sup> On the scene, see Frazier 1992: 4496-9; Stadter 1996: 291-6. Whitmarsh 2002: 180-1 does little more than repeat Stadter's points without giving him credit. For the various traditions on Bucephalas, see Anderson 1930.

<sup>280</sup> Cf. Frazier 1992: 4497.

<sup>281</sup> Stadter 1996: 292.

(‘σκιὰν προπίπτουσαν’, 6.5). Alexander then ‘trots besides’ Bucephalus (‘παρακαλάσας’) and caresses him, literally, ‘strokes down’ (‘καταψήσας’), before he ‘throws away’ his mantle (‘ἀπορρίψας’) and mounts the horse, literally, ‘encircles’ him (‘περιέβη’, 6.6). ‘Drawing’ the reins both ‘on the left and the right side’ (‘περιλαβών’),<sup>282</sup> Alexander ‘holds in’ Bucephalus (‘προσανέστειλεν’, 6.7). The detailed spatial deixis, meticulously charting every movement of Alexander, makes the scene highly graphic – while reading Plutarch’s description, it is hard not to see Alexander and Bucephalus before one’s inner eye.

Adverbs – εὐθύς, μικρά, ἡσυχῆ, ἀσφαλῶς, ἤδη (6.5-7) – temporally nuance the single steps just as the sequence, told in the aorist, receives temporal depth from imperfect forms and present and perfect participles: Alexander ‘saw that he [i.e. Bucephalus] was filled with courage and spirit’ (‘έώρα πληρούμενον θυμοῦ καὶ πνεύματος’, 6.6) and later he ‘saw that the horse was free of rebelliousness and impatient for the course’ (‘έώρα τὸν ἵππον ἀφεικότα τὴν ἀπειλήν, ὀργῶντα δὲ πρὸς τὸν δρόμον’, 6.7).

While Alexander carefully watches Bucephalus, he is observed by Philip and the others who, or at least some of whom, have failed to tame the horse. The spectators form an internal audience that brings the reader close to the scene. They first laugh about the bet (6.5), are then silent and finally break out in war-cries (6.8). Plutarch does not interrupt the description of the taming and reports their silence only after its description.<sup>283</sup> This is not only a highly appropriate way of rendering the silence that contributes nothing to the taming, but also makes the reactions of the spectators frame the scene just as they will have surrounded the place where Alexander mounts Bucephalus. The temporal ordering thus mimics the spatial lay-out of the scene.

The breaking of Bucephalus is placed prominently at the beginning of the biography and interpreters have not hesitated to ascribe to it deeper significance than merely reporting an incident from Alexander’s youth. The anecdote establishes major features of Alexander’s character, notably his wit, ambition and brashness.<sup>284</sup> Furthermore, Philip’s dictum with which Plutarch closes the scene directly jolts the reader to Alexander’s later conquests: Alexander will subjugate entire countries just as he tamed Bucephalus.<sup>285</sup> Two subtle points may buttress this interpretation that aligns the taming with the later military conquest: Alexander leads Bucephalus toward the sun, which is associated with the East where Alexander made his conquests. Moreover, in Philip’s dictum it is natural to refer σεαυτῷ to ἴσην, as Perrin does in the Loeb translation quoted above: Alexander ought to search a kingdom equal to himself. At the same time, the

<sup>282</sup> On this meaning of περιλαμβάνειν see Ziegler 1935: 369-70, who defends the transmitted form against the various conjectures.

<sup>283</sup> Cf. Frazier 1992: 4499.

<sup>284</sup> Cf. Stadter 1996: 292.

<sup>285</sup> Cf. Beck 2007: 398.

sentence can be construed differently if we correlate σεαυτῷ with the preceding ζήτει. In this case, the kingdom would be equal to the horse and the prefiguration of the conquests in the taming explicit.

Another interpretation takes Bucephalas as the ‘equine counterpart of Alexander’.<sup>286</sup> Noting that the episode is embedded in Plutarch’s treatment of Alexander’s education, Stadter underlines the parallels between horse and rider:<sup>287</sup> they are both characterised by *thymos*, an ambivalent feature, and just as Bucephalas, who proves δύσχρηστος (‘intractable’, 6.1) is only managed by Alexander, Philip, seeing that his son is δυσκίνητος (‘unyielding’, 7.1), engages the great philosopher Aristotle for his ‘taming’. In quoting Sophocles to call Alexander’s education ‘a task for many bits and rudder-handles as well’, Plutarch echoes metaphorically the literal bit that Alexander has used to rein in Bucephalas. Stadter suggests that Alexander’s trick to turn Bucephalas toward the sun ‘recalls the philosopher’s route up from the cave in the *Republic*. When Alexander points Bucephalas toward the sun, he enacts on a physical plane what Aristotle must attempt to do spiritually: turn Alexander toward the good, and the light of philosophy.’<sup>288</sup> Duff even proposes that ‘the use of equestrian imagery also encourages the reader to see Alexander’s education in terms of the training of the “spirited horse” in Plato’s *Phaidros* which seems to have influenced Plutarch so much (253c-254e).’<sup>289</sup> A further subtle point that parallels Alexander with Bucephalas is the echo of ἀφεικότα referring to the horse, in ἀφείς, having his rider as subject (6.7).

No matter whether we read the taming of Bucephalas as a chiffre for Alexander’s conquests or his education, the anecdote is vividly told and simultaneously adumbrates Alexander’s further career. It does not generate narrative suspense, but is rather closed – we are not left wondering what will happen next; instead, it sketches a picture of Alexander that goes beyond his comportment in a particular situation. In taking an incident out of the passage of time and making it metaphorically encapsulate later events, the vignette freezes the sequence of time and spatializes history: important traits of Alexander are revealed in the close-up of a scene. This is emblematic of Plutarch’s tendency to break the flux of time into episodes the significance of which goes beyond the moment.

Plutarch’s interest in aspects and features beyond their temporal context comes to the fore not only at the micro-level of the episode, but also at the macro-level: the *Parallel Lives* juxtapose a Greek with a Roman. Following Erbse’s lead, scholars have elucidated the importance of this structure.<sup>290</sup> The juxtaposition is

---

<sup>286</sup> Anderson 1930.

<sup>287</sup> Stadter 1996: 293-4.

<sup>288</sup> Stadter 1996: 294.

<sup>289</sup> Duff 1999: 85.

<sup>290</sup> Erbse 1956. Later important works on *synkrisis* in Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* include Stadter 1995 (=1975); Duff 1999: 243-86; Pelling 2002g (=1986): 349-63. For further literature, see Duff

explicit in the proems, which tend to emphasize parallels, and the synkritic epilogues, many of which highlight differences, but also permeates the biographic narratives, shaping the selection and presentation of events. The *Alexander-Caesar* pair whose final *synkrisis* is missing<sup>291</sup> may not be the strongest case, but even here the two heroes shed light on each other:<sup>292</sup> both are driven by ambition, display a high degree of self-control, are capable of extreme generosity, but are also prone to give in to tyrannical aspirations. Single episodes such as Alexander's taming of Bucephalas and the outwitting of the pirates in the *Caesar* may mirror each other.<sup>293</sup> Chris Pelling has considered the role of the supernatural in the endings and has shown how their juxtaposition may influence our understanding of each *Life*.<sup>294</sup> Even some peculiarities may be explained by the desire to create a stronger parallel. For example Plutarch's silence over Caesar's sexual debauchery, so prominent in other authors, may help Plutarch to align him with chaste Alexander.

For my argument here, it is noteworthy that the synkritic structure of the *Parallel Lives* reveals an interest in recurring features. Just as episodes convey meaning that transcends a specific situation, the pairing of the *Lives* draws attention to timeless features. Of course, Plutarch takes into account the historical circumstances of a life, but his deeper interest reaches further to universals.<sup>295</sup>

## VI. ENARGEIA AND MORALISM

Plutarch's narrative practice does not always map directly onto his reflections about his writing. In the introduction of the *Nicias*, for example, he hails Thucydides as ἐναργέστατος ποικιλώτατος ('surpassing ... himself in ... vividness, and variety', 1.1) and announces that, unlike Timaeus, he is not going to try to outshine Thucydides through his artistry. Instead, he will only touch briefly upon the events that Thucydides and Philistus report and concentrate on 'those details which have escaped most writers, and which others have mentioned casually, or which are found on ancient votive offerings or in public decrees' ('τὰ διαφεύγοντα τοὺς πολλοὺς, ὑφ' ἐτέρων δ' εἰρημένα σποράδην ἢ πρὸς ἀναθήμασιν ἢ ψηφίσμασιν εὐρημένα παλαιοῖς', 1.5). Nonetheless, the biography gives much space to the Sicilian expedition and here closely follows

---

1999: 250 n. 25 and most recently Humble, ed. 2010. Some scholars go further and entertain the idea that not only the paired *Lives*, but the entire corpus of the *Parallel Lives* ought to be understood together: Beneker 2005; Pelling 2002e (=1999): 188; 2006: 268.

<sup>291</sup> Cf. n. above ???

<sup>292</sup> Cf. Erbse 1956: 405-6; Hamilton 1969: xxxiv; Harris 195-7.

<sup>293</sup> Beck 2007: 399.

<sup>294</sup> Pelling 2002h (=1997): 378-80.

<sup>295</sup> Cf. Pelling 2000: 58; 2002f (=1995): 239-43. See also Russell 1995a (=1966): 79 on the 'impression of timelessness' that Plutarch's *Lives* make.

Thucydides.<sup>296</sup> By the same token, in the proem to *Alexander and Caesar* Plutarch sets biography apart from history and states that he will leave great deeds and battles to others, a view that conflicts with the close attention that politics and historical events receive in the *Caesar*.<sup>297</sup> That being said, it proves fruitful to view Plutarch's position regarding teleology and experience discussed above in the light of his explicit reflections. In the final section of this chapter, I will first explore some ramifications of Plutarch's comparison of his narrative with paintings and maps before I set his take on the futures past in relation to his moralist goal.

### *The spatial notion of Plutarch's narrative*<sup>298</sup>

In the proem to *Alexander and Caesar*, Plutarch remarks (1.2-3):

For it is not Histories that I am writing, but Lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall, or the greatest armaments, or sieges of cities. Accordingly, just as painters get the likenesses in their portraits from the face and the expression of the eyes, wherein the character shows itself, but make very little account of the other parts of the body, so I must be permitted to devote myself rather to the signs of the soul in men, and by means of these to portray the life of each, leaving to others the description of their great contests.

οὔτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους, οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δῆλωσις ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιὰ τις ἔμφασιν ἤθους ἐποίησε μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυριόνεκροι καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγιστα καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων. ὥσπερ οὖν οἱ ζωγράφοι τὰς ὁμοιότητας ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου καὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν ὄψιν εἰδῶν οἷς ἐμφαίνεται τὸ ἦθος ἀναλαμβάνουσιν, ἐλάχιστα τῶν λοιπῶν μερῶν φροντίζοντες, οὕτως ἡμῖν δοτέον εἰς τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς σημεῖα μᾶλλον ἐνδύεσθαι, καὶ διὰ τούτων εἰδοποιεῖν τὸν ἐκάστου βίον, ἐάσαντας ἑτέροις τὰ μεγέθη καὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας.

While the contrasting of biography with history as well as the emphasis on character has been much discussed,<sup>299</sup> the comparison of the biographer with a

<sup>296</sup> Cf. Wardman 1974: 156-7; Duff 1999: 25. On the presence of Thucydides in *Nicias*, see Pelling 2002c (=1992): 118-22.

<sup>297</sup> Cf. Pelling 2002b (=1980): 104; Duff 1999: 21 suggests that the reflections in the introduction only pertain to the *vita Alexandri*, but even so they would sit uncomfortably, for example with the extensive description of Gaugamela.

<sup>298</sup> On spatial narrative, see ch. 9 ???

painter in this passage has received less attention. The juxtaposition of the arts is a topos, but their entwinement by Plutarch is noteworthy and reflects, I think, an important aspect of his literary practice.<sup>300</sup> The parallel between painting and biography is underscored by the echo of ἔμφασιν in ἐμφαίνεται:<sup>301</sup> the biographer's focus on sayings and jests has the capacity to give a clear impression of a character like the painter's concentration on the eyes.<sup>302</sup> Plutarch then blends together the two arts semantically when he applies words from painting to the writing of the biographer, notably εἰδοποιεῖν ('portray') and μεγέθη ('size').

Plutarch's comparison of narrative with the arts in the *Lives* and other works is multi-faceted. In the *Pericles* proem, for example, he *prima facie* compares sculptures with great deeds, arguing that the former may arouse our admiration, but that only the latter instil in us the desire to imitate them and become virtuous.<sup>303</sup> Duff argues persuasively that Plutarch here equates the deeds with his narrative representation of them, thereby underscoring his mimetic claims.<sup>304</sup> Plutarch thus contrasts his biography with the arts in order to highlight its moral orientation and impact. A confrontation of this juxtaposition with the *Alexander* proem indicates how difficult, and perhaps also how questionable, it is to synthesize a unified aesthetic theory from Plutarch's comments in different works: whereas in the *Pericles* proem sculptures are obviously not deemed to be capable of representing virtue, in the *Alexander* proem Plutarch elaborates on how eyes in paintings are crucial to conveying *ethos*. As so often, we need to read Plutarch's reflections in their contexts.

While the *Pericles* proem concentrates on the object and reception of representation, *De gloria Atheniensium* features a passage that focuses on the medium of representation and aligns biography with painting in a way that can shed light on their intertwinement in the *Alexander* proem.<sup>305</sup> The much-quoted praise of Thucydides' *enargeia* follows upon the citation of Simonides' dictum that poetry is a speaking painting and painting mute poetry. Plutarch states a first

---

<sup>299</sup> Cf. Duff 1999: 14-22.

<sup>300</sup> *Contra* Wardman 1974: 25-6 who somehow assumes that Plutarch discards *enargeia* for his biographies.

<sup>301</sup> See also ἐμφαίνουσιν in 4.1 when Plutarch discusses pictorial representations of Alexander. On the word, see Duff 1999: 16 n. 7.

<sup>302</sup> In this context, the significance of eyes and gaze in Plutarch's *Lives*, as pointed out by Frazier 1996: 4511, is noteworthy.

<sup>303</sup> On the proem, see besides Stadter's commentary Wardman 1974: 21-5; van der Stockt 1992: 32-7; Frazier 1996: 60; Duff 1999: 34-45. Another interesting passage occurs at the beginning of the *Cimon*: Plutarch first states 'that a portrait which reveals character and disposition is far more beautiful than one which merely copies form and feature' ('εἰκόνα δὲ πολὺ καλλίονα νομίζοντες εἶναι τῆς τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον ἀπομιμουμένης τὴν τὸ ἦθος καὶ τὸν τρόπον ἐμφανίζουσιν', 2.2), but then continues to discuss the biographer's presentation of a character's flaws in analogy with the painter's treatment of his model's imperfection (2.3-4).

<sup>304</sup> Duff 1999: 36-7. While Wardman 1974: 24-6 argues that Plutarch 'put little or no value on his own function as a literary artist' (24), Duff charts the artful claim to mimesis that Plutarch makes.

<sup>305</sup> On *De glor. Ath.* 347c-d, cf. van der Stockt 1992: 31. On Plutarch's concept of mimesis, see van der Stockt 1992; Zadoroijny 2011.

distinction that ‘painters show actions as they happen, while words show them after they have happened’ (‘ὅς γὰρ οἱ ζωγράφοι πράξεις ὡς γινομένας δεικνύουσι, ταύτας οἱ λόγοι γεγενημένας διηγοῦνται καὶ συγγράφουσιν’, 346f). And yet, while the two media differ in their ‘material and modes of imitation’ (‘ὕλη καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως’), ‘the underlying end and aim of both is one and the same; the most effective historian is he who, by a vivid representation of emotions and characters, makes his narration like a painting’ (‘τέλος δ’ ἀμφοτέροις ἐν ὑπόκειται, καὶ τῶν ἱστορικῶν κράτιστος ὁ τὴν διήγησιν ὡσπερ γραφὴν πάθει καὶ προσώποις εἰδωλοποιήσας’, 347a). Strikingly, narrative’s goal is phrased in the terms of painting. Plutarch needs to align narrative with painting for his argument that, like the painter, the historian is inferior to the general, but it is noteworthy that he chooses the qualities of a picture as the common ground for both.

A brief glance at Lessing’s *Laocoon* may help us link these reflections with Plutarch’s narrative praxis.<sup>306</sup> Lessing’s major point is a comparison of narrative with painting as mimetic media. While narrative is sequential and therefore suited to represent sequential action, painting is spatial and through its simultaneity apt to represent bodies. Lessing’s normative statement is debatable and his scheme may be too rigid: we do not perceive pictures in an instant, but need some time to process them just as our understanding of narratives is not only sequential, but also has a synchronic dimension. This and other qualifications left aside, the juxtaposition of narrative sequentiality with pictorial simultaneity has proven a powerful insight into the nature of the two media.<sup>307</sup>

Viewed against the backdrop of Lessing, Plutarch’s tendency to cast narrative in the mould of painting ties in nicely with the de-temporalization of his narrative. As we have seen, he downplays sequentiality and strings together episodes. Most importantly, just as Plutarch praises visual quality in other authors, the *enargeia* found in his narrative centres on scenic vividness. The *Alexander* is not experiential in that it makes the reader follow the plot from the vantage-point of the characters, but it features several elaborate vignettes. Plutarch himself calls attention to the visual features of his narrative through comments such as ‘a sight that was wonderful to behold and a spectacle that passes description’ (‘δεινὸν ἰδεῖν θέαμα καὶ λόγου κρείττων ὄψις’, *Rom.* 19.1) or: ‘Never, as those who were present tell us, was there a more piteous sight.’ (‘οὐδὲν ἐκείνου λέγουσιν οἰκτρότερον γενέσθαι οἱ παραγενόμενοι θέαμα.’ *Ant.* 77.3).<sup>308</sup> Plutarch’s comparison of his biography with painting thus makes explicit the un-sequential, scene-like character of his *enargeia* for which I have argued in the preceding section.

<sup>306</sup> Lessing (1962) [1766].

<sup>307</sup> For a fruitful application to ancient art, see, e.g., Giuliani 2003.

<sup>308</sup> The first comment refers to the battlefield of the Romans and Sabines during the intervention of the Sabine wives of the former, the second qualifies the heavily injured Antonius being raised up to Cleopatra.

In a similar vein, another comparison highlights a feature of the *Lives* that is closely linked to its scenic vividness. When Plutarch turns to the mythic period in the *Theseus*, he compares his biography with a map (1.1). He sets himself off against geographers – while they tend to be vague about the edges of their maps, he does venture back in time to a hero as early as Theseus – but again the semantics of the comparison is suggestive. It metaphorically spells out the spatial notion that we have found in the episodic design of the *Lives*. In freezing the flux of time and creating vignettes the significance of which extends far beyond the moment, Plutarch spatializes history. Both comparisons of biography with maps and paintings reflect important aspects of Plutarch’s position regarding futures past.

### *Spatial narrative and moralism*

Emphasizing visual appeal and downplaying temporal sequence, Plutarch’s *enargeia* is rather un-experiential, but befits his subject and goal very well. The focus on character, as emphasized in the *Alexander* proem, is combined with a didactic intention.<sup>309</sup> Duff has demonstrated how both converge in a double notion of mimesis: Plutarch’s literary mirror of lives aims at encouraging his readers to imitate these models.<sup>310</sup> The first act of mimesis leads from life to narrative, the second back from narrative to life, coming full circle. Such a conceptual frame of biography is unconcerned with recreating the openness that the past had for historical agents. Needless to say, the virtue that Plutarch is interested in manifests itself in action that is only understandable in context, but the deeper goal is the timeless qualities exhibited by past heroes which are to be imitated by Plutarch’s readers in the present. The specific kind of *enargeia* and teleology that we have seen in the *Alexander*, both shaped by the downplaying of temporal dynamics, is closely linked with Plutarch’s moralism. Vignettes serve well to display moral qualities in a memorable way that may incite readers to imitate them.

In *How to recognize that one is making progress in virtue*, Plutarch recommends holding before one’s eyes the model of good men (85a-b)

... and reflecting: ‘What would Plato have done in this case? What would Epameinondas have said? How would Lycurgus have conducted himself, or Agesilaus?’ And before such mirrors as these, figuratively speaking, they array themselves or readjust their habit, and either repress some of

---

<sup>309</sup> For statements of Plutarch’s interest in character, see, e.g., *Nic.* 1; *Pomp.* 8.6-7; *Dem.* 11.7; *Cat. Min.* 37.10; for Plutarch’s desire to better his readers, see, e.g., *Per.* 1-2; *Aem.* 1. Cf. Russell 1995a (=1966): 83-6; Wardman 1974: 32-7; Gill 1983: 472-5, 478-81; Duff 1999: 72-8; Pelling 2002a (=1985): 53-9 with interesting qualifications of Plutarch’s self-proclaimed focus on character. On Plutarch’s view of character in general, see especially *On Moral Virtue*.

<sup>310</sup> Duff 1999: 33-4 (on mirror); 40-1 (on mimesis).

their more ignoble utterances, or resist the onset of some emotion.

... καὶ διανοεῖσθαι ‘τί δ’ ἂν ἔπραξεν ἐν τούτῳ Πλάτων, τί δ’ ἂν εἶπεν Ἐπαμεινώνδας, ποῖος δ’ ἂν ὤφθη Λυκοῦργος ἢ Ἀγησίλαος’, οἷον πρὸς ἔσοπτρα κοσμοῦντας ἑαυτοὺς καὶ μεταρρυθμίζοντας, ἢ φωνῆς ἀγεννεστέρας αὐτῶν ἐπιλαμβανομένους ἢ πρὸς τι πάθος ἀντιβαίνοντας.<sup>311</sup>

Plutarch uses the same image for the reading of his *Lives* in the prologue to the *Aemilius and Timoleon* (1.1), where he elaborates on the didactic function of his *Lives* that extends to himself

... trying in the mirror of history to adorn life somehow and adjust it to the virtues of those men. For the result is like nothing else than daily living and associating together, when I receive and welcome each subject of my history in turn as my guest ...

... ὥσπερ ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ τῇ ἱστορίᾳ πειρώμενον ἀμῶς γέ πως κοσμεῖν καὶ ἀφομοιοῦν πρὸς τὰς ἐκείνων ἀρετὰς τὸν βίον. οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλ’ ἢ συνδιαιτῆσει καὶ συμβιώσει τὸ γινόμενον ἔοικεν, ὅταν ὥσπερ ἐπιξενούμενον ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἐν μέρει διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας ὑποδεχόμενοι καὶ παραλαμβάνοντες ...

This nicely encapsulates the difference between Plutarch’s *enargeia* and Thucydides’ and Xenophon’s experiential quality: while the historians, as Plutarch perceptively puts it, make readers witnesses of past events, he himself makes heroes of the past visit us. Both employ vividness for a close encounter with the past, albeit in different directions: Thucydides’ and Xenophon’s experiential narratives enmesh us in the past; Plutarchan *enargeia*, on the other hand, brings past virtues to us.

---

<sup>311</sup> Cf. Frazier 1996: 59.

## 5. Tacitus, *Annals*

Nero's clever plan to stage a shipwreck and kill his mother on a boat from Baiae fails, but this means only a brief deferral (*Ann.* 14.8):

Meanwhile Agrippina's danger had become public, the assumption being that it had happened by accident, and each person on hearing of it ran down to the shore. Some climbed on the piled breakwaters, some on the closest boats; others waded into the sea as far as their bodies allowed; still others stretched out their hands. The whole beach was filled with the complaints, vows, and shouting of those asking their different questions or answering in uncertain terms. A mighty multitude with lights streamed down, and, when it became known that she had been preserved, they prepared themselves to offer congratulations – until they scattered at the sight of an armed and menacing column.

Anicetus surrounded her villa with pickets and, breaking down the entrance, seized any slaves he encountered until he came to the doors of the bedroom, where a few still stood fast, the rest having been terrified away in terror of the onrushers. In the bedroom there was only a modest light and one of the maids, while Agrippina was more and more tense that no one, not even Agermus, arrived from her son. Welcome circumstances would wear a different face, she thought; as it was, there was isolation and sudden noises and the symptoms of a final affliction. When next the maid departed, she said 'Are you too deserting me?', then looked around to see Anicetus, accompanied by the trierarch Herculeius and Obaritus, a marine centurion. If he had come to visit, she said, he might report that she had recovered; but, if to perpetrate a crime, she would not believe it of her son: there had been no command for parricide. But the assailants surrounded her bed, and initially the trierarch struck her head with his cudgel; and, as the centurion was already drawing his sword for death, she proffered her womb, crying out 'Stab my belly!'; and with many wounds she was dispatched.

*Interim vulgato Agrippinae periculo, quasi casu evenisset, ut quisque acceperat, decurrere ad litus. hi molium obiectus, hi proximas scaphas scandere; alii, quantum corpus sinebat, vadere in mare; quidam manus protendere. questibus votis clamore diversa rogitantium aut incerta respondentium omnis ora compleri; adfluere ingens multitudo cum luminibus, atque ubi incolumem esse pernotuit, ut ad gratandum sese expedit, donec adspectu armati et minitantis agminis deiecti sunt. Anicetus villam statione circumdat refractaque ianua obvios servorum abripit, donec ad fores cubiculi veniret; cui pauci adstabant, ceteris terrore inrumpentium exterritis. cubiculo modicum lumen inerat et*

*ancillarum una, magis ac magis anxia Agrippina, quod nemo a filio ac ne Agermus quidem: aliam fore laetae rei faciem; nunc solitudinem ac repentinos strepitus et extremi mali indicia. abeunte dehinc ancilla ‘tu quoque me deseris?’ prolocuta respicit Anicetum, trierarcho Herculeio et Obarito centurione classiario comitatum: ac, si ad visendum venisset, refotam nuntiaret, sin facinus patraturus, nihil se de filio credere; non imperatum parricidium. circumstant lectum percussores et prior trierarchus fusti caput eius adflixit. iam <in> morte<m> centurioni ferrum destringenti protendens uterum ‘ventrem feri’ exclamavit multisque vulneribus confecta est.*

The string of historical infinitives, together with asyndeta such as *questibus votis clamore*, renders highly graphic Tacitus’ description of the crowd uninformed about the sinister background, but worried about Agrippina.<sup>312</sup> The happy news of her survival has just become known when the arrival of Nero’s soldiers, focalized through the bystanders (*adspectu*, 14.8.1), abruptly changes the situation again. The bare narrative given in the historical present (*circumdat; abripit*, 14.8.2) enhances the dramatic aspect of the action. Tacitus then shifts to Agrippina and follows her perspective, first sketching her thoughts, then reproducing her words in indirect speech, with direct speech highlighting a question and an exclamation. The killing itself is told briefly ‘in the sober pose of historian recording the past’,<sup>313</sup> but the chiasmic juxtaposition of the movements of slayer and victim – *ferrum destringenti protendens uterum* (14.8.5) – gives the sentence a picturesque quality just as Agrippina’s final exclamation to strike her belly conveys the horror of the scene: ‘She offers for assault, as if in punishment of it, the part of her body which produced the unfilial Nero. She thus underlines Nero’s unspeakable crime in having his mother killed.’<sup>314</sup>

The murder of Agrippina illustrates the dramatic and graphic qualities for which Tacitus’ historiography is praised.<sup>315</sup> The account does not revel in details, but nonetheless it will be hard for a reader to resist the grip of the narrative and not to see the scene before her inner eye.<sup>316</sup> ‘Le plus grand peintre de l’antiquité’, as Tacitus was dubbed by Racine,<sup>317</sup> is a particularly interesting author for an exploration of experience in ancient historiography. I will focus on the *Annals* and read Germanicus’ visit to Teutoburg as an account that is not only highly mimetic, but also encapsulates a reflection on narrative mimesis (I). The reports of

<sup>312</sup> On Tacitus’ use of historical infinitives in dramatic narrative, see Rademacher 1975: 61-4.

<sup>313</sup> Quinn 1963: 127. On this scene, see also Scott 1974; Ginsburg 2006: 46-53.

<sup>314</sup> Edwards 2007: 200.

<sup>315</sup> For the dramatic quality of Tacitus’ narrative, see, e.g., Mendell 1935; Leeman 1985: 305-15; Billerbeck 1991. On its iconic quality, see, e.g., Vianey 1896; Hommel 1936; Rademacher 1975.

<sup>316</sup> Cf. Quinn 1963: 121-2.

<sup>317</sup> As Rademacher 1975: 7 notes, Racine refers in the second preface to *Britannicus* (1676) to Tacitus’ ability to characterize humans, but his dictum has been taken up and applied to the graphic quality of his narrative in general.

Germanicus' death (II) and of the Pisonian Conspiracy (III) reveal how devices such as narratorial uncertainty and alternative versions that interrupt the narrative mimesis can nonetheless convey experience. Finally, Tacitus is not overtly concerned with teleology, but he knows how to exploit it for narrative effects and embeds his own vantage-point as telos in the world of the historical agents (IV).

## I. GERMANICUS' VISIT TO THE TEUTOBURG FOREST

### *Mimesis*

While finding it 'hard to appraise' Tacitus' account of the German campaigns in 15 CE 'as historical narrative', Goodyear concedes: 'The artistry of these chapters is evident and admirable.'<sup>318</sup> Germanicus' expedition to Germany that Tiberius ends against the general's will, honouring him through a triumph, illustrates Tacitus' mastery in conjuring up the past and making it tangible for his readers. I would like to focus on Germanicus' visit to the site of Varus' defeat in the Teutoburg Forest (1.61-2), a passage that makes the past present in exemplary fashion. I thereby do not mean that Tacitus writes 'wie es wirklich geschehen'; Woodman, pointing out the striking parallels with the *Histories*' account of Vitellius' tour of the site of the first battle of Cremona (2.70), has argued persuasively that *Ann.* 1.61 is a case of 'substantive imitation', i.e. that Tacitus enriches his narrative of Germanicus' visit with details from another parallel situation for which he had better evidence.<sup>319</sup> It is not historical accuracy with which I am concerned, but the vividness that permeates the narrative and makes the reader feel that what Tacitus reports is present.

In an examination of the fall of Vitellius in *Histories* 3, Levene has demonstrated the capacity of pity to enmesh the reader in the world of the narrative as well as to create a gap between her and the characters.<sup>320</sup> Whilst sometimes the characters' feeling of pity is not shared by the reader and thus labelled as 'analytic pity' by Levene, 'audience-based' pity makes the reader adopt the feeling harboured by a character: the *miseratio* felt by the Romans at the sight of the Teutoburg Forest surely qualifies as 'audience-based' in Levene's sense. Tacitus alleges the reasons for their response to the battlefield in circles that, starting from their specific situation, become more general and extend to the world of the reader: '... for kinsmen, friends, and, ultimately, for the fortunes of war and the lot of men' (... *ob propinquos, amicos, denique ob casus bellorum et sortem hominum* ..., 1.61.1). A few phrases suffice to sketch the uncanniness of the place that the Romans are about to enter: *occulta saltuum* ('hidden denes'),

---

<sup>318</sup> Goodyear 1972-81: II: 65.

<sup>319</sup> Woodman 1998: 70-85. For yet another comparison, see Pagán 1999: 306-7, who compares *Ann.* 1.61-2 with Hannibal's walking the site of Cannae in Livy 22.51.5-6.

<sup>320</sup> Levene 1997.

*umido paludum* ('wet marshes') and *fallacibus campis* ('treacherous plains') convey a sense of fickleness that reflects the disaster of the Roman legions in 9 CE and anticipates the trials Germanicus' troops will have to face soon.<sup>321</sup> The characterization of the site through the feelings it evokes in the soldiers ('sorrowful site' – *maestos locos*; cf. 1.62.1: 'sorrowing' – *maesti*) adds to the emotional appeal of the scene.<sup>322</sup>

Select vocabulary and a wealth of stylistic devices render the scene extraordinarily vivid.<sup>323</sup> Consider, for example, *adiacebant fragmina telorum equorumque artus, simul truncis arborum antefixa ora* ('Nearby lay fragments of weapons and horses' limbs, and also, on the trunks of trees, skulls were impaled.' 1.61.3): first a material object signified by the poetic *fragmen* instead of *fragmentum*; then the remains of horses, the two chiastically presented in a well-balanced sequence of syllables; finally, set apart by *simul*, the shocking climax, human skulls, hammered home through the term *ora* that is rare in this meaning and is given strong emphasis through its position as last word of the sentence. The horror is increased through the echo of *foribusque adfixa superbis/ ora* (Verg. *Aen.* 8.196-7) that evokes the monstrous Cacus.<sup>324</sup> Further Virgilian allusions add to the elevated poetic tone: *medio campi albentia ossa* (1.61.2) ~ *campique ingentes ossibus albert* (*Aen.* 12.36); *vulnus ... adactum* (1.61.4) ~ *nunc alte vulnus adactum* (*Aen.* 10.850).<sup>325</sup>

The mimesis of the Teutoburg Forest passage is reinforced by individual expressions such as the 'vision funeste' in the heavy rhythm of *insepultae dicebantur* ('[the legions] were said to lie unburied', 1.60.3) and the 'cacophonie évidente' of *barbarae arae* ('barbarian altars', 1.61.3)<sup>326</sup> as well as by the structure of the vignette: as Woodman observes, Tacitus starts with the desire felt by Germanicus and the reaction of the soldiers and, in closing, resumes both themes chiastically: 'The enclosure of the narrative within this frame, which itself is enclosed within an outer frame, mirrors the enclosed nature of the site it describes.'<sup>327</sup>

### *Mimesis reflected*

<sup>321</sup> For the foreshadowing, see, e.g., 1.63.1: '... whom he had hidden in the denses' (... *quos per saltus occultaverat.*) and 1.64.2. On the evocation of the typical German landscape, see Soubiran 1964: 57; Woodman 1998: 113.

<sup>322</sup> Cf. *Aen.* 5.48: *maestas ... aras.*

<sup>323</sup> See, for example, the analysis of Soubiran 1964: 56-64.

<sup>324</sup> E.g., Baxter 1972: 256.

<sup>325</sup> See besides Soubiran 1964: 56-64 also Baxter 1972: 254-6 for a survey of Virgilian phrases in the Teutoburg Forest passage. Edelmaier 1964: 134-9 elaborates on similarities between Germanicus and Aeneas.

<sup>326</sup> Soubiran 1964: 56; 60.

<sup>327</sup> Woodman 1998: 118.

The crucial point for my interpretation is that the account is not only mimetic, but also offers an implicit reflection on its mimesis. The past itself features an encounter with the past: embedded in the past narrated by Tacitus, namely Germanicus' visit to the Teutoburg Forest, there is another past envisaged by the characters, that is the battle of Varus.<sup>328</sup> In the terms suggested by Chris Krebs and myself, Tacitus evokes an external 'plupast', an event that antecedes the beginning of his narrative.<sup>329</sup> The character's act of memory mirrors the historian's act of memory and I therefore suggest interpreting it as a *mise-en-abime*.<sup>330</sup> Needless to say, recalling the past at a historical site is different from writing history, and accordingly the memories that haunt Germanicus and his troops are not a straightforward mirror for the *Annals*, but shed light on it through a complex net of similarities and differences. I will single out one aspect: the *mise-en-abime* highlights in particular how the past can become present; the presence that Varus' battle has for Germanicus and his men throws into relief the restoration of presentness achieved by Tacitus in his narrative.

The encounter of Germanicus with the Varus battle draws on two sources which are laid out at the beginning when Tacitus calls the place *visuque ac memoria deformis* ('grotesque to see and for its memories', 1.61.1). The semantic richness of *deformis* that can cover sensual experience as well as moral evaluation permits bringing together sight and memory.<sup>331</sup> This prefigures the close entwinement of the two in the visit to the Teutoburg Forest. Tacitus first narrates how the Romans walk around the site and gaze at it (1.61.2-3) and then reports the account of the battle given by survivors (1.61.4), but the sight evokes the memory of the battle just as the survivors refer their audience to what they see. The interpenetration of sight and memory comes to the fore in the interweaving of space and time. The spatial dimension of sight and the temporal depth of memory complement each other to conjure up the past and make it tangible for Germanicus and his men.

To start with the first part, Tacitus not only describes how the perception of the site evokes the memory of the battle, but intimates the immediacy of the experience through mapping the visit closely onto the fighting. No matter what

---

<sup>328</sup> Germanicus takes a strong interest in the past: visiting the East, he is 'keen on seeing these old and famous sites' (*cupidine veteres locos et fama celebratos noscendi*, 2.54.1), visiting Actium, Troy and other places as well as Egypt 'in order to explore its antiquity' (*cognoscendae antiquitatis*, 2.59.1). Cf. Pelling 1993: 72-4, who elucidates the ambiguities of Germanicus' links to the republican past, on which see also O'Gorman 2006: 291. While most scholars take Germanicus as a positive foil to Tiberius, Shotter 1968 and Ross 1973 emphasize negative aspects of his portrayal.

<sup>329</sup> Grethlein and Krebs 2012.

<sup>330</sup> For a different approach to time and space in Germanicus' visit to Teutoburg, see Pagán 1999, who argues that 'time and space collapse into a point of absolute zero' (308).

<sup>331</sup> Baxter 1972: 254-5 points out that *deformis*, like other words in this passage, is used for the underworld by Virgil and thereby adds to the 'other-worldly atmosphere of the Tacitean passage'. For a different reading of the juxtaposition of *visus* with *memoria*, see O'Gorman 2000: 49-50.

reconstruction of the site we adopt,<sup>332</sup> Tacitus describes it step by step as it is perceived by the Romans, thereby temporalizing the perception of space: *prima* and *dein* (1.61.2) follow the movement of the beholders through the site, while *medio campi* calls to mind its spatial dimension. Strikingly, the Romans' tour of the site mimics the sequence of the battle: like Varus' troops they start from the camp, then go to a ditch where the three legions paused, already reduced in number from the ongoing attacks, before they approach the field on which the open battle took place.<sup>333</sup> Even more strikingly, the sequence is continued by Tacitus' narrative: the skulls fixed on tree-trunks and the altars at which the officers were sacrificed attest to what the Germans did with the dead and captives after the battle. With the survivors (*cladis eius superstites*, 1.61.4), the account comes full circle and arrives in the present of the visit. The subtle alignment of the tour of the site with the unfolding of the battle highlights the deep involvement of the soldiers: literally stepping into the footsteps of Varus, Germanicus and his men somehow re-experience the battle.

Tacitus expresses the presence of the past in this experience through syntactically blurring the boundary between past and present: 'In the middle of the plain there were whitening bones, scattered or piled up, exactly as they had fled or resisted.' (*medio campi albertia ossa, ut fugerant, ut restiterant, disiecta vel aggerata*. 1.61.2). O'Gorman notes perceptively: 'If read literally this sentence is nonsensical; the subject of the verbs of motion being "the bones".'<sup>334</sup> While she argues that 'the reader of the text must bring the bones back to life, to be read retrospectively as signs for the living men they once were',<sup>335</sup> I propose that the hypallage expresses the powerful experience of the beholders: in their eyes and minds, the bones become the fighting soldiers again: their experience transforms the representation of relics into a presence that brings the past to life.

A lexical ambiguity in the preceding sentence also blends together the past of the battle with the present of the visit: '... in a shallow ditch, their remnants, now cut to pieces, had evidently huddled together.' (... *humili fossa accisae iam reliquiae consedissee intellegebantur*. 1.61.2). The perfect tense of the infinitive requires that *reliquiae* refers to the fighting soldiers; it must therefore mean the 'rest' of Varus' legions, which had already been reduced in numbers, but it is hard not to think of the 'relics' which the same word signifies in 1.60.3 and 1.62.1. *Reliquiae*, oscillating between the 'rest' of Varus' troops and the 'relics' visible in 15 CE, makes the boundary between past and present collapse and thereby highlights the immersion of the beholders.

---

<sup>332</sup> Cf. Koestermann 1957: 443 n. 32 on the question whether Tacitus refers to a single camp or two camps. For recent attempts to make Tacitus' report fruitful for locating the site of the battle, see Wolters 2003; Gruber 2008 with further literature on p. 453 n. 1.

<sup>333</sup> Pagán 2002: 52 notes that 'the further the soldiers advance toward the center of the battlefield, the further they recede from civilization'.

<sup>334</sup> O'Gorman 2000: 50.

<sup>335</sup> O'Gorman 2000: 50.

While in the first part of the account sight gains temporal depth through memory, in the second the eyewitnesses localize the events of their account through deixis (1.61.4): the death of officers, the capture of the standards, the wounding of Varus, his suicide, the rally held by Arminius after the battle, the mistreatment of the captives and the mockery of the standards is a detailed sequential account of the battle and its aftermath. The sequence is still visible in *primum* (1.61.4), but the major principle on which the narrative is arranged is spatial: *hic ... illic ... ubi ... ubi ... quo tribunali*.<sup>336</sup> Just as the sight of the battlefield was temporalized, memory is now spatialized.

The mimetic appeal of the eyewitnesses' account comes to the fore in the tense of *invenerit* and *inluserit*. The *consecutio temporum* requires the plu-perfect for the anterior past narrated by somebody in the past, but Tacitus uses the perfect tense. Commentators have found a few parallels for this deviation from classical grammar,<sup>337</sup> but I think in our passage it has special significance: besides reducing the temporal gap between the reader and the events described, the transformation of the plu-perfect into a perfect makes the actions of Arminius grammatically concurrent to the visit to the site and thereby expresses the hermeneutics of the experience on the battlefield. For Germanicus and his men, the past has become present again; accordingly, the plu-perfect becomes a simple perfect.

As much as Tacitus strives to highlight the presence of the past in the experience of the beholders, he nonetheless reveals the gap that separates past from present: 'No one knew whether they were covering over the remains of relatives or not ...' (... *nullo noscente alienas reliquias an suorum humo tegeter ...*, 1.62.1).<sup>338</sup> The following narrative of the battle also drives home the difference between 9 and 15 CE: as Koestermann and Woodman point out, the Varus battle looms so large in the narrative that Germanicus' expedition is envisaged as its re-enactment, but it ultimately veers from this script.<sup>339</sup> Caecina's order to assign the horses to the most audacious men (1.67.3) as well his falling prostrate on the ground in order to keep his men from panicking (1.66.2) follow other, more auspicious models than Varus, namely Caesar in the battle against the Helvetians and Pompeius.<sup>340</sup> Particularly the Germans' decision, against the will of Arminius, to attack the Romans while still in their camp (1.68.1) deviates from the strategy pursued against Varus and allows the Romans to save themselves. Germanicus may not succeed in 'obliterating the great disgrace on account of the army lost with Q. Varus' (*abolendae ... infamiae ob amissum cum Quinctilio Varo exercitum*, 1.3.6) – it still figures prominently in the following narrative<sup>341</sup> –,

<sup>336</sup> Cf. O'Gorman 2000: 50.

<sup>337</sup> Nipperdey and Andresen <sup>8</sup>1884: *ad loc.*; Koestermann 1963-8: *ad loc.*; Goodyear 1972-81: *ad loc.*

<sup>338</sup> Cf. O'Gorman 2000: 51-2.

<sup>339</sup> Koestermann 1957: 443 n. 32; Woodman 1998: 116; 123.

<sup>340</sup> Both models are noted by Koestermann 1963-8: *ad* 1.66.2 und 1.67.3.

<sup>341</sup> E.g., 1.71.1; 2.15.1; 2.25.1; 2.41.1; 2.45.3.

but history does not repeat itself. As close as the past may get in re-experience and re-enactment, it proves irretrievable.

That being said, the powerful impression the Teutoburg Forest makes on the Romans comes to the fore in their reactions. Tiberius, Tacitus muses, may have criticized Germanicus as he ‘believed that the sight of the slaughtered and unburied had slowed the army for battle and increased its alarm at the enemy’ (*exercitum imagine caesorum insepultorumque tardatum ad proelia et formidolosiore hostium credebat*, 1.62.2). The narrative, however, foregrounds another response to the re-experience of the Varus battle: in the final victory over the Germans, the soldiers satiate the anger which the sight of the Teutoburg Forest has instilled in them (‘their anger at the enemy mounted’ – *aucta in hostem ira*, 1.62.1 ~ ‘Their crowd was butchered as long as anger and daylight remained.’ – *vulgus trucidatum est, donec ira et dies permansit*. 1.68.5). The spell over Caecina is so strong that after visiting the site of Varus’ debacle, he is visited by Varus in a dream (1.65.2):

As for their leader, an ominous slumber terrified him: he imagined that he witnessed Quintilius Varus smeared in blood and emerging from the marshes and heard him apparently calling, but that he did not follow and pushed away the hand extended to him.

*ducemque terruit dira quies: nam Quinctilium Varum sanguine oblitum et paludibus emersum cernere et audire visus est velut vocantem, non tamen obsecutus et manum intendentis reppulisse.*

The intensity of the dream is obvious in that it is conveyed through three senses: Caecina seems to see and hear Varus, emphasized by the alliteration, and evades his grip. Two ironic twists may underscore the horror of the apparition: *quies* obviously means ‘dream, dream apparition’, but its basic meaning of ‘rest’, sounded in the preceding sentence (‘The night was restless for different reasons’ – *Nox per diversa inquiet*, 1.65.1), contrasts with the unsettling brutality of the sight.<sup>342</sup> *Oblitum* is here the perfect participle of *oblino*; the form could also be, as noted by O’Gorman,<sup>343</sup> the perfect participle of *oblivisci*. This, I suggest, throws into relief that Caecina cannot forget what he has seen in the Teutoburg Forest: the experience of the visit has been so powerful that it haunts him at night and resurrects the bones.

As I argued at the beginning of this section, Germanicus’ visit to the Teutoburg Forest is a particularly gripping passage in the *Annals*. The evocation of pity, various stylistic devices, poetic intertexts and a structure that mimics the spatial lay-out of the scene render the account highly mimetic. We have now seen that embedded in this attempt to bring the past to life there is another encounter

---

<sup>342</sup> It also echoes Lucan 7.26: *dira quies*.

<sup>343</sup> O’Gorman 2000: 54 n. 12.

with the past. The intensity of the Romans' re-experience of the Varus battle mirrors the experiential quality for which Tacitus himself strives. The *Annals* restore presence to the past just as it comes to life for Germanicus. At the same time, as I have already pointed out, seeing a historical site is different from narrating its history. On the battlefield, the past is present metonymically, through traces and relics; narrative, on the other hand, represents the past metaphorically in the sign system of language. That being said, Tacitus underlines the close entwinement of memory and sight. His narrative cannot point the reader to the places of the events as the eyewitnesses do on the battlefield, but it replaces, in Bühler's term, 'deixis ad oculos' with 'deixis ad phantasma'.<sup>344</sup> The psychologist and linguist Bühler was not the first to notice that the images conjured by our fantasy can be nearly as compelling as what we actually see. Narrative's capacity to evoke images in the mind of listeners and readers had already been amply treated by ancient rhetoricians and critics under the label of *enargeia*.<sup>345</sup>

Through its self-referential aspect, the *mise-en-abime* alerts the reader to the act of mediation. It thereby interrupts the mimesis in which the act of representation disappears behind the represented, but perhaps the *mise-en-abime* also has another effect to which the parallel of meta-painting can draw our attention. *Trompe-l'oeil* pictures by Gijsbrecht, for example, feature various objects, among them often paintings. The *mise-en-abime* seems to reinforce the attempt to dazzle the viewer by integrating into the picture the boundary between art and life;<sup>346</sup> the image in the image seems to dispel our awareness that we are viewing an image. The Teutoburg Forest narrative may work along similar lines: in concentrating on the Romans' encounter with their past, the reader may forget for a moment that she is only reading a historiographical account and instead sense the presence of the past.

## II. AMBIGUITY AS MIMETIC DEVICE (I): THE DEATH OF GERMANICUS

In the chapters on Xenophon and Plutarch, we have seen that narratorial uncertainty interrupts the mimesis and goes against the experiential quality of the narrative. An author's admission that he is unsure of details, the discussion of alternative versions as well as passages not vouched for, but ascribed to named or anonymous sources highlight the mediating instance of the historian who has himself no direct access to the past. In Tacitus' hands, however, narratorial uncertainty becomes a mimetic device. Tacitus, I will argue in this section, flags his uncertainty and creates ambiguity that mimics the perspective of the historical

---

<sup>344</sup> Bühler 1934: 121-40 on 'deixis ad phantasma'.

<sup>345</sup> Cf. ch. 1 ???

<sup>346</sup> On self-referential paintings, see Stoichita 1993; on images-in-images in ancient paintings and their effect, see Squire 2009: 396.

agents. My test-cases will be the death of Germanicus and, in the next section, the Pisonian Conspiracy.

### *An Emperor's intrigue?*

Many scholars have remarked on how Tacitus, while not stating in his own voice that Germanicus was poisoned, intimates that he actually was, especially through juggling rumours about it. Leo, for example, writes: 'Even today most readers of Tacitus will believe that they have read in him that Tiberius had poisoned Germanicus through Piso. At the same time, Tacitus states himself that this part of the accusation was groundless. He never directly ascribes guilt to Tiberius or to Livia. Nevertheless, his narrative is intended to make the reader believe the worst – and he succeeds.'<sup>347</sup> In the eyes of many scholars, this mode of presenting Germanicus' death expresses a tension between Tacitus the historian and Tacitus the artist: while the historian Tacitus feels obliged to stick to the facts which do not support a lethal intrigue against Germanicus, he is biased against Tiberius and strives to insinuate the emperor's guilt through his narrative artistry. In Ryberg's words: 'As an historian Tacitus would not suppress or misstate the facts, but as an artist he could present them in such a way as to make the reader draw the inferences which the historian refrained from drawing.'<sup>348</sup>

The art of innuendo certainly permits ancient historians to air points for which they are unwilling to vouch, and in Tacitus' hands this device has a uniquely insidious quality.<sup>349</sup> That being said, the distinction between Tacitus the historian and Tacitus the artist is not a particularly happy one just as the ambiguity created in the *Annals* ought to be taken more seriously. The uncertainty surrounding the circumstances of Germanicus' death illustrates that the art of innuendo, together with other modes of creating ambiguity, also contributes to Tacitus' mimetic efforts.<sup>350</sup> Far from being merely an artistic device, it can serve a referential function, more precisely to restore presentness to the past.<sup>351</sup>

At the very beginning of book 2, Tacitus mentions that Tiberius was concerned with Germanicus' successes (2.5.1):

---

<sup>347</sup> Leo 1969: 10-11. On Germanicus' death and its ambiguity, see, e.g., Ryberg 1942: 391-7; Walker 1952: 110-31; Shotton 1968: 208-14; Shatzman 1974: 563-8; Develin 1983: 92-4; De Vivo 2003. Tacitean ambiguity can be considered a kind of 'figured speech' which, as Ahl 1984 argues, was a widely spread mode of expression 'in the interests of both tact and safety' in Greco-Roman antiquity (174).

<sup>348</sup> Ryberg 1942: 404. Similar positions on ambiguity as a means for Tacitus of suggesting what he cannot vouch for can be found in, e.g., Walker 1952; Pippidi 1965 [1944]: 39-51; Shatzman 1974; Develin 1983. Cf. the survey of Sinclair 1991: 2795-808, which, however, is not always reliable.

<sup>349</sup> This is emphasized by Develin 1983.

<sup>350</sup> From different perspectives, Syme 1958: I: 315-16; Pöschl 1959: XXII; 1969: 171 and Pelling 2010: 382-3 point out that rumours and ambiguity serve a mimetic function in Tacitus' narrative. O'Gorman 2000 elaborates on the irony of Tacitus as a means to express formally the character of the history he is narrating.

<sup>351</sup> Cf. ch. 1???

As for Tiberius, the disruption of affairs in the East was a not unwelcome development, since with that pretext he could drag Germanicus away from his familiar legions and install him in new provinces, exposing him to guile and hazard.

*Ceterum Tiberio haud ingratum accidit turbari res Orientis, ut ea specie Germanicum suetis legionibus abstraheret novisque provinciis impositum dolo simul et casibus obiectaret.*<sup>352</sup>

*Dolus*, despite not being spelt out, conjures up a narrative frame, the script of an intrigue of the emperor against his stepson. Tacitus is not going to confirm that Germanicus is a victim of Tiberius, and yet the idea of an imperial intrigue, brought into play very early in the narrative, provides a script that will be well-suited to accommodate many of the data as well as rumours reported, aligning them into a coherent plot.

The insinuation is continued and reinforced in the context of the triumph granted to Germanicus: ‘Yet he [i.e. Tiberius] did not thereby gain credibility for the soundness of his affection and, determined to dislodge the young man by a display of honor, he manufactured reasons or seized on those offered by chance.’ (*nec ideo sinceræ caritatis fidem adsecutus amoliri iuvenem specie honoris statuit struxitque causas aut forte oblatas arripuit.* 2.42.1). The juxtaposition of reasons that are the product of scheming with such that happen by chance takes up and re-phrases the distinction between *dolus* and *casus* in 2.5.1, but the passage goes further in charting the threat for Germanicus. *Amoliri* does not necessarily imply execution,<sup>353</sup> but it can – and the context of our passage suggests that Tiberius is aiming at Germanicus’ life: the Romans, while relishing in Germanicus’ triumph, simultaneously remember (2.41.3)

... that the goodwill of the public had been disadvantageous in the case of Drusus, his father, that his uncle Marcellus had been snatched away in mid-youth from the burning devotion of the plebs, and that brief and unpropitious were the loves of the Roman people.

*... haud prosperum in Druso patre eius favorem vulgi, avunculum eiusdem Marcellum flagrantibus plebis studiis intra iuventam ereptum, breves et infaustos populi Romani amores.*<sup>354</sup>

The reference to Tiberius’ plans to remove Germanicus is thus preceded by the concern that Germanicus may be short-lived. Tacitus goes on to tell the

---

<sup>352</sup> Tiberius’ concern with Germanicus’ successes and popularity is already mentioned in 1.7.6 and 1.52.1-2. See also 1.33.1-2.

<sup>353</sup> In *Ann.* 14.59.4, for example, *amoliri* does not imply death. Cf. Shotter 1968: 205; Shatzman 1974: 564 n. 51 and Ryberg 1942: 392 on *amoliri* in 2.42.1.

<sup>354</sup> On the tragic character of this passage, see Walker 1952: 119.

story of Archelaus, the king of Cappadocia. Lured to Rome by Tiberius, he is accused in the senate and, although he dies ‘of his own accord or naturally’ (*sponte an fato*, 2.42.3), his death hammers home the reach of Tiberius’ schemes.

When Tiberius chooses Germanicus to pacify the East, he replaces Creticus Silanus with Piso as new governor of Syria. Whilst Silanus was related to Germanicus, Piso is ‘temperamentally violent and a stranger to compliance’ (*ingenio violentum et obsequii ignarum*, 2.43.4)

... nor did he have any doubt that he had been selected for installation in Syria to curb Germanicus’ hopes. Certain people believed that secret instructions had been given to him by Tiberius; and without doubt Augusta warned Plancina in womanly rivalry to assail Agrippina.

*nec dubium habebat se delectum, qui Syriae imponeretur ad spes Germanici coercendas. credere quidam data et a Tiberio occulta mandata; et Plancinam haud dubie Augusta monuit aemulatione muliebri Agrippinam insectandi.*<sup>355</sup>

Tacitus casts here further roles for the script of an imperial scheme, while keeping a cautious distance from it through vague phrases and internal focalization: ‘to curb Germanicus’ hopes’ (*ad spes Germanici coercendas*) is as fuzzy as *occulta*. The former is internally focalized through Piso, the latter is ascribed to anonymous voices in the past. That Tacitus does not vouch for the ‘secret instructions’ of Tiberius is thrown into relief by the *haud dubie* that corroborates Augusta’s role in instigating Plancina’s rivalry with Agrippina. When Piso and Plancina start badmouthing Germanicus and undermining his efforts, Tacitus adds, ‘there had spread a concealed rumor that such developments were not contrary to the Commander’s will. All this was known to Germanicus, but turning his attention to the Armenians was a more immediate concern.’ (... *quod haud invito imperatore ea fieri occultus rumor incedebat. nota haec Germanico, sed praeverti ad Armenios instantior cura fuit.* 2.55.6). Tiberius is named, but his involvement, alluded to in the form of a litotes, figures only as the object of rumor. As the past tense of *incedebat* highlights, the reader is made to see the events through the eyes of the characters, more specifically the public entertaining rumours and circumscribed as *quidam*. The reader thus shares the ambiguity to which the contemporaries were exposed.

Before his death, already gravely ill, Germanicus accuses Piso of poisoning him: ‘The savage violence of the disease was increased by his conviction that he had been given poison by Piso.’ (*saevam vim morbi augebat persuasio veneni a Pisone accepti.* 2.69.3). Tacitus reports Germanicus’

---

<sup>355</sup> Germanicus und Piso are not only antagonists and very different, but also share some points including a strong link with the republican past, cf. Pelling 1993: 83-4. On Piso as a victim in the *Annals*, see Walker 1952: 96-7; 218.

conviction both in indirect speech, reproducing his worries about his family (2.70.1), as well as in a direct speech that renders his last words and the appeal to his friends to pursue his murderers relentlessly (2.71.1-4). While Germanicus harbours no doubts about Piso's and Plancina's guilt, it is not entirely clear what role he ascribes to Tiberius: on the one hand, he asks his friends to tell his father (and brother) 'the embitterments with which I have been tormented, the snares by which I have been surrounded, as I end my most pitiable life by the worst of deaths' (*quibus acerbitatibus dilaceratus, quibus insidiis circumventus miserrimam vitam pessima morte finierim*, 2.71.1). In his last sentence, on the other hand, he obliquely alludes to rumours about Tiberius' involvement: 'And those fabricating criminal instructions will either not be believed by men or not forgiven.' (... *fingentibusque scelestam mandata aut non credent homines aut non ignoscent*. 2.71.4). *Fingere* implies that Germanicus does not believe the rumour, but his final admonishment of his wife may suggest differently: Agrippina should moderate her ferocious nature and avoid provoking those 'with more power' (*validiores*): 'These words openly; others were in secret, by which he was believed to have shown dread of Tiberius.' (*haec palam et alia secreto, per quae ostenderet credebatur metum ex Tiberio*. 2.72.1). The script of a murder story is thus spelt out by Germanicus as well as in anonymous rumours, but it is, as we see, vague about the role played by Tiberius and remains without narratorial confirmation.

Relics of human bodies and objects used in rituals, found together with inscriptions carrying the name of Germanicus, suggest that black magic was used against him. Tacitus embeds these finds into comments on Germanicus' conviction that he was poisoned by Piso, but does not specify the agents of the rituals, thereby adding to the uncertainty (2.69.3). Furthermore, scrutiny of Germanicus' corpse fails to produce clear evidence (2.73.4):

Before his body was cremated, it was stripped in the forum of the Antiochians, the place which was marked out for burial; but there was no general agreement whether it presented signs of poisoning: interpretations differed according to whether one was more inclined toward Germanicus through pity and the presumption of suspicion, or toward Piso through goodwill.

*corpus antequam cremaretur nudatum in foro Antiochensium, qui locus sepulturae destinabatur, praetuleritne veneficii signa, parum constitit: nam ut quis misericordia in Germanicum et praesumpta suspicione, aut favore in Pisonem pronior, diversi interpreta<ba>ntur.*

Not even material evidence sheds light on the dark cloud of gossip and suspicions. The omission of the two letters 'ba' in *interpreta<ba>ntur* by our manuscripts may be only a minor mistake of transmission that is easy to correct,

but the shift from past to present tense expresses nicely that the perspectives of the characters and readers converge. Just as the corpse of Germanicus is interpreted differently by contemporaries, the history of scholarship reveals that Tacitus' account of Germanicus and his death is open to diverging interpretations.<sup>356</sup> The history of transmission highlights here an aspect inherent in the text.

After Germanicus' death, a woman named Martina provides a promising lead: '... a woman infamous for poisonings in the province and particularly dear to Plancina ...' (... *infamem veneficiis ea in provincia et Plancinae percaram ...*, 2.74.2). Tacitus does not comment on her involvement, but she fits nicely into the script of a murder. Later, however, on her way to Rome, she is found dead in Brundisium: '... and poison had been concealed in a knot of her hair, and on her body no signs had been discovered of a self-inflicted extermination.' (... *venenumque nodo crinium eius occultatum, nec ulla in corpore signa sumpti exitii reperta*. 3.7.2). Thus, an opportunity of clarifying the accusation against Piso is lost. Simultaneously Martina's violent death as well as the poison found adds material to the murder script. Tacitus does not have to elaborate on it, but the bare mention of the facts and a suggestive syntactic connection, a *nam* linking the death of Martina with the suspicions against Piso, intimate that a witness of, and potential participant in, the murder has been removed.

At the same time, Piso's son and his friend Celer reject in their conversations with Piso the murder story as false: the son tries to convince Piso to go straight to Rome: 'No unpardonable act had yet been committed, he said, nor were weak suspicions or the inanities of report much to be feared; his disaffection toward Germanicus perhaps earned him rejection, but not punishment.' (*nihil adhuc inexpiabile admissum, neque suspiciones imbecillas aut inania famae pertimescenda. discordiam erga Germanicum odio fortasse dignam, non poena*. 2.76.2). Celer uses Piso's innocence as argument for the opposite position, namely that Piso ought to stay in Syria and mobilize troops: 'Also, time should be left for rumors to grow old; the innocent were generally unequal to fresh resentment.' (*relinquendum etiam rumoribus tempus, quo senescant: plerumque innocentes recenti invidiae impares*. 2.77.2).<sup>357</sup> Are Piso jr. and Celer, the reader wonders, in the know at all, and, if so, are their arguments honest or manipulated for the ears of others? Or, is Piso innocent and has, despite trying to harm Germanicus, perhaps even planning an assault, no share in his death? Is he after all the victim of rumours?<sup>358</sup>

---

<sup>356</sup> Marsh 1931: 93-4 and Shotter 1968: 208-9, for example, argue that Tacitus does not believe in the rumour about the poisoning of Germanicus, whereas Ryberg 1942: 397 and Shatzman 1974: 566 assume that he wants his readers to accept its truth.

<sup>357</sup> Celer points out that Piso can rely on Augusta's and Tiberius' sympathies, as Ryberg 1942: 395 notes, but this says nothing about their involvement in the death of Germanicus.

<sup>358</sup> In laying out different possible further developments, the conversation between Piso, his son and Celer serves a 'sideshadowing' function. I elaborate on 'sideshadowing' in Tacitus below ???

The dangerous dynamic of rumours is reflected in 2.82: the death of Germanicus ignites the rumblings in Rome that accompanied his illness. The ultimate reason for his premature end, it is said, was his intention to restore liberty in Rome. Germanicus' death agitates the vulgus so much that public life comes to a standstill. However (2.82.4),

... some businessmen, having left Syria while Germanicus was still alive, brought more welcome news about his health. It was immediately believed, immediately publicized: as individuals met, each passed to others what he had heard (however uncritically), and they in their turn to more people, with a further joyful accretion ... nighttime aided belief, and assurance was readier in the darkness.

... *negotiatores, vivente adhuc Germanico Syria egressi, laetiore de valitudine eius attulere. statim credita, statim vulgata sunt: ut quisque obvius, quamvis leniter audita in alios atque illi in plures cumulata gaudio transferunt ... iuvat credulitatem nox et promptior inter tenebras adfirmatio.*

In other passages, Tacitus is even more negative about hearsay.<sup>359</sup> Does the murder story which owes its frame to narratorial insinuations and has been spelt out by Germanicus, lose in credibility when it is rehearsed as rumour in a passage that foregrounds how easily the people are deceived – *quamvis leniter audita ...?* Tacitus brings the murder script up time and again; he does not vouch for it, but nonetheless accumulates data that as in a jigsaw-puzzle fit the script. The more Tacitus refracts the murder script through various lenses, the less clear the evidence becomes.

The ending of book 2, although without explicit mention of Germanicus, invites the reader to engage in further reflections about the rumours concerning his death. Tacitus turns to Arminius, the great antipode of Germanicus. The senate rejects an offer from the princeps of the Chatti to kill Arminius through poison (2.88.1):

And the reply was that the Roman people took vengeance on their enemies not by foul play or concealment but openly and armed. By this glorification Tiberius was matching himself with the old-time commanders who had prohibited the use of poison against King Pyrrhus and betrayed it.  
... *responsumque esse non fraude neque occultis, sed palam et armatum populum Romanum hostes suos ulcisci. qua gloria aequabat se Tiberius priscis imperatoribus, qui venenum in Pyrrhum regem vetuerant prodiderantque.*

---

<sup>359</sup> Cf. Shatzman 1974: 551-60 for a collection of Tacitean comments on rumour.

Instead, Tacitus adds, Arminius fell ‘to the cunning of his kinsmen’ (*dolo propinquorum*, 2.88.2). Arminius’ death is not only emphasized through its position at the end of a book, it is also ‘a bold anticipation upon chronology’.<sup>360</sup> Tacitus mentions that Arminius ruled for twelve years; if we count his rule from the Varus battle, then he died not in 19, but 21 CE.<sup>361</sup> Through the striking leap against chronology, Tacitus deepens the juxtaposition of Arminius with Germanicus and, without mentioning the death of the latter, alludes to it in the closure of book 2. Does, we are prompted to ask, the fate of Arminius parallel the end of his Roman opponent, who, according to rumour, fell ‘to the snares of his own people’ (*suorum insidiis*, 2.73.2)?

The imperial intrigue, if it is true, would challenge the senate’s reply to the princeps of the Chatti in a highly ironic way: no, the Roman princeps does not poison his enemies – but, just like German barbarians, the members of his own family.<sup>362</sup> Read against the foil of the rumours about Germanicus’ death, the report about Arminius’ murder is a biting comment on the corruption of the Roman political system: it calls attention to the gap separating the present from the past evoked by the honest wars against Pyrrhus as well as to the deep rift between heroic self-presentation and depraved practice. But still, as much as the narrative enmeshes the reader in thoughts about the death of Germanicus, it denies her clarity about how it actually came about.

### *Investigating Germanicus’ death*

In book 3, the focus shifts from the death of Germanicus to responses to it, particularly by Tiberius (3.2.3-3.3.3):<sup>363</sup>

... everyone [was] aware that the delight of Tiberius at Germanicus’ death was being badly dissembled. Tiberius and Augusta refrained from public

---

<sup>360</sup> Syme 1958: I: 266.

<sup>361</sup> Cf. Koestermann 1963-8 and Goodyear 1972-81: *ad* 2.88.3; Walker 1952: 124.

<sup>362</sup> For another ironic twist, see Walker 1952: 124, who finds in Tiberius’ reply an echo of Arminius’ words in 1.59.3: ‘It was not *his* habit to conduct war by betrayal or against pregnant females, but openly against armed men.’ (*non enim se proditione neque adversus feminas gravidas, sed palam adversus armatos bellum tractare.*). Seen from this perspective, Arminius gets the better of Tiberius, as he ‘had kept his word, but Tiberius, speaking in the same terms, has already proved them worthless by the assassination of his own nephew’.

<sup>363</sup> For a different view, see Damon 1999, who argues ‘that in book 2 he offers an account of what really happened (as he reconstructs it anyway), then in book 3 shows how this “truth” was obscured by a haze of rumor and suspicion in a world driven by obsequiousness and dissimulation’ (143). Taking into account also the *SCPP*, Damon makes many interesting observations, but her thesis just quoted does not square with her claim that ‘in the end Tacitus gives authorial support of the widespread view that Piso’s suicide avenged the death of Germanicus’ (159). Moreover, Damon underplays the ambiguity of book 2 just as Tacitus’ comments following the trial are less clear-cut than she has them. For a comparison of Tacitus’ account of the *SCCP* and literary sources, see also De Vivo 2003: 69-78.

appearance, deeming it would belittle their sovereignty to lament openly – or lest, with everyone’s eyes examining their demeanor, their falsity be understood. As for his mother Antonia, neither in the authors of affairs nor in the daily account of events do I discover that she performed any illustrious duty (although in addition to Agrippina and Drusus and Claudius his other kinsfolk too are listed by name), whether because she was prevented by health or because her mind, defeated by grief, could not bear to endure beholding the dimension of the disaster. I am inclined more easily to believe that Tiberius and Augusta, who made no attempt to come out of the house, restrained her, so it should appear that their sorrow was matching and that it was by the mother’s example that grandmother and uncle too were held back.

*... gnaris omnibus laetam Tiberio Germanici mortem male dissimulari. Tiberius atque Augusta publico abstinere, inferius maiestate sua rati, si palam lamentarentur, an ne omnium oculis vultum eorum scrutantibus falsi intelleg<er>entur. matrem Antoniam non apud auctores rerum, non diurna actorum scriptura reperio ullo insigni officio functam, cum super Agrippinam et Drusum et Claudium ceteri quoque consanguinei nominatim perscripti sint, seu valitudine praepediebatur, seu victus luctu animus magnitudinem mali perferre visu non toleravit. facilius crediderim Tiberio et Augusta<e>, qui domo non excedebant, cohibitam, ut par maeror et matris exemplo avia quoque et patruus attineri viderentur.*

The circumstances of Germanicus’ death become more and more clouded through various layers of focalization entertaining alternative views: Tiberius’ and Augusta’s response to Germanicus’ funeral, or rather their decision not to exhibit their response in public, is subjected to various interpretations one of which links it to their joy about the death, which, it may be conjectured, also attests their involvement in it. As the death itself is grasped only at several removes, the reader finds herself caught in the same multi-layered web of suspicions as contemporaries. The doubling of focalization that we have noticed in Thucydides is taken to a new level here.<sup>364</sup>

A similarly intricate web is spun around Germanicus’ death when Piso approaches Drusus ‘who he hoped would be, not callous on the demise of a brother, so much as more sympathetic to himself on the removal of a rival’ (*quem haud fratris interitu trucem quam remoto aemulo aequiorem sibi sperabat*, 3.8.1). Is this, we may wonder, an implicit admission of guilt – Piso counts on Drusus’ gratefulness for the murder of his rival – or does Piso merely assume that Drusus considers him responsible, or, to entertain yet another option, that he is relieved and approachable no matter what the circumstances of Germanicus’ death? Drusus’ response opens a further circle of interpretation (3.8.2):

---

<sup>364</sup> Cf. ch. 2 ???

Drusus replied to Piso that, if what was being bandied about was true, the principal one to be pained would be himself; but he would prefer it to be false and hollow, and Germanicus' death fatal to no one. These things openly, all privacy avoided; but there was no doubt that the words had been prescribed for him by Tiberius, since, being inastute otherwise and with the complaisance of youth, it was the practices of the elderly which he was then deploying.

*Drusus Pisoni, si vera forent quae iacerentur, praecipuum in dolore suum locum respondit, sed malle falsa et inania nec cuiquam mortem Germanici exitiosam esse. haec palam et vitato omni secreto; neque dubitabantur praescripta ei a Tiberio, cum incallidus alioqui et facilis iuventa senilibus tum artibus uteretur.*

Drusus becomes a mask behind which the public surmises Tiberius who has eluded scrutiny by the public eye at the funeral.

Accordingly, Tiberius is in the spotlight when the senate opens the process against Piso (3.11.2),

... with the whole community alert to hear how great was the loyalty of Germanicus' friends, what confidence the defendant had, and whether Tiberius would manage to contain and suppress his own feelings. At no other time did a more attentive people give itself greater permission for concealed utterances against the princeps or for suspicious silence.

*... arrecta omni civitate, quanta fides amicis Germanici, quae fiducia reo; satin cohiberet ac premeret sensus suos Tiberius. [is] haud alias intentior populus plus sibi in principem occultae vocis aut suspicacis silentii permisit.*

Besides creating suspense, the internal audience highlights that the narrative aligns the readers with contemporaries; the question that has been nagging us for a while, i.e. whether or not Germanicus was poisoned, is prefigured and institutionalized in the trial. Tiberius' speech, however, is a 'Meisterwerk ersten Ranges'<sup>365</sup> and does not betray any new insights into the death of Germanicus. There are some disconcerting echoes of the address that the dying Germanicus gave to his friends: like Germanicus, Tiberius refers to *fingentes* in his last sentence (*finguntur*, 3.12.7), albeit, as Koestermann *ad loc.* notes, with a rather different tenor. He also appeals to relatives and friends of the accused to support him: 'Those who have become his advocates because of kindred blood or individual loyalty, help the imperilled man as effectively as each of you can with your eloquence and concern.' (*si quos propinquus sanguis aut*

---

<sup>365</sup> Koestermann 1963-8: *ad* 3.12.1.

*fides sua patronos dedit, quantum quisque eloquentia et cura valet, iuvate periclitantem.* 3.12.6). This chimes uncannily with Germanicus' wish that *his* relatives will cry over him and avenge his death (2.71.2):

Anyone who was moved by my hopes, by kindred blood, even by resentment toward me during my lifetime – they will shed tears that a once flourishing survivor of so many wars has fallen to womanly foul play ...  
*si quos spes meae, si quos propinquus sanguis, etiam quos invidia erga viventem movebat, inlacrimabunt quondam florentem et tot bellorum superstitem muliebri fraude cecidisse.*

The echo hammers home that Tiberius does not comply with Germanicus' wish; instead of relentlessly pursuing the accused, he cares about their defence. At the same time, Tiberius elegantly balances his appeal with the expression of grief over Germanicus' death. If he was involved in the murder, his speech gives no clues about it; on the contrary, as Woodman and Martin put it, Tiberius' speech can be read 'as a vehicle for oblique rebuttal of the criticisms which he knew to have been made of him'.<sup>366</sup> While emphasizing the tense atmosphere in which the public awaited his speech, Tacitus does not waste a single word on their reaction to it.

The accusation rehearses, among other points, the murder story. However, while the defenders cannot deny Piso's rebellion, his abuse of power and slandering of Germanicus, the accusers fail to prove the murder (3.14.1-2):

Only the charge of poisoning did they seem to have wiped out, which not even his accusers adequately proved with their argument that at a party of Germanicus', when Piso was reclining above him, his food had been tainted at the man's hands. It is absurd that among someone else's slaves and in the sight of so many attendants, in the presence of Germanicus himself, he had dared such a deed.

*solum veneni crimen visus est diluisse, quod ne accusatores quidem satis firmabant, in convivio Germanici, cum super eum Piso discumberet, infectos minibus eius cibos arguentes. quippe absurdum videbatur inter aliena servitia et tot adstantium visu, ipso Germanico coram, id ausum.*

And yet, the success of the defence in rejecting the accusation of murder is qualified through a repeated *videri*. There is nothing to prove Piso's innocence and the suspicion continues: '... the senate never really believing that

---

<sup>366</sup> Woodman and Martin 1996: *ad* 3.12.1. In the further course of the trial, Tiberius does not reveal any emotions either: '... the sight of Tiberius – without pity, without anger, blocked and closed against being breached by any emotional appeal' (... *Tiberium sine miseratione, sine ira, obstinatum clausumque vidit, ne quo adfectu perrumperetur.* 3.15.2).

Germanicus' demise had been without foul play' (... *senatus numquam satis credito sine fraude Germanicum interisse*. 3.14.3). While the trial is still going on, Piso is found dead, with a sword on the floor – after Martina the second death and possible murder that smears the traces of Germanicus' death, obscuring whether it was a murder or not.

In the senate, Tiberius reads out a last letter of Piso, in which he claims his innocence (3.16.3),<sup>367</sup> but Tacitus mentions a book in which Piso kept letters and orders from Germanicus: 'The intention had been to produce it before the fathers and to accuse the princeps, had he not been outwitted by Sejanus with empty promises.' (... *destinatum promere apud patres principemque arguere, ni elusus a Seiano per vana promissa foret*. 3.16.1). It was also rumoured that Piso's death was not suicide, but murder. Tacitus states that he cannot confirm either hearsay, but, as Woodman and Martin point out, he goes out of his way to authenticate the information: 'I remember hearing from my elders that a document was often seen in Piso's hands ...' (*Audire me memini ex senioribus visum saepius inter manus Pisonis libellum ...*).<sup>368</sup> Even unvouched for, the hearsay produces another claim that raises uncomfortable questions about Tiberius and ties in nicely with the script of a murder story surrounding Germanicus' death. This script is granted another mention when Tacitus reports the outcome of the trial. The very mild treatment of Piso's family, in particular of Plancina who was protected by Augusta, provoked outrage: 'So it was right for a grandmother to behold the murderess of her grandson, to address her, to snatch her from the senate!' (*id ergo fas aviae, interfetricem nepotis aspicere adloqui, eripere senatui*. 3.17.2) This time, the suspicion gains emphasis from being ascribed to *optimus quisque* (3.17.1) and is reinforced through the concern that Plancina would turn 'poisons and practices so triumphantly tested' (*venena et artes tam feliciter expertas*) against further members of the imperial family (3.17.2).

In concluding the episode, Tacitus points out in solemn words the difficulties of finding the truth (3.19.2):

That was the end to the avenging, though Germanicus' death was bandied about in various rumors not only among those men who lived then but also in following times. So is it the case that all the greatest matters are ambiguous, inasmuch as some people hold any form of hearsay as confirmed, others turn truth into its converse, and each swells among posterity.

*is finis fuit ulciscenda Germanici morte, non modo apud illos homines qui tum agebant, etiam secutis temporibus vario rumore iactata. adeo maxima*

---

<sup>367</sup> On correspondences between this letter and Germanicus' last words, see Koestermann 1958: 372.

<sup>368</sup> Woodman and Martin 1996: *ad* 3.16.1.

*quaeque ambigua sunt, dum alii quoquo modo audita pro compertis habent, alii vera in contrarium vertunt, et gliscit utrumque posteritate.*

Shatzman argues that ‘the opening sentence, *ulciscenda Germanici morte*, is very powerful; vengeance strongly suggests that a crime was committed’.<sup>369</sup> However, the word *ulcisci* may be internally focalized and reflect the perspective of the agents.<sup>370</sup> Even so this passage is emblematic of Tacitus’ inclination to insinuate, in addition to reporting rumours, through ambiguous phrasing what he will not vouch for. Another example of this occurs while Germanicus is still in Egypt: Piso has learnt about his recovery from his illness: ‘Then he departed for Seleucia, waiting upon the illness which again had befallen Germanicus.’ (*tum Seleuciam degreditur, opperiens aegritudinem, quae rursus Germanico acciderat*. 2.69.2). Taking into account Tacitus’ convoluted style, it is possible to assume that Piso is waiting to see if Germanicus has really recovered, but Germanicus’ ‘conviction that he had been given poison by Piso’ (*persuasio veneni a Pisone accepti*) mentioned in the following sentence (2.69.3) leaves the reader puzzled whether ‘*opperiens aegritudinem* may be taken to imply that he had reason to expect it to be serious’.<sup>371</sup>

Tacitus points out that the rumours did not stop, thereby challenging his attempt to conclude the episode.<sup>372</sup> The younger Drusus, for example, when he is led to his death, blames Tiberius among other crimes for the death of Germanicus (6.24.2). Tacitus himself adds to his summary of the year 23 CE at the beginning of book 4 the insidious remark that Tiberius considered Germanicus’ death ‘among the successes’ (*inter prospera*, 4.1.1). On Plancina’s death he comments: ‘... she exacted a late rather than an undeserved reprisal.’ (... *sera magis quam immerita supplicia persolvit*. 6.26.3).<sup>373</sup> The closure, undermined and deferred, exacerbates the ambiguity created in the narrative.

The uncertainty about the circumstances of Germanicus’ death is thrown into relief by the paragraph preceding Tacitus’ concluding comment. When Messalinus suggests thanking the emperor and his family for avenging Germanicus, he leaves out the name of Claudius, who is only added at the instigation of another senator. This prompts Tacitus to muse about history in general (3.18.4):

But as for me, the more I reconsider recent or past events, the more I am confronted with the mockeries made of mortal affairs in every activity: for

---

<sup>369</sup> Shatzman 1974: 567. See also Damon 1999: 159.

<sup>370</sup> *Ultio* is internally focalized in 3.7.1, where, however, the focalizing instance is explicitly mentioned: ‘... the mind of everyone alerted for the exacting of vengeance on Piso ...’ (... *erectis omnium animis petendae e Pisone ultionis* ...).

<sup>371</sup> Ryberg 1942: 394.

<sup>372</sup> Cf. Woodman and Martin 1996: *ad* 3.19.2.

<sup>373</sup> On the presence of Germanicus in the later books of the *Annals*, see Walker 1952: 126-8.

in terms of reputation, hope, and veneration, everyone was marked out for command rather than the future princeps whom fortune was keeping in hiding.

*mihi, quanto plura recentium seu veterum revolvo, tanto magis ludibria rerum mortalium cunctis in negotiis obversantur. quippe fama spe veneratione potius omnes destinabantur imperio quam quem futurum principem fortuna in occulto tenebat.*

This reflection has received much attention from scholars writing on Tacitus' concept of *fortuna* and idea of history,<sup>374</sup> but it is also worth considering it in its context. The openness of the future in some ways mirrors the obscurity of the past. Of course, the past has already happened, whereas the future is still to come, but particularly the phrase *in occulto tenere*, besides being 'a sardonic allusion to the familiar circumstances of Claudius' accession',<sup>375</sup> invites a comparison as the word *occultus* is also employed in attempts to scrutinize the past.<sup>376</sup> The juxtaposition with the impossibility of knowing the future highlights the problems in finding the truth about Germanicus' death. The past, it seems, is nearly as hard to figure out as the future.

The most salient aspect of Tacitus' concluding remarks is the comparison of contemporaries with posterity. Gullibility as well as manipulation makes it hard for contemporaries to find the truth, 'and each swells among posterity' (*et gliscit utrumque posteritate*, 3.19.2). Tacitus' own narrative, however, proves that in some cases time helps truth to emerge: the poisoning of Drusus, for one, became known only after eight years (4.8.1). Nonetheless, the general alignment of contemporaries with later observers, including, of course, historians, makes explicit the narrative design for which I have argued: that ambiguity, reports of rumour, source quotations and alternative versions serve a mimetic effect. Tacitus confronts his readers with the same uncertainty about Germanicus' death as contemporaries, slyly feeding suspicions, without vouching for them. Instead of interrupting the mimesis, uncertainty heightens the experiential spell of the narrative.

### *Tiberius and Tacitus*

The prominence of ambiguity in the presentation of Tiberius underscores its mimetic function.<sup>377</sup> We have encountered many passages in which the

---

<sup>374</sup> E.g., Kroymann 1969: 140; Griffin 2009: 169.

<sup>375</sup> Woodman and Martin 1996: *ad* 3.18.4.

<sup>376</sup> In the account of Germanicus' fate, see, e.g., 2.43.4: *occulta mandata* and 2.55.6: *occultus rumor*.

<sup>377</sup> Most scholars emphasize that the use of innuendo and reference of *rumores* looms particularly large in the Tiberius' books: Ferrero 1946: 86; Shatzman 1974: 569; Sullivan 1976: 323; Aubrion

ambiguity of Tacitus' narrative represents the inscrutability of the princeps; further examples include Tacitus's difficulties in reading the emperor when he ponders on Tiberius' motivation for keeping magistrates as long as possible (1.80) and when he devotes an extended reflection to his decision to leave Rome (4.57).<sup>378</sup> This ambiguity reproduces a significant trait of Tiberius, flagged prominently at the beginning of the *Annals*: 'And Tiberius' words, even on matters which he was not concealing, were – whether by nature or habit – always weighed and dark.' (*Tiberioque etiam in rebus quas non occuleret, seu natura sive adsuetudine, suspensa semper et obscura verba*. 1.11.2). Even on his deathbed, Tiberius clings to his art of concealment: 'It was now that Tiberius' body and strength were letting him down; but not yet his dissembling.' (*Iam Tiberium corpus, iam vires, nondum dissimulatio deserebat*. 6.50.1).

There are striking similarities between Tacitus and Tiberius: 'Tiberius had skill too in a technique whereby he weighed his words, on such occasions being either effective in his sentiments or purposely ambiguous.' (*Tiberius artem quoque callebat, qua verba expenderet, tum validus sensibus aut consulto ambiguus*. 13.3.2) As Syme notes, 'Tacitus approves the eloquence of the Emperor in terms that fit his own style'.<sup>379</sup> Even the critical comment on the *suspensa semper et obscura verba* just quoted will not fail to evoke the challenges that the *Annals* pose to every reader. O'Gorman suggests that 'the difficulties of reading the princeps are a dramatization of the difficulties of reading the *Annals*'.<sup>380</sup> and Pelling points out that 'one can also put it the other way round, and emphasize how the reading process replicates the difficulties that contemporaries found in grasping Tiberius'.<sup>381</sup> The creation of ambiguity in particular aligns Tacitus with Tiberius and can be read as the historian's attempt to render experiential the account of the princeps' era.

Ambiguity is not, at least not in many cases, the honest expression of a scrupulous historian who has reached his wit's end. Tacitus in general does not shy away from elaborating on thoughts and feelings of characters and is also able to unveil Tiberius' hidden intentions.<sup>382</sup> It is striking that the admission of narratorial uncertainty features only rarely in his account of external events.<sup>383</sup> Tacitus has a sure grasp of the quarrels between German tribes as well as of the

---

1985: 161; Sinclair 1995: 63. See, however, Betensky 1978, who argues that the Neronian books are no less 'Tacitean' than the first hexad.

<sup>378</sup> For a full list, see Develin 1983: 91-4.

<sup>379</sup> Syme 1958: I: 429; cf. 319. For more passages on the opaque nature of Tiberius' speech, see Woodman and Martin 1996: *ad* 3.51.1; on the similarities between Tacitus and Tiberius, see especially Allison 1990.

<sup>380</sup> O'Gorman 2000: 78.

<sup>381</sup> Pelling 2010: 382. See also Rutledge 1998: 144. The similarities between Tacitus and Tiberius are not limited to style. In the Piso trial, his self-stylization as impartial and his critique of rumours (3.12.3-4) are reminiscent of Tacitus just as the emperor's description as 'without pity, without anger' (*sine miseratione, sine ira*, 3.15.2) cannot fail to evoke the *Annals*' proem.

<sup>382</sup> Cf. Ryberg 1942: 385. See also Sailor 2008: 178.

<sup>383</sup> For some of the rare occurrences, see Aubrion 1985: 172.

intricate struggles for succession in Armenia and the motives of African rebels. Paradoxically at first sight, the historian's uncertainty seems to decrease with distance from Rome.<sup>384</sup> This highlights that in the first hexad ambiguity serves the mimetic function of making the reader feel what it was like to live under Tiberius. Shatzman puts succinctly the negative judgment of many readers of Tacitus: 'Insofar as he presents false versions as possibly genuine, he fails to carry out his first duty as a historian. Tacitus' narrative is a confused account of various versions, personal comments and rumours.'<sup>385</sup> If my argument is correct, then what is often considered as Tacitus' failure as historian reveals him as a historian at his best: ambiguity is an artful attempt to restore presentness to the past, thereby ultimately serving a referential function.

### III. AMBIGUITY AS MIMETIC DEVICE (II): THE PISONIAN CONSPIRACY

It has been noted that the art of innuendo looms particularly large in the first hexad of the *Annals*, but Tacitus also creates ambiguity in the later books.<sup>386</sup> In this section, I shall focus on an episode that, besides illustrating other mimetic devices, corroborates and helps to refine the thesis that narratorial uncertainty serves a mimetic function in the *Annals*: the Pisonian Conspiracy, extending over 28 chapters, that is the last part of book 15.<sup>387</sup> The year 65 CE saw a broad conspiracy that included Romans from very different backgrounds and with various motives. The plan to assassinate Nero on his way to the games was leaked to Nero by the freedman of one of the conspirators. Nero took merciless revenge and also used the opportunity to get rid of others not involved in the conspiracy. Before exploring narratorial uncertainty as a means of restoring presentness to these events, I will demonstrate the prominence of 'sideshadowing' and consider the blurring of the boundaries between art and life.

#### *'Sideshadowing'*

The narrative of the Pisonian Conspiracy is strikingly rich in 'sideshadowing'.<sup>388</sup> Time and again, Tacitus alerts the reader to alternative courses that history could have taken. One of the conspirators, Subrius Flavius,

---

<sup>384</sup> As the uncertainty clouding events in Rome expresses the political decline, the comparable clarity about events on the empire's periphery can be linked to the Romanness of barbarian characters such as Calgacus and Caratacus that has been pointed out by Clarke 2001 and 2002: 90-2.

<sup>385</sup> Shatzman 1974: 568.

<sup>386</sup> See above ???

<sup>387</sup> On the Pisonian Conspiracy in the *Annals*, see, e.g., Graf 1931: 101-5; Walker 1952: 131-7; Corsi Zoli 1972; Mastellone Iovane 1989: 130-44; Woodman 1998: 190-217; Devillers 1999; O'Gorman 2006: 286-8.

<sup>388</sup> Cf. ch. 1 ??? on the concept of 'sideshadowing'.

proposes that Nero be killed either while singing on stage or while rambling at night (15.50.4):

In the latter case it was the opportunity of his solitude, in the former the actual throng – the finest of witnesses to such an exploit – that had spurred his spirit, except that he was restrained by the desire for impunity, always a barrier to great attempts.

*hic occasio solitudinis, ibi ipsa frequentia tanti decoris testis pulcherrima animum exstimulaverant, nisi impunitatis cupido retinuisset, magnis semper conatibus adversa.*

Another possible scenario discussed later is to assault Nero in Piso's villa in Baiae, where the emperor often went to relax, but Piso opposes this plan (15.52.1).<sup>389</sup> Before this, there is a double 'sideshadow': probably the oddest participant in the conspiracy is a freedwoman named Epicharis, who is friends with Proculus, a captain of the navy in Misenum.<sup>390</sup> Knowing that this captain is disappointed about not having received the due reward for his role in the murder of Agrippina, Epicharis tries to win him for the conspiracy (15.51.1-3). The involvement of the navy, the first 'sideshadow', would have given a rather different twist to the assault which failed not least due to a lack of manly courage and military force.<sup>391</sup> Proculus, however, reports on Epicharis. This, one might first expect, means the end of the conspiracy – a second 'sideshadow'. And yet, Epicharis has not shared the names of the conspirators with Proculus and in the interrogation manages to refute the accusation (15.51.4). Like the prospect of the navy participating in the conspiracy, the report of Proculus draws the attention of the reader to an alternative turn that the events could have taken.

Further possible developments are envisaged as the object of Piso's fear (15.52.2-3): after the fall of Nero, Silanus could become the new emperor. Furthermore, the influential consul Vestinus who has been excluded from the conspiracy could restore a republican constitution or make another man rule. Tacitus then reports in much detail how the assault is envisioned by the conspirators (15.53): that Lateranus, pretending to ask the emperor for support, would approach him and knock him down. Then, soldiers and others would kill him, the first blow being reserved for Scaevinus who for this purpose has fetched an old dagger from a temple. In the meantime, Piso would wait in the temple of Ceres and then be brought to the castle by Faenius. According to Pliny, the

---

<sup>389</sup> On the historical problems that this suggestion raises, see Walker 1952: 134 n. 2 and Koestermann 1963-8: *ad loc.*

<sup>390</sup> On Epicharis, see Corsi Zoli 1972.

<sup>391</sup> Tacitus uses in particular Epicharis' death to throw into relief the cowardice and unheroic character of the other conspirators (15.57.2). On the military weakness of the conspiracy, see Woodman 1998: 200-2 and also Mastellone Iovane 1989: 130-44, who elaborates on the importance of fear for the failure of the conspiracy.

conspirators would have bolstered the new imperial authority of Piso through a marriage with Antonia, the daughter of Claudius. The conspirators will not get that far, but Tacitus' detailed report of the planning lets the readers imagine what the assault would have been like.

The man who betrays the conspiracy is Milichus, a freedman who denounces his former master Scaevinus. However, Tacitus entertains the possibility that this betrayal is not the end of the conspiracy. Scaevinus is very adroit in the interrogation and manages to give plausible explanations for all points that have aroused Milichus' suspicion (15.55.2-3): an 'ancestral scruple' (*religione patria*, 15.55.2) prompts him to keep the dagger, and he frequently revises his testament. Gifts to his slaves are not that uncommon and, on account of his current financial situation, particularly rich this time. He is also used to giving lavish meals, while the preparation of bandage is a lie of Milichus (15.55.4):

Scaevinus added steadfastness to his words: he in turn censured the man for being a detestable criminal – with such unconcern in delivery and demeanor that the information would have collapsed, had not Milichus' wife reminded him that Antonius Natalis had had a long and private dialogue with Scaevinus and that both were intimates of C. Piso.  
*adicit dictis constantiam; incusat ultro intestabilem et consceleratum, tanta vocis ac vultus securitate, ut labaret indicium, nisi Milichum uxor admonuisset Antonium Natalem multa cum Scaevino ac secreta collocutum et esse utrosque C. Pisonis intimos.*

The counterfactual signals that another outcome was within reach, that due to Scaevinus' clever defence the plans could have remained undiscovered, that the assault could have taken place and that Rome would have been freed of Nero.<sup>392</sup>

Even after the first wave of arrests, Tacitus goes out of his way to envision an alternative course of events. Piso, while still free, is encouraged by anonymous voices to go public and try to win the soldiers and the people for a rebellion (15.59.1-2):

If his accomplices flocked to his attempt, they said, the uninvolved too would follow; and great would be the report of what they had set in motion, something particularly effective in revolutionary plans. No provision against such things had been made by Nero: even brave men were terrified by unplanned developments; still less would that stage-performer, accompanied for sure by Tigellinus and his concubines, stir up arms against them. Many things were brought about by experiment, though to sluggards they seemed a steep task.

---

<sup>392</sup> Cf. Devillers 1999: 57. On counterfactuals, see ch. 3 ???.

*si conatibus eius conscii adgregarentur, secuturos etiam integros; magnamque motae rei famam, quae plurimum in novis consiliis valeret. nihil adversum haec Neroni provisum. etiam fortes viros subitis terreri, nedum ille scaenicus, Tigellino scilicet cum paelicibus suis comitante, arma contra cieret. multa experiendo confieri, quae segnibus ardua videantur.*

Even if Piso dies, this would be more glorious than a disgraceful execution and spurn on soldiers and the people to rise up. This alternative scenario puts into relief Piso's decision to stay at home and paves the way for a devastating judgment of his personality (15.59.5). It also calls to mind that a failure of the conspiracy was not the necessary outcome.

At several junctures in the plot Tacitus sketches in detail roads not taken. As in other cases, the 'sideshadowing' makes the narrative dramatic and restores presentness to the past. I suggest that it additionally has a more specific function in this episode: the various courses the conspiracy could have taken highlights its political insignificance. Piso is 'an inoffensive Nero'<sup>393</sup> and his fear that Vestinus could revive the old Republic highlights that it is not the aim of most of the conspirators to restore liberty.<sup>394</sup> The dense web of alternative scenarios throws into relief the fact that the Pisonian Conspiracy did not offer a true alternative.<sup>395</sup> The multiple possible developments entertained by Tacitus contrast with the absence of a real political alternative and thereby intimate that, questionable as it is, the principate may have become the only viable political system.

### *Art and life*

The mimesis of Tacitus' account is reinforced through a second point. Woodman has elaborated on the prominence of role-playing in the Pisonian Conspiracy which reflects the strong theatrical inclinations of the epoch.<sup>396</sup> In the planning of the assault, for example, Scaevinus claims the 'leading role' for himself (*primas sibi partes expostulante Scaevino*, 15.53.2) and his performance in the interrogation by Nero's men qualifies as 'superb acting'.<sup>397</sup> Seneca's theatrical stylization of his own death has been noted by several commentators.<sup>398</sup> All protagonists, however, are outsmarted and outplayed by Nero, the outstanding actor, who finally gets to play triumph (15.72.1). In an intriguing note, Woodman

---

<sup>393</sup> Syme 1958: II: 575.

<sup>394</sup> Cf. Walker 1952: 133.

<sup>395</sup> On the alternative history offered by various members of the Piso family in the *Annals*, see O'Gorman 2006.

<sup>396</sup> Woodman 1998: 190-217. On theatre and role-playing in the Neronian period, cf. Boesche 1987: 207-9; Bartsch 1994.

<sup>397</sup> Woodman 1998: 204.

<sup>398</sup> See, e.g., Koestermann 1963-8: *ad* 15.64.3; Martin 1981: 184; Woodman 1998: 206 with n. 53; Auffarth 2009.

muses about different categories of role embracing stage performance as well as real life action and adds: ‘Had Tacitus’ account of the Pisonian Conspiracy been an actual drama, rather than a narrative, one might usefully have invoked the idea of a “play within play”.’<sup>399</sup> Woodman correctly insists on the difference between drama and narrative, but there are at least two passages referring to non-dramatic texts that contain a self-referential reflection on the relation between art and life: the deaths of Seneca and Lucan.

Seneca opens his veins, but ‘his elderly body had shrunk owing to his spare livelihood’ (*senile corpus et parco victu tenuatum*, 15.63.3), the blood flows only slowly and does not lead to a sudden death.<sup>400</sup> He therefore swallows the poison ‘by which those condemned by the Athenians’ public court had their lives extinguished’ (*quo d<am>nati publico Atheniensium iudicio exstinguerentur*, 15.64.3). This of course ‘prompts us to think of the account of Socrates’ death in Plato’s *Phaedo*’.<sup>401</sup> Cancik-Lindemaier aptly speaks of a ‘gelebtes Platonzitat’<sup>402</sup> – Tacitus obviously aligns the Roman with the Greek philosopher. Another aspect is also worth considering: the blurring of the boundary between life and narrative. Tacitus has Seneca model his own death on a text that itself claims to represent an actual death. In addition to having strong histrionic qualities, Seneca’s death is presented as the enactment of a non-dramatic script. A neat distinction between art and life is also challenged through the relation between Seneca’s death and his own writing. Not only does Seneca’s serenity reflect the maxims of his own writings,<sup>403</sup> but even in his ‘last moment’ he continues to dictate words which, as Tacitus adds, would be published (15.63.3). In Seneca’s death, living and writing, reality and text, are in flux.

About Lucan, Tacitus writes (15.70.1):

As his blood poured forth, and he realized that his feet and hands were chilling and that the pulse was gradually withdrawing from his extremities, yet his breast was still warm and in control of his mind, he recalled a poetic composition of his in which he had transmitted that a wounded soldier had met a form of death of the same sort; he repeated the actual verses, and they were his final utterance.

*is profluente sanguine ubi frigescere pedes manusque et paulatim ab extremis cedere spiritum fervido adhuc et compote mentis pectore intellegit, recordatus carmen a se compositum, quo vulneratum militem*

<sup>399</sup> Woodman 1998: 210 n. 74.

<sup>400</sup> On Seneca’s death, see, in addition to the literature in n. ???, Hutchinson 1993: 263-8 with further literature in n. 11 on 263; Kyle 2008; Ker 2009: 20-34.

<sup>401</sup> Woodman 1998: 206. Cf. Hutchinson 1993: 263; 267, who also notes differences from Plato’s account, notably Tacitus’ distance and his focus on the ‘agonizing protraction’.

<sup>402</sup> Cancik-Lindemaier 2006: 299.

<sup>403</sup> Edwards 2007: 110-12.

*per eius modi mortis imaginem obisse tradiderat, versus ipsos rettulit, eaque illi suprema vox fuit.*<sup>404</sup>

O’Gorman reads this account against the background of Nero’s striving to establish his own poetic voice and particularly his attempt to silence Lucan’s authorial activity:<sup>405</sup> the allusion to Virgil’s *plurima mortis imago* (*Aen.* 2.369) as well as to *omni imagine mortium* in Tacitus’ *Historiae* 3.28 sets up a complex layer of authorial voices that finally allows Lucan to ‘re-appropriate the death which is under Nero’s control and refigure it as an *imago*’.<sup>406</sup> From the angle of my interpretation, it is striking that Lucan enacts lines from his own poetry, thereby blending together art and life. *Imago* signifies here ‘kind of’, as most scholars see, but the meaning ‘a fictitious representation’, championed by others, may also be heard.<sup>407</sup> This connotation would highlight that Lucan is reciting fiction and thereby hammer home the transformation of fiction into reality.<sup>408</sup>

The explicit enactment of Lucan’s poetry is prefigured in 15.50.1: ‘Therefore, among themselves or among friends, they bandied the princeps’s crimes and the fact that the end of his command was near and that someone must be chosen to relieve the general exhaustion.’ (*Ergo dum scelera principis, et finem adesse imperio deligendumque, qui fessis rebus succurreret, inter se aut inter amicos iaciunt ...*). Woodman observes that Tacitus not only alludes to *Aen.* 11.335, but also to the Virgilian echo in *Bellum civile* 8.278: *quemnam Romanis deceat succurrere rebus*.<sup>409</sup> According to Woodman, the intertextuality unveils the conspirators’ ‘lack of realism’ and implies ‘a complex condemnation’. On my view, it is noteworthy that the allusion to Lucan in the plans of the conspirators anticipates the blending together of Lucan’s poetry and death and thereby contributes to the blurring of the boundary between fact and fiction.

Texts play a major role in the death of both Seneca and Lucan.<sup>410</sup> Their composition, recital and enactment can be read as acts of resistance to an emperor who tries to silence other voices. In recording them, Tacitus helps the victims to a

---

<sup>404</sup> On the question as to whether Lucan was executed or committed suicide, see Tucker 1987, in favour of the former, and Wilson 1990, arguing for the latter.

<sup>405</sup> O’Gorman 2000: 155-9.

<sup>406</sup> O’Gorman 2000: 157-8.

<sup>407</sup> See, e.g., Furneaux <sup>2</sup>1896-1907 and Koestermann 1963-8: *ad* 15.70.2 in favour of ‘a form of/kind of’, whereas Nipperdey and Andresen <sup>8</sup>1884 and *Lex. Tac.* 564A opt for ‘fictional representation’. It is also worth noting that the *imago mortis* of Lucan contrasts with the *imago vitae* that Seneca professes to leave to his friends (15.62.1).

<sup>408</sup> The reference to a soldier dying in Civil War may add a malicious twist to the passage. Lucan may be granted a *suprema vox*, but it throws into relief the very weak military aspect of the conspiracy emphasized by Woodman 1998: 200-2.

<sup>409</sup> Woodman 1998: 201.

<sup>410</sup> Petronius can be added as a third author in whose death writing plays a role and provides a last act of resistance. He sends an account of Nero’s sexual perversions to the emperor (16.19.3). In many regards, his death offers a parody of Seneca’s death (cf. Connors 1994: 228-9), but their use of writing is parallel, as O’Gorman 2000: 158 notes.

late victory over Nero. He simultaneously challenges a clear-cut borderline between life and art; they are intricately entangled. It is tempting to read these reflections on reality and text meta-historically and apply them to the text that features them. This does not make the *Annals* more experiential in the sense that it becomes more dramatic and immersive; the self-reference rather undermines the mimesis. And yet, it reinforces the *Annals*' mimetic claim at a more abstract level: if reality itself is closely entwined with texts, the gap between Tacitus' narrative and the events it covers begins to close.

### *Narratorial uncertainty*

The mimesis of Tacitus' account of the Pisonian Conspiracy gets a stronger experiential touch through narratorial uncertainty, the assignation of stories to other authors, rumours and alternative versions: narrative ambiguity formally expresses the atmosphere of the conspiracy like the inscrutability of Tiberius in the last hexad. A closer look, however, will also reveal differences and thereby deepen our understanding of narrative mimesis. To start with, narratorial uncertainty looms large in the Pisonian Conspiracy: Subrius' proposal to assassinate Nero on stage or at night is qualified by *ferebatur* (15.50.4). It is uncertain, Tacitus claims, how Epicharis learnt about and joined the conspiracy (15.51.1).<sup>411</sup> Tacitus also leaves it open whether she has known Proculus for a long time or has made his acquaintance more recently (15.51.2). The motives for Piso's efforts to keep Vestinus out of the conspiracy that Tacitus mentions are reported as the belief of *plerique* (15.52.3). Scaevinus has fetched the dagger either from the temple of Salus or Fortuna in Ferentinum (15.53.2).<sup>412</sup> Tacitus ascribes to Pliny the report about the plan to secure Piso's authority through a marriage with Antonia; he himself considers this absurd given that Piso's love for his wife was well known – and yet, 'the desire for despotism flares stronger than every feeling' (*cupido dominandi cunctis adfectibus flagrantior est*, 15.53.4). Milichus may have been in the know about the conspiracy and have broken his loyalty only before the last moment, but perhaps he was not informed and is only alerted by Scaevinus' odd behaviour (15.54.3). Scaevinus betrays the names of fellow conspirators either because he is just as weak as Natalis or assuming that Natalis has already laid bare everything (15.56.3). Tacitus is not sure whether Paulina was conscious of having been saved from suicide (15.64.2):

For – such is the readiness of the public for baser alternatives – there was no lack of those who believed that, as long as she feared Nero's

---

<sup>411</sup> Corsi Zoli 1972: 329-30 notes this as strange given how well-informed Tacitus is about the exact circumstances of her death. Polyaeus *Strat.* 8.62 introduces her as the mistress of Annaeus Mela, one of the conspirators. Cf. Devillers 1999: 54.

<sup>412</sup> Wiseman 1967: ??? argues that the dagger came from the Ferentinan temple of Fortuna.

implacability, she had sought the fame of a death allied to her husband's; but then, with the offer of a gentler prospect, she had been overcome by the blandishments of life.

*nam, ut est vulgus ad deteriora promptum, non defuere qui crederent, donec implacabilem Neronem timuerit, famam sociatae cum marito mortis petivisse, deinde oblata mitiore spe blandimentis vitae evictam.*

By denigrating the people's inclination to slander, Tacitus casts doubt on the rumour, and yet he reports it in full detail. When Nero's soldiers come to get Vestinus, he is having a dinner party, 'dreading nothing or dissembling his dread' (*nihil metuens an dissimulando*, 15.69.2).

Most of these points are of minor relevance and concern only motivation or details of the story. Nonetheless, their density is striking: taken together they set a pervasive tenor of ambiguity in the account of the Pisonian Conspiracy. This tenor is reinforced at the beginning and ending: Tacitus starts with the admission that he cannot name the origin of the conspiracy: '... and yet I could not easily recall who was initially the author or at whose instigation came the summons which so many took up.' (*nec tamen facile memoraverim, quis primus auctor, cuius instinctu concitum sit quod tam multi sumpserunt*. 15.49.1) At the end, Tacitus comments on the whole conspiracy (15.73.2):

But that there had been a conspiracy which began and developed and was overthrown was not doubted at the time by those whose concern was with knowing the truth, and is admitted by those who after Nero's demise returned to the City.

*ceterum coeptam adultamque et revictam coniurationem neque tunc dubitavere, quibus verum noscendi cura erat, et fatentur, qui post interitum Neronis in urbem regressi sunt.*

The reference to those 'whose concern was with knowing the truth' and the dissidents instils authority in the claim; 'curiously however', as Woodman notes, 'this sentence seems to suggest that some people had questioned, or perhaps even denied, the very existence of an episode to which Tacitus has devoted more space than to any other in the *Annals*'.<sup>413</sup> Pelling may push it too far with his claim that 'Tacitus' readers would be failing in their duty if they were not by now suspecting that the whole thing might have been a sham'.<sup>414</sup> For this, I think, the account is too long and too detailed, but the ambiguity in which the Pisonian Conspiracy is couched is strongly reinforced at the beginning and ending of the account.

---

<sup>413</sup> Woodman 1998: 215. Cf. Walker 1952: 132.

<sup>414</sup> Pelling 2009: 158.

One point on which Tacitus is deliberately vague stands out: Seneca's role in the conspiracy. Book 14 closes with the accusation that Seneca is an associate of Piso, but Seneca manages to turn the tables and the accuser, a freedman named Romanus, is himself executed for support of Piso (14.65.2). When Natalis names Seneca as a participant in the conspiracy, Tacitus deepens the ambiguity by musing on the motives of Natalis' claim: '... either because he was an intermediary between him and Piso or else in order to obtain influence with Nero, who, hostile to Seneca, had been searching for every means to overwhelm him' (*sive internuntius inter eum Pisonemque fuit, sive ut Neronis gratiam pararet, qui infensus Senecae omnes ad eum opprimendum artes conquirebat*, 15.56.2). Nero has Seneca die 'not because he had discovered him in the act of conspiracy but so that he could make progress with the sword, since poison had not succeeded' (*non quia coniurationis manifestum compererat, sed ut ferro grassaretur, quando venenum non processerat*, 15.60.2). Thus, Seneca's participation in the conspiracy is not proven, but Tacitus' choice of words does not rule it out either, whatever form it may have taken. Natalis' report that Seneca refused to meet with Piso because 'conversational exchanges and frequent dialogues were of advantage to neither party, whereas his own life depended upon Piso's preservation' (*sermones mutuos et crebra conloquia neutri conducere; ceterum salutem suam incolumitate Pisonis inniti*, 15.60.3) is not very conclusive, but, if true, would imply that Seneca knew about the plans and approved of them. Seneca, however, counters the report with the question *cur salutem privati hominis incolumitati suae anteferet* ('why should he give the life of a private individual precedence over his own preservation', 15.61.1). At the same time, rumour insinuates a far deeper involvement (15.65): that Subrius Flavus and the centurions planned to execute Piso also and then make Seneca the emperor. Tacitus does not offer safe ground, but prompts the reader insistently to rack her brain over the role of the philosopher. Not surprisingly, scholars still disagree about whether or not Seneca was involved in the conspiracy against his pupil.<sup>415</sup>

In the case of Germanicus' death, I have argued that Tacitus exposes the reader to the same uncertainty as the characters. He reports the event largely through hearsay and thereby assimilates the perspective of the readers to that of the contemporary public. The experiential effect of Tacitus' narrative of the Pisonian Conspiracy is different; here Tacitus privileges the reader over the contemporaries. He reports ominous signs at the end of 66 CE: deformed humans and animals, especially a bull born with his head on his thigh which is interpreted as a sign that 'in preparation there was another head of human affairs, but it would not be effective or concealed, because it had been suppressed in the womb or

---

<sup>415</sup> For a survey of older scholarship, see Koestermann 1963-8: *ad* 15.65. See also Mastellone Iovane 1989: 134 n. 9, who thinks that Tacitus asserts Seneca's innocence. Ker 2009: 21, on the other hand, states 'that Tacitus "does not go out of his way to deny that Seneca was part of the conspiracy"'. On the debate about Tacitus' judgment of Seneca, see Griffin 1976: 441-4.

delivered by the wayside' (*parari rerum humanarum aliud caput, sed non fore validum neque occultum, quia in utero repressum aut iter iuxta editum sit*, 15.47.2). What will have been a riddle to contemporaries anticipates for Tacitus' readers the failure of the conspiracy that follows immediately in the account.<sup>416</sup> While the public will have learnt about the conspiracy only through Nero's crackdown with some maybe hearing rumours before, Tacitus informs us right away: *Initium coniurationi ... fuit*. ('It was the beginning of the conspiracy ...', 15.49.1). At the same time, Tacitus does not follow the perspective of the conspirators. He is, as we have seen, uncertain, for example, about the instigators and vague on the role of Seneca. Our reading experience is thus no direct mimesis of the experience of the characters. While the account of Germanicus' death puts us in the shoes of the contemporary public, the way in which we learn about the conspiracy does not directly map onto the perspective of the contemporaries.

Nonetheless, Tacitus' narrative has a strong mimetic appeal: while not directly reflecting the restricted access to knowledge confining the contemporaries, the ambiguity that pervades Tacitus' account recreates the clandestine atmosphere of the conspiracy that is highlighted, for example, in 15.51.4: '... on Nero's suspicion that the matter was not false, even if it could not be proved true' (... *suspectante Nerone haud falsa esse etiam quae vera non probabantur*). Even within the circle of the conspirators, concealment looms large: Piso rejects the idea to kill Nero in his house in Baiae arguing that this would violate the laws of hospitality and a public assault would be more appropriate for an enterprise on behalf of the *res publica*: 'This for general consumption, but with the hidden fear that L. Silanus ... might march into a command ...' (*haec in commune, ceterum timore occulto, ne L. Silanus ... imperium invaderet ...*, 15.52.2). Uncertainty continues after the conspiracy has been unveiled as Nero's raids are unpredictable (15.58.3):

And, whenever they went in to plead their case, it was not only services for the conspirators but a chance conversation or unplanned encounters – if they had coincided at a party or spectacle – that were interpreted as criminal ...

*atque ubi dicendam ad causam introissent, <non stud>ia tantum erga coniuratos, sed fortuitus sermo et subiti occursus, si convivium, si spectaculum simul inissent, pro crimine accipi ...*

The uncertainties to which Tacitus exposes his readers partly differ from the uncertainties felt by the characters, but nonetheless express the precariousness

---

<sup>416</sup> Cf. Graf 1931: 101. The last word of book 14 also adumbrates the failure of the conspiracy, if very vaguely: 'Hence fear on Piso's part, and there arose against Nero a storm of intrigue, great and ill-starred.' (*unde Pisoni timor, et orta insidiarum in Neronem magna moles et improspera*. 14.65.2). On this passage, see Mastellone Iovane 1989: 132-3.

of the situation narrated. The readers of Tacitus may be puzzled over other issues than the characters, but their lack of secure knowledge mirrors the insecurity of the characters. The account of the Pisonian Conspiracy thus demonstrates that a narrative can be experiential while not strictly adhering to the perspective of the characters.

In *Writing and Empire in Tacitus*, Sailor takes up and spins further the established point that Tacitus makes his readers ‘see things as they are, not as they are professed to be’:<sup>417</sup> ‘Feldherr has made the successful and important argument that Livy’s history strives to engage readers, in a participatory sense, in the spectacles and rituals of Rome’s past, and that the work, like the spectacles it contains, cultivates a unifying, “community-building” effect. Tacitus’ work too constructs an imagined community, but it is a community forged in rejection of, not participation in, the world of the narrative.’<sup>418</sup> More specifically, Sailor argues that the obscurity surrounding the historical agents contrasts with the clarity created for the readers by the historian in hindsight: ‘To read Tacitus is not to become entrapped in the failures of signification but to observe and reconcile from them, all the while recognizing that our ability to observe might be dependent on our not being present to observe the narrated events, that is, on our separation from the events by time and text.’<sup>419</sup>

The gap between fact and impression looms large in the *Annals* indeed; Tacitus presents himself as striving hard to unearth truths that lie beneath the dust of official versions, lies and pretensions. That being said, Sailor downplays the complexity of Tacitus’ narrative. The reader of the *Annals* may often be privileged over the characters, but is also exposed to a great deal of ambiguity. An important function of this ambiguity is, I think, to recreate for the readers the experiences of the historical agents. This sheds new light on the art of innuendo in Tacitus, as scholarship tends to concentrate on its insidious quality. I am not the first to mention its mimetic function, but I hope that my readings of Germanicus’ death and the Pisonian Conspiracy have deepened our understanding of how intricate the mimetic effect of ambiguity in the *Annals* is. The findings of these readings are also significant for the argument of this book. Many of the devices deployed to generate ambiguity interrupt the mimesis of the narrative: as we have seen in the two previous chapters on Xenophon and Plutarch, an author’s admission of uncertainty, the juxtaposition of alternative versions and source quotations draw the reader’s attention to the gap between *res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum*. The *Annals*, on the other hand, illustrate that these devices can also be used to great mimetic effect. The ambiguity created by Tacitus helps the reader to envision the insecurity of life under Tiberius and the atmosphere in Rome during the Pisonian Conspiracy. The account of the latter also underlines

---

<sup>417</sup> Sailor 2008: 318.

<sup>418</sup> Sailor 2008: 318.

<sup>419</sup> Sailor 2008: 249. Pelling 2010: 382-4 also emphasises the gap between readers and characters.

another important point for the exploration of experience in historiography: close adherence to the characters' viewpoint enhances the mimetic appeal of a text, but a mimetic effect can also be achieved without it. The readers of the Pisonian Conspiracy are not directly aligned with the contemporaries, neither the man on the street nor the conspirators, but nevertheless the ambiguity of the narrative makes the reader re-experience the general insecurity of the situation.

#### IV. TELEOLOGY IN THE *ANNALS* – THE *ANNALS* AS TELOS

At first sight, the *Annals*' proem may seem to feature a reflection on retrospect as an important aspect of historiography. Tacitus there reveals a keen awareness of how much historiography is shaped by the historian's vantage-point: 'The affairs of Tiberius and Gaius, as of Claudius and Nero, were falsified through dread while the men themselves flourished, and composed with hatred fresh after their fall.' (*Tiberii Gaique et Claudii ac Neronis res florentibus ipsis ob metum falsae, postquam occiderant recentibus odiis compositae sunt.* 1.1.2).<sup>420</sup> The attitudes criticized by Tacitus have a temporal dimension: the need to flatter vanishes with an emperor's death and hatred will be felt most strongly by contemporaries who tend to express it only after his death.<sup>421</sup> And yet, the fact that Tacitus brings up the same points in the proem of the *Histories*<sup>422</sup> indicates that his reflections concentrate on the political, not the temporal aspect of a historian's vantage-point. While he is too old to have been affected by the principles covered in the *Annals*, his career, as he points out, thrived under the Flavians whose age he is narrating in the *Histories*. Nonetheless, Tacitus feels able to deliver an unbiased account. That the temporal gap is not crucial also comes to the fore in 4.33.4 when Tacitus compares the *Annals* with works on ancient history in order to throw into relief the proximity of the events narrated.<sup>423</sup> He here presents the history of the *Annals* as close enough to be controversial in the present – but again lays claim to report 'without anger and partiality' (*sine ira et studio*, 1.1.3). Like Lucian in *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* (see especially 38-42), Tacitus is, it seems, concerned rather with the political bias of historians than with the superiority provided by retrospect. Nonetheless, like all historians, his account of the past is shaped by retrospect. I will first investigate the impact of retrospect on the *Annals* and then argue that Tacitus implements his own work as telos in the action.

#### *Prolepses and teleology*

<sup>420</sup> On Tacitus' critique of bias in historiography, see, e.g., Vogt 1936; Luce 1989.

<sup>421</sup> Cf. Luce 1989: 17; 25.

<sup>422</sup> In addition to flattery and slander, Tacitus mentions in the *Histories* also deficient understanding of statesmanship (1.1.1-2). For an attempt to explain the tensions between the prefaces of *Histories* and *Annals*, see Marincola 1999b.

<sup>423</sup> See also the end of book 2 where Tacitus labels Arminius as *recens* in whom the Romans, obsessed with *vetera*, do not take a strong interest (2.88.3).

The annalistic structure of Tacitus' work is not conducive to a teleological narrative. The year by year account rather favours experience as it follows the sequence in which the characters make and experience history. At the same time, Tacitus' application of the annalistic scheme is not rigorous. The annalistic frame is less prominent in the Neronian books, and already in the first hexad Tacitus is free to modify it.<sup>424</sup> book 3, for example, does not begin with the mention of the consuls, but with the return of Agrippina to Italy carrying the ashes of Germanicus. Tacitus gives a touching vignette of her reception in Brundisium, mentioning the consuls only as part of the cortège (3.2.3). This play with the annalistic form underlines effectfully that the institutions of the *res publica* have been superseded in their significance by the affairs of the royal family.<sup>425</sup> While this modification of the annalistic frame foregrounds a highly mimetic scene, Tacitus also deploys foreshadowing, thereby creating a gap between readers and characters. We have already encountered a couple of prolepses in the course of this chapter: the failure of the Pisonian Conspiracy, for instance, is adumbrated at the end of book 14 as well as at the beginning of its account (14.65.2; 15.47.2) and, to give an example for a prolepsis that reaches further, the thanks to the royal family for avenging the murder of Germanicus jolt the narrative to Claudius' principate (3.18.3-4).

Prolepses set the reader off from the characters, but Tacitus' use of them illustrates how they can nonetheless intensify the reading experience. To take the presentation of Tiberius' reign: 'The first act of the new principate was the slaughter of Postumus Agrippa, unawares and unarmed, whom a centurion, despite bracing himself in spirit, dispatched only with difficulty.' (*Primum facinus novi principatus fuit Postumi Agrippae caedes, quem ignarum inermumque quamvis firmatus animo centurio aegre confecit.* 1.6.1). *Primum* generates suspense as to what Tiberius has up his sleeve just as *nondum* in 1.54.2 intimates disasters on the horizon: 'But, with the people having been handled softly for so many years, he did not yet dare to turn them in a harder direction.' (*sed populum per tot annos molliter habitum nondum audebat ad duriora vertere.*). In the same vein, Tacitus does not give us precise information, but raises our expectations through a vague premonition in 2.33.1: 'It was still regular for senators, when their turn came to speak, to express whatever they believed to be in the state's interest.' (*erat quippe adhuc frequens senatoribus, si quid e re publica crederent, loco sententiae promere.*). The imagery of growth in 2.50.1 conveys the sense of a development with a distinct telos: 'Coming to maturity, meanwhile, was the law

---

<sup>424</sup> See especially Ginsburg 1981 and also Walker 1952: 35-6; Syme 1958: I: 266-70.

<sup>425</sup> The very adoption of the annalistic scheme may be taken as an attempt to throw into relief the different nature of the principate in which the annual offices and rituals had become an empty form. Cf. Syme 1958: I: 267; Ginsburg 1981: 100.

of treason.’ (*Adolescebat interea lex maiestatis.*). The trajectory of Tiberius’ reign is fully sketched in 1.73.1:

It will not be irksome to record the charges brought in the test cases of Faianius and Rubrius, modest Roman equestrians, in order to become acquainted with the initial phases from which, given the degree of Tiberius’ skill, a form of extermination of the utmost severity crept in, was then suppressed, and finally flared up and gripped everything.

*Haud pigebit referre in Faianio et Rubrio, modicis equitibus Romanis, praetemptata crimina, ut quibus initiis quanta Tiberii arte gravissimum exitium inreperit, dein repressum sit, postremo arserit cunctaque corripuerit, noscatur.*

Several comments imply this trajectory: a wave of trials in 22 CE is introduced by *Paulatim dehinc ab indecoris ad infesta transgrediebantur* (‘But gradually thereafter they crossed from the discreditable to the destructive. 3.66.1). The beginning of book 4 flags the change in Tiberius’ attitude so prominently that scholars have divided his presentation in the *Annals* into two parts: ‘... when suddenly fortune started to turn disruptive and the man himself savage ... because for Tiberius that year brought the start of his principate’s change for the worse’ (... *cum repente turbare fortuna coepit, saevire ipse saevientibus vires praebere ... quoniam Tiberio mutati in deterius principatus initium ille annus attulit.* 4.1.1 ... 4.6.1). These and other prolepses betray the retrospect in which Tacitus’ account of the Iulian-Claudian dynasty has been composed.

At the same time, the prolepses just cited are very vague.<sup>426</sup> While privileging the reader over the characters and evoking her surplus knowledge of the past, the foreshadowing also generates for the reader the suspense with which an alert contemporary may have followed the development of Tiberius’ career. It is also worth noting that Tacitus does not present a single clear-cut trajectory for Tiberius’ career: the position of Drusus’ death as watershed suggested at the beginning of book 4, for example, does not easily map onto the division of Tiberius’ deterioration into five phases in Tacitus’ final verdict (6.51.3).<sup>427</sup> Even in retrospect, it is not easy to figure out a clear teleology.

It has been argued that 1.73.1, instead of charting Tiberius’ career, summarizes the development of the principate in general, but, as Goodyear *ad loc.* notes, ‘that period saw no such straight-forward development’.<sup>428</sup> The fragmentary state of our text makes it hard to pin down the exact trajectory of the principate in the *Annals*, but what we have indicates that Tacitus did not envision

<sup>426</sup> On the vagueness of many prolepses in the *Annals*, see Walker 1952: 68. See also Mendell 1935: 12 and Devillers 1994: 109-14.

<sup>427</sup> Cf. Pelling 2009: 165-6.

<sup>428</sup> See also Koestermann 1955: 81 n. 23. A reference to the principate of the first century is championed by Lipsius 1589 and Nipperdey and Andresen<sup>8</sup>1884: *ad loc.*

the principate as moving towards a telos. Tiberius, Claudius and Nero are all pretty unique in their vices; the *Annals* are not designed with an overarching telos. There is, however, a passage in which Tacitus presents a strongly teleological view of history, namely his digression on the history of law (3.25.2-28.2). Going back to the origins of human society, Tacitus casts the development of law and order as a history of decline that culminates in the anarchy of the late Republic. From this though, we ought not to derive far reaching conclusions about Tacitus' view of history in general. Not much later, for example, he closes a survey of the development of luxury saying (3.55.5):

Nor was everything better in the time of our forbears, but our age too has produced many an instance of excellence in the arts which deserves to be imitated by posterity. Whether or not this happens, however, may these be the contests of ours with our ancestors which will enjoy an honorable survival.

*nec omnia apud priores meliora, sed nostra quoque aetas multa laudis et artium imitanda posteris tulit. verum haec nobis <in> maiores certamina ex honesto maneant.*<sup>429</sup>

These and other reflections make it impossible to distil a coherent philosophy of history from the *Annals* that would support a strong teleological view.<sup>430</sup> While occasionally cashing in on hindsight, Tacitus neither envisions history with a strong inherent teleology nor does he give a linear trajectory for the history of the principate, as his comment on Claudius highlights (3.18.4):

But as for me, the more I reconsider recent or past events, the more I am confronted with the mockeries made of mortal affairs in every activity: for in terms of reputation, hope, and veneration, everyone was marked out for command rather than the future princeps whom fortune was keeping in hiding.

*mihī, quanto plura recentium seu veterum revolve, tanto magis ludibria rerum mortalium cunctis in negotiis obversantur. quippe fama spe veneratione potius omnes destinabantur imperio quam quem futurum principem fortuna in occulta tenebat.*

### *Historiography as telos*

---

<sup>429</sup> On this passage which is more than topic as it applies the notion of a cycle to morals, see Goodyear 1970. On the *in maiores certamina*, see also Ginsburg 1993.

<sup>430</sup> Cf. Goodyear 1970: 104; Griffin 2009: 168-73. On Tacitus' take on history, see also the wide-ranging book of Häußler 1965.

Instead of emphasizing retrospect, the *Annals* feature an intriguing play with teleology that downplays the gap between historical agents and the historian: Tacitus presents historiographic records as telos at the level of the action. In having the characters take into account the historian's retrospect, he embeds the tension of futures past into history, subtly blending together *historia rerum gestarum* with *res gestae*.

That future historiographic memory is a factor to be reckoned with is set out in the famous reflection of 3.65.1:

Recounting proposals has not been my established practice, except those distinguished by honorableness or of noteworthy discredit, which I deem to be a principal responsibility of annals, to prevent virtues from being silenced and so that crooked words and deeds should be attended by the dread of posterity and infamy.

*Exsequi sententias haud institui nisi insignes per honestum aut notabili dedecore, quod praecipuum munus annalium reor, ne virtutes sileantur utque pravis dictis factisque ex posteritate et infamia metus sit.*

The exact syntactic construction of this sentence is debated,<sup>431</sup> but no matter if we refer the *quod*-sentence to the preceding main clause or the following *ne*-clause, Tacitus declares it his goal to make sure that virtues are not forgotten and to generate fear of posterity's judgment. If we side with the *communis opinio*, then this is even named the highest task of the *Annals*. Tacitus' expression is elliptical: while he mentions the recording of virtues, but not their impact on the audience, he passes over the recording of negative sayings and deeds and foregrounds the effect they have on the recipients. As Luce has pointed out, Tacitus does not simply rehash the topos of history's usefulness, but gives it a very distinct twist in the second colon of the *ne*-sentence: historiography serves a deterrent function, as the fear of a negative record prevents readers from bad deeds.<sup>432</sup> Through the interweaving of retrospect with prospect, the memory of the past makes future historiography a matter for the present.

The awareness of future historiography and its impact on the present is not only object of Tacitus' reflections, but also figures in his narrative, notably in the middle of book 4 where the comments on his own work, the trial of Crematius Cordus and Tiberius' speech about honours form a triptych on memory.<sup>433</sup> In 4.32-3, Tacitus discusses the limits and claims of his own work by juxtaposing it with accounts of the republican past. The *Annals* do not compare with those works dealing with the glorious past, but will prove useful for the reader. Tacitus'

---

<sup>431</sup> For a critical survey, see Woodman 1998: 86-103, who argues that the *quod*-sentence is a parenthetic relative clause that does not refer to the *ne*-sentence, but to the preceding main clause.

<sup>432</sup> Luce 1991.

<sup>433</sup> The term 'triptych' for the chapters 4.32-8 stems from Cancik-Lindemaier and Cancik 1986: 17.

account will not offer much entertainment though and, given the temporal proximity of the events covered, risks estranging the readers. The subsequent chapter introduces a new year and returns to the narrative, but the topic of memory continues to resonate in the trial of Cremutius who is charged with praising Brutus and calling Cassius the last Roman in his *Annals* (4.34-5). A quick glance at further trials in the same year (4.35) leads the narrative to the provinces which serve as a stepping stone to the third part of the triptych, namely a speech in which the rejection of honours from Farther Spain prompts Tiberius to ponder on memory. Tacitus reports various reactions to this speech, lingering on a particularly hostile one (4.37-8).

*Annals* 4.32-8, particularly the trial of Cremutius, has received a lot of attention in scholarship:<sup>434</sup> it has been shown that Tacitus uses his fellow historian Cremutius to shed light on his own work, and it has been much discussed how to take Tiberius' speech and its anonymous critics. On my view, the close entwinement of past, present and future combined with an eroding boundary between agents and historians is noteworthy. To start with Cremutius, the parallel to Tacitus is obvious: both are historians, both have written works entitled *Annals*. The use of Cremutius as a mirror of Tacitus is itself mirrored in Cremutius' speech which marshals several earlier historians as well as other writers as exempla for why the accusation is not justified: Livius' praise for Pompeius, for one, did not affect his friendship with Augustus (4.34.3). Viewing Cremutius as a backdrop to Tacitus thus merely continues the series of foils that Cremutius invokes.

Cremutius, however, is not a simple mirror for Tacitus; the *mise-en-abime* is more complex than it may first seem. Both are separated from the events they narrate by about the same time difference,<sup>435</sup> but while Cremutius argues that the gap of seventy years has softened the past's explosive character (4.35.2), Tacitus emphasizes that, unlike the Punic Wars, his subject is close enough to provoke strong reactions in his readers (4.33.4):<sup>436</sup>

But many who during Tiberius' rule suffered punishment or infamy have descendants remaining, and, even if the actual families have now been extinguished, you will discover persons who, owing to a similarity of

---

<sup>434</sup> Cf. Suerbaum 1971; Cancik-Lindemaier and Cancik 1986; Canfora 1993: 221-60; Moles 1998; O'Gorman 2000: 97-105; Sailor 2008: 250-313; Pelling 2010.

<sup>435</sup> Cf. McCulloch 1991: 2932-3.

<sup>436</sup> Suerbaum 1971: 86-8 assumes that Cremutius is not convinced of his argument and uses it only for rhetorical reasons. He also notes out that Cremutius and Tacitus differ in their judgment on Augustus: while Cremutius stresses the liberty under him, Tacitus is more sceptical (79-80). I am less convinced by Suerbaum's suggestion that Cremutius' point about the *imagines* 'which not even the victor abolished' (*quas ne victor quidem abolevit*, 4.35.2) contradicts Tacitus (91). Tacitus only mentions that the *imagines* were not paraded in 22 CE in the funeral of Iunia (3.76.2), whereas Cremutius speaks about Augustus' liberal stance. Cremutius' comment may imply a sly dig at Tiberius who is unfavourably compared with his predecessor.

behavior, think that the misdeeds of others are being imputed to themselves. Even glory and courage receive a ferocious response, as being critical of their opposites from too close at hand.

*at multorum, qui Tiberio regente poenam vel infamias subiere, posterii manent, utque familiae ipsae iam extinctae sint, reperies qui ob similitudinem morum aliena malefacta sibi obiectari putent. etiam gloria ac virtus infensos habet, ut nimis ex propinquo diversa arguens.*

The fate of Cremutius proves Tacitus right: his death, which is inevitable at least in his own eyes (4.32.2), forcefully expresses the significance of the past in the present and, as some scholars have stressed, helps Tacitus to stylize his historiographic endeavour.<sup>437</sup> Our evidence suggests that the trial did not concentrate on Cremutius' historiographic works, but rather his rhetorical invective against Sejanus. By foregrounding Cremutius' *Annals*, on the other hand, Tacitus alerts the reader to the subversive and risky character of his own *Annals*. The exemplum even works *a fortiori*: if Cremutius is driven to suicide on account of the praise he lavishes on men of the past, how much more is the author of a work in danger that is as critical as Tacitus'!

Readers have been quick to take the final sentence of Cremutius' speech as a reference to Tacitus: 'Posterity pays to every man his due repute; and, if condemnation is closing in on me, there will be no lack of those who remember not merely Cassius and Brutus but also myself.' (*suum cuique decus posteritas rependit; nec derunt, si damnatio ingruit, qui non modo Cassii et Bruti, sed etiam mei meminerint.* 4.35.3). The ambiguity of the first colon hammers home the close entwinement of past, present and future. Cremutius serves as *posteritas* to Cassius and Brutus and is himself remembered by Tacitus who, if we follow Sailor's interpretation, presents himself as depending on the insurance provided by future historians.<sup>438</sup> The present will be the future past just as the past has been a present as well as a future. The flux in time blurs the boundary between historical agent and historian: Cremutius is both writer and object of historiography<sup>439</sup> and his case illustrates that historiography is part of history: not only do records of the past matter – the reaction of Tiberius shows their potential to stir up tyrants – but, and here Cremutius echoes Tacitus' own reflection in 3.65.1, future records need to be reckoned with. Through historiography, both past and future weigh on the present – this makes the historian simultaneously a historical agent.

---

<sup>437</sup> Cf. Suerbaum 1971: 69-70; Edwards 2007: 139-43; Sailor 2008: 295-7.

<sup>438</sup> Sailor 2008: 291-305. See also McCulloch 1991: 2932-3: 'In recounting from the past Cremutius' inspiring defense, Tacitus anticipates his own epitaph in the future. People will remember him after his death, just as they now remember Cremutius.'

<sup>439</sup> On the uniqueness of this in ancient historiography, see Suerbaum 1971: 61. However, as Marincola 1997: 251 and Moles 1998: 136 remark, already Sallust gives a speech to one of his predecessors, namely Licinius Macer (*Hist.* 3.48).

While Cremutius is right in his take on the past and the future with his flawed assessment of the present highlighting Tacitus' own position, Tiberius is wrong on all counts – with some qualifications: his rejection of the divine honours that Farther Spain wants to bestow on him is honourable just as his reflection on memory, particularly the bold play with the architectural metaphor,<sup>440</sup> is thought-provoking (4.38.2):

These are my temples in your hearts, these the likenesses which are finest and destined to survive: those which are set up in stone are spurned like sepulchres if the judgment of posterity turns to hatred.

*haec mihi in animis vestris templa, hae pulcherrimae effigies et mansurae; nam quae saxo struuntur, si iudicium posterorum in odium vertit, pro sepulchris spernuntur.*

Tiberius first turns the temple which the Spanish want to erect for him into a metaphor that through analogy underlines the permanence of the kind of memory he is aspiring to. He then literalizes the metaphor again to throw this permanence into relief *e contrario* as monuments can fall prey to oblivion or even desecration.<sup>441</sup> This reflection on the unstable nature of fame may even evoke Tacitus' comment on the potentially hostile reception of his *Annals* which seem open to various readings (4.33.4).<sup>442</sup> Nonetheless, Tiberius gets past, present and future all wrong. Tacitus hammers home that his attempt to manipulate the memory of the past fails. The senate orders Cremutius' books to be burnt (4.35.4-5),

but they survived, having been concealed and published. Wherefore it is pleasant to deride all the more the insensibility of those who, by virtue of their present powerfulness, believe that the memory even of a subsequent age too can be extinguished. On the contrary, the influence of punished talents swells, nor have foreign kings, or those who have resorted to the same savagery, accomplished anything except disrepute for themselves and for their victims glory.

*<s>ed manserunt, occultati et editi. quo magis socordia<m> eorum inridere libet, qui praesenti potentia credunt exstingui posse etiam sequentis aevi memoriam. nam contra punitis ingeniis gliscit auctoritas,*

---

<sup>440</sup> Cf. Martin and Woodman 1989: *ad loc.* on Tacitus' play with the traditional comparison of literature with monuments.

<sup>441</sup> See Pelling 2010: 369-70, who quotes Juv. 1.131 and argues for a strong meaning of *spernere* in 4.38.3.

<sup>442</sup> Rutledge 1998: 143-4 and O'Gorman 2000: 102-5 press the point that Tacitus signals the impossibility to control meaning in his reflection on the *Annals*' reception.

*neque aliud externi reges aut qui eadem saevitia usi sunt nisi dedecus sibi  
atque illis gloriam peperere.*<sup>443</sup>

Nuanced interpretations show that the hostile reaction on Tacitus' part to Tiberius' speech 'manifestly fails to hit its target' and that 'Tib. emerges with his reputation enhanced'.<sup>444</sup> Indeed, the reproach that 'contempt for fame meant contempt for virtues' (*contemptu famae contemni virtutes*, 4.38.5) is utterly unfair as Tiberius elaborates on his concern with fame: 'It is a world ... where as far as his critics are concerned, Tiberius cannot do anything right',<sup>445</sup> writes Pelling who unravels a wealth of echoes that make this critique of Tiberius less than convincing. I agree, but another aspect of the reaction is also noteworthy: the hostile reaction demonstrates that Tiberius does not enjoy the appreciation in the present for which he hopes just as he fails to manipulate the record of the past.

Finally, Tacitus' *Annals* forcefully attest that Tiberius does not receive the kind of posthumous memory that he envisages (4.38.2):<sup>446</sup> echoes of Cremutius' speech and Tacitus' comment highlight that while Cremutius is remembered as he expects to be, Tiberius is not, and that his verdict on Cremutius may figure among the reasons why not: *mansurae* harks back to *manserunt* (4.35.4) – while the metaphorical temples and images have disappeared, the literal carrier of memory has remained; materialized memory, on which Tiberius has punned so cleverly, finally gets the better of him. *Spernuntur* evokes Cremutius' warning: 'What is spurned tends to abate; but, if you become angry, you appear to have made an admission.' (*namque spreta exolescunt: si irascare, adgnita videntur.* 4.34.5).<sup>447</sup> Had Tiberius ignored the appraisal of the last republicans, he might not have received the negative press which is even worse than the oblivion of which he is afraid. Tiberius' flawed take on past, present and future underscores their entanglement that, along different lines, has already come to the fore in Cremutius' speech.

Cremutius and Tiberius are opposed in life as in Tacitus' account who, however, turns the tables. The 'judgment of posterity' (*iudicium posterorum*) brought into play by Tiberius (4.38.2) intimates the judge-like character of the historian and suggests juxtaposing Cremutius' trial with the *Annals*' verdict. At the same time, Cremutius and Tiberius are aligned in envisioning future records of themselves that the reader, prompted by the preceding meta-historical reflections, will have no difficulty identifying with the *Annals*. In literary terms, this is a case

---

<sup>443</sup> For the echo of the *Agricola* proem, see Suerbaum 1971: 96-7.

<sup>444</sup> Martin and Woodman 1989: *ad* 4.37-8.

<sup>445</sup> Pelling 2010: 369.

<sup>446</sup> Tiberius' concern with his posthumous reputation also comes to the fore in 6.46.2. See Luce 1991: 2922-5 for further passages and discussion.

<sup>447</sup> It occurs again in 4.38.4: 'And he persevered thereafter even in his private conversations in spurning such cult of himself.' (*perstititque posthac secretis etiam sermonibus aspernari talem sui cultum.*).

of metalepsis, if only implicit, as the character refers unintentionally to the story-world to which they belong.<sup>448</sup> The characters' awareness of future records, while not abandoning the asymmetry between agents and historian, establishes a reciprocal relation. Not only does the historian record the deeds of the agents, but they inversely take notice of him. The historian's retrospective vantage-point is only anticipated prospectively, and yet it is present in the past.

### *History and agency*

The embedding of future historiographic records as telos in the world of the action establishes a bridge between the historian and the historical agents. This take on teleology converges with Tacitus' design of restoring presentness to the past: just as the agents' references to their own place in future historiography brings the historian closer to them, rumours and uncertainty distance the contemporaries from the events, aligning them with the historian and readers. Some parallels between historian and historical agents underscore the impression that the gulf dividing the historian from the historical agents is not too wide: in the meta-historical reflection just discussed, for example, Tacitus writes: 'It will nevertheless not be without benefit to have gained an insight into what at first sight are trivialities, from which the movements of great affairs often spring.' (*non tamen sine usu fuerit introspicere illa primo aspectu levia, ex quis magnarum saepe rerum motus oriuntur.* 4.32.2). In other passages, *introspicere* is the activity of historical agents such as Tiberius, who, as I have already noted, is similar to Tacitus in many regards: 'Afterward it was recognized that his hesitancy had been brought on to gain an insight into the attitudes of the aristocracy too.' (*postea cognitum est ad introspicendas etiam procerum voluntates inductam dubitationem.* 1.7.7).<sup>449</sup> This is of course not a deliberate echo, but the use of the same words for the activities of historian and agents is emblematic of Tacitus' tendency to reduce the gap between them.<sup>450</sup> The numerous embedded judgments further underline the similarity between historical agents and historian: in 6.51.3, for example, Tacitus puts forward his final verdict on Tiberius which, as in the case of Augustus, is voiced by contemporaries (1.9-10). Needless to say, Tacitus does not necessarily subscribe to their views, and yet it is striking that he often steps back and leaves to the agents the historian's privilege to judge. By the same token, his writing differs from that of the princes, but nonetheless the note taken of Drusus (6.24.1) or Nero's account of the Pisonian Conspiracy (15.73.1)

---

<sup>448</sup> On metalepsis in ancient literature, see de Jong 2009.

<sup>449</sup> The other occurrences of *introspicere* in the *Annals* are 1.10.7; 3.60.3; 5.4.1; 6.21.2; 11.38.1. Cf. Lana 1989: 45-9.

<sup>450</sup> Cf. O'Gorman 2000: 35 on *coniectare*. Besides O'Gorman, who elaborates on the notion of misreading of and in the *Annals*, see also Rutledge 1998: 144-5 on the various levels of reading extending from the characters to the readers. Sailor 2008: 178-82 interprets Tacitus as princes.

prefigure the narrative of the *Annals*, highlighting the similarity between agent and historian.<sup>451</sup>

Tacitus, it is well known, casts himself as a distanced historian, who is critical in his view and incorruptible in his judgment. I have already quoted Sailor who thinks that in reading Tacitus, we are led to recognize ‘that our ability to observe might be dependent on our not being present to observe the narrated events, that is, on our separation from the events by time and text’.<sup>452</sup> My reading dovetails with Sailor’s thesis that Tacitus’ historiography is an important part of his self-fashioning as a senator: the blending together of *res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum* that I have noted bestows much political significance on the historian. At the same time, it challenges Sailor’s emphasis on the temporal gap between Tacitus and the characters of his history. Tacitus, I have argued, strives to make the past present, sometimes putting the readers into the shoes of the characters, sometimes endowing his narrative with an experiential appeal that does not directly map onto the experience of the characters. In accordance with the annalistic frame, the *Annals* do not feature many prolepses, and they are rarely used to bolster critique. Inversely, Tacitus has the characters anticipate his own vantage-point and downplays the temporal superiority of the historian and the readers. The combination of strong mimesis with stern evaluation, I would say, makes Tacitus’ critique so forceful, as it leaves no excuse to the historical agents. His unflattering view of Rome’s rotten state is not presented as the gift of retrospect, but as the truth visible already to contemporaries. Tacitus does not present hindsight as his trump, but criticizes the agents in a merciless close-up.

### *Summary of Part 1*

Before we move from experience to teleology, from the desire to make the past present to the benefits of hindsight, let me briefly review the findings of the first part. The three fundamental narratological categories of time, voice and focus have proven crucial for mimetic narratives. Time may be most important, as it is the medium in which experiences unfold: in mimicking narrated time through narrative time, historians can make their readers re-experience the past in the frame of ‘as-if’. Voice and focus give us access to the minds of contemporaries, be they agents or observers. While focalization tends to concentrate on the perception of the present, speeches are suited to evoke the horizon of past and future that defined this present. ‘Sideshowing’ alerts us to possible alternative courses and thereby drives home the openness of the past.

My readings have focused on narratological aspects, but we have also seen the impact of linguistic features. In the hands of ancient historians, tense is a

---

<sup>451</sup> On the historiographic activities of the Roman emperors, see Durry 1956, on their literary activity in general cf. Dilke 1957.

<sup>452</sup> Sailor 2008: 249. Pelling 2010: 382-4 also emphasises the gap between readers and characters.

powerful means of regulating the relation between past and present, action and reception, agent and reader: the imperfect has the capacity to put us right on the spot of the action just as the historical present bestows immediacy on the narrative. Deixis is another linguistic means that helps to catapult the reader to the scene of the action. Description has turned out to be two-faced: ekphrasis looms large in ancient rhetorical treatises and *enargeia* is a feature much admired in the works of historians. In their discussions, ancient critics foreground the effect of making the reader ‘see’ the scene; and indeed, without detailed descriptions it is hard to visualize objects, characters and incidents. That being said, extensive descriptions as we find them, for example, in Herodotus’ geographic and ethnographic digressions ultimately undercut historiography’s experiential potential: they freeze the flow of the narrative, which, in imitating the unfolding of real-life time, is crucial to the reader’s re-experience.

Some features that generally impede mimesis can also be used to enhance it: alternative versions, reports of rumours and citations highlight the mediating instance of the narrator, but, as Tacitus demonstrates, can reproduce the insecurity affecting the historical agents. In the Pisonian Conspiracy, ambiguity renders the narrative experiential even without mapping directly onto the world of the action. While not strictly following the experiences of contemporaries, the narratorial insecurity nonetheless reproduces for the reader the climate of the past.

The notion of genre is pervasive in ancient literature, but it is not crucial for the experiential quality of historiographic narrative. Mimesis can be found in such monographs as the *Anabasis* as well as in chronicles, e.g. Tacitus’ *Annals*. The latter also reveals that experiential narratives are in no way limited to *Zeitgeschichte* as Thucydides seems to suggest. A more striking case in point would be Livy who offers us gripping episodes featuring introspection and speeches already for Rome’s early history. Experiential appeal as defined in the introduction is not a matter of sources, but of literary technique.

Getting in touch with the past, learning what it was like to be there is a basic desire that drives our interest in the past. While being a sufficient motive in itself, the texts discussed reveal that attempts to make the past present can be linked to various goals, which may help to explain different nuances and means in the representation of experience. Thucydides’ ‘presentism’ has a rather intellectual slant: elaborate sensual descriptions are rare, but the reader is continuously informed about thoughts and motives of the agents. This accords with Thucydides’ claim to usefulness: besides teaching lessons about the past and showcasing the virtues of methodological rigour, the narrative forces the reader to assess various situations from the perspective of the characters and thereby offers an exercise in how to deal with the vagaries of life. Xenophon draws on a very similar arsenal as Thucydides for restoring presentness to the past, but subtle differences indicate further motives. The focus on a single character, namely Xenophon, and the apologetic tendency of his speeches in particular sustains the

exculpatory intention ascribed to the *Anabasis*. Plutarch is a very different case: the *Lives* feature elaborate scenes, but their mimesis is challenged by a conspicuous narrator and an episodic structure. The *enargeia* of Plutarch is conducive to the aim of highlighting moral values that the readers can apply to their own lives. Rather than moving the reader to the past, Plutarch brings the past to us. Tacitus, finally, not only gives a frightening scenario of imperial Rome, but also uses the close-up to reinforce his merciless critique of tyrannical emperors and sycophantic senators. The differences notwithstanding, my samples reveal the prominence of experience in ancient historiography. The attempts of modern historians to make the past present, touched upon in the epilogue, will help us throw this further into relief, but first the other pole of narrating the past, teleology, needs to be explored.

## 6. Herodotus, *Histories*

‘Historians know the verdict in advance, they run forward with alacrity to salute the victors and chant hymns to success.’<sup>453</sup> Syme’s own work illustrates that historiography is not necessarily affirmative; and yet, as his dictum implies, it is always written retrospectively and therefore lends itself to teleological narratives. The works discussed in the preceding chapters demonstrate that even historians taking pains to make the past present cannot entirely forego hindsight. As I noted in the introduction, retrospect lets us see larger lines that are still invisible to historical agents; it is crucial to historical explanation. In the second part of this study, I invite the reader to consider the dynamic of teleology in ancient historiography: Herodotus highlights the significance of retrospect while also reflecting some of its intricacies. In Polybius, the influence of hindsight may be even more pervasive, as the telos of Rome’s dominion prompts him to write universal history; and yet, the teleological design of his account is not clear-cut. With Sallust’s *Bellum Catilinae*, we will turn finally to a monograph that reveals further aspects of teleology: the past is not only shaped by a later telos, but also by making it the telos of earlier events. While in Herodotus and Polybius the strong teleological design can be interpreted as a response to the fickleness of fate, Sallust uses it to bestow significance on an incident which may have been minor.

I suggested in the introductory chapter that Solon’s advice to Solon ‘to look to the conclusion of every matter, and see how it shall end’ (‘σκοπέειν δὲ χρὴ παντὸς χρημάτων τὴν τελευτὴν κῆ ἀποβήσεται.’ 1.32.9) can be read metaleptically as a reflection on an important aspect of the *Histories*. Herodotus makes lavish use of the benefit of hindsight and writes about events that are separated from his own present by a gap of two generations and more. Solon’s wisdom is echoed by Artabanus in a conversation with Xerxes at Abydos: ‘Also bear in mind the well-put old wisdom that the end is not obvious at the beginning.’ (‘ἐς θυμὸν ὦν βαλεῦ καὶ τὸ παλαιὸν ἔπος ὡς εὔ εἴρηται, τὸ μὴ ἄμα ἀρχῆ πᾶν τέλος καταφαίνεσθαι.’ 7.51.3).<sup>454</sup> Croesus’ encounter with Solon is also paralleled in some regards by Xerxes’ dialogue with the Spartan Demaratus at Doriscus (7.101-4). Asked by the Persian King if there is any chance that the Greeks would resist his army, Demaratus emphasizes the manliness of the Spartans. Xerxes inquires about his success in the future, while Croesus asks about his present grandeur, but in both cases an Eastern monarch shrugs off a comment that should have alerted him to the possibility of disaster – and later recalls this conversation with remorse, reinterpreting it as a warning (1.86.3;

---

<sup>453</sup> Syme 1958: I: 435.

<sup>454</sup> For yet another more specific version of this wisdom, see Amasis in a letter to Polycrates: ‘Because I have never heard tell of a single case of someone doing well in everything who did not end up utterly and horribly destroyed.’ (‘οὐδένα γὰρ κω λόγῳ οἶδα ἀκούσας ὅστις ἐς τέλος οὐ κακῶς ἐτελεύτησε πρόρριζος, εὐτυχέων τὰ πάντα.’ 3.40.3). On the similarities between Artabanus and Solon, see Harrison 2000: 48-51; Baragwanath 2008: 266-7.

7.234.1). Xerxes' ignorance is emblematic of a problematic attitude to history. I shall argue that he and before him Darius are driven by a desire to memorialize their own deeds and thereby throw into relief Herodotus' insight that history can only be written retrospectively (I). Accordingly, the *Histories* have a strong teleological design and deepen the gap between the readers' and characters' experiences (II). However, the ending not only corroborates the *Histories'* teleological design, but also undermines it as it looks beyond the Persian Wars (III). At the same time, the oblique way in which Herodotus alludes to contemporary politics is appropriate for a historian invested in the significance of retrospect and can be elucidated by a comparison of the *Histories* with oracles (IV). Finally, the *Histories* implicitly reflect that the significance of events that have come to an end is not stable, but shifts in the process of time (V).

### I. HOW (NOT) TO DO HISTORY: DARIUS AND XERXES

Christ has shown that the *Histories'* Eastern monarchs resemble Herodotus in their inquiries.<sup>455</sup> In Thessaly, for instance, Xerxes is much impressed by the river Peneus, sails to its mouth and wonders if the river could be given another direction so that it would flow into the sea (7.128-30).<sup>456</sup> The convergence of the King's and historian's interest is highlighted by the structure of the narrative: Herodotus embeds in Xerxes' inquiry his own *logos* about the origin of the river (7.129), thereby blending together his own perspective with that of the character. The curiosity of the Persian Kings is not limited to geology, but also embraces other aspects of the *Histories*. Darius sends Democedes and others to Greece in order to observe and write down ὀνομαστότατα ('the most notable places', 3.136.1). Xerxes' inquiry about the Olympic Games illustrates his ethnographic interests (8.26). He is astonished that the Greeks compete only for an olive wreath, envisaging a Greek institution from a Persian point of view just as in Herodotus' account Greek culture provides the frame for understanding barbarian customs. The interests of the Persian Kings also extend to the past. When Xerxes comes to the river Alus in Achaëa, he learns from his guides about the events that led to the barring of Phrixus' offspring from the town-hall (7.197). And he is very eager to scale the ruins of Troy, where he is told all the details about the Trojan War (7.43.1). Similarly to Herodotus, Xerxes listens to local stories at the places that he visits.

Christ notes that the inquiries of the Eastern monarchs, unlike those of Herodotus, are ultimately driven by strategic considerations. In this section, I would like to elaborate on a further difference that sheds light on Herodotus' agenda as historian. Darius and Xerxes are not only interested in the past, but are

---

<sup>455</sup> Christ 1994.

<sup>456</sup> Cf. Fehling 1989: 31-3 and Christ 1994: 179-80, who emphasizes Xerxes' pragmatic interest in the possibility of damming the Peneus up.

also strongly concerned with memorializing their own deeds.<sup>457</sup> The problems raised by their attempt to record events while they are happening throws into relief Herodotus' decision to write history teleologically. The failure of the Persian Kings as historians of their own history can thus be read meta-historically, as an implicit self-reflection of the *Histories*, notably on its teleological design. It furnishes a splendid introduction to the pervasiveness of teleology in ancient historiography.

### *Darius and memorials*

Darius' desire 'to leave a memorial of himself that has not been produced by another king' ('μνημόσυνον έωυτοῦ λιπέσθαι τοῦτο τὸ μὴ ἄλλω εἶη βασιλεί κἀτεργασμένον', 4.166.1) is noted by Aryandas, very much to his own detriment: his silver coinage imitating Darius' coins made of pure gold attracts the King's attention and leads to his execution. Darius' concern with the record of his deeds comes to the fore on his expedition against the Scythians. At the Bosphorus, he erects two stelae made of white stone, one with an inscription in Assyrian, the other in Greek, listing all the people he is leading (4.87.1).<sup>458</sup> The two languages mirror the semantics of the Bosphorus which marks the border between Asia and Europe and express Darius' claim to rule both continents. Since stone is a material that is little affected by time, stelae normally connote stability and longevity. In his proem, Herodotus wittily plays with this connotation of inscriptions to underline his goal of making sure that 'what was done by men does not fade away with time' ('ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται').<sup>459</sup> Using the *terminus technicus* for the fading of colours in inscriptions, Herodotus flags an aspect that undermines the stability of epigraphic records. The implied superiority of his account over a medium whose stability is a topos strongly buttresses the *Histories'* claim to establish lasting *kleos*. The memory that Darius wants to establish falls prey to another pitfall of inscriptions which can be removed: as Herodotus adds, Darius' stelae are later brought to Byzantium where they provide material for an Artemis altar with the exception of one stone with Assyrian letters that ends up in front of the Dionysus temple (4.87.2). The fate of the stelae thus not only paradoxically expresses the short life span of Persia's claims to the rule over Europe, but also illustrates the failure to establish permanent memory and, continuing the proem's juxtaposition of historiography with inscription, highlights the *Histories'* superiority.

---

<sup>457</sup> This argument is an expanded version of the second part of Grethlein 2009b. In the first part of this article, I investigate Xerxes' failure to learn from the past which corresponds with his unsuccessful efforts as historian of his own deeds.

<sup>458</sup> On memory through monuments in Herodotus, see Immerwahr 1960: 262-75; Steiner 1994: 125-42.

<sup>459</sup> Cf. Svenbro 1993: 149-50; Moles 1999: 44-53 with further bibliography in n. 32.

The Scythian expedition features further manifestations of Darius' wish to memorialize his deeds. The sight of the river Tearus gives Darius so much pleasure that he puts up an inscription (4.91.2):

The springs of the River Tearus give the best and finest water of all rivers. And to them there came, leading an army against the Scythians, the best and finest man of all men, Darius the son of Hystaspes, King of Persia and the whole continent.

Τεάρου ποταμοῦ κεφαλαὶ ὕδωρ ἄριστόν τε καὶ κάλλιστον παρέχονται πάντων ποταμῶν· καὶ ἐπ' αὐτάς ἀπίκετο ἐλαύνων ἐπὶ Σκύθας στρατὸν ἀνὴρ ἄριστός τε καὶ κάλλιστος πάντων ἀνθρώπων, Δαρεῖος ὁ Ὑστάσπεος, Περσέων τε καὶ πάσης τῆς ἡπείρου βασιλεύς.

The affinity between 'best and finest' king and 'best and finest' landscape does not hold true though: the vastness of the land will prove one of the major assets of the Scythians,<sup>460</sup> and the 'best and finest man of all men' will be utterly defeated. History is highly problematic to record while it is happening – the end may put everything into another perspective. Not much later, at the river Artescus, Darius foregoes the medium of language and only employs the material of stone for his commemorative purposes when he has every soldier deposit a stone: 'His men carried out these orders, and, leaving behind huge mounds of stones, Darius marched on.' ('ὡς δὲ ταῦτα ἡ στρατιὴ ἐπετέλησε, ἐνθαῦτα κολωνοὺς μεγάλους τῶν λίθων καταλιπὼν ἀπήλαυε τὴν στρατιήν.' 4.92). The mountain of stones represents metonymically and metaphorically the army and its great number.<sup>461</sup> Retrospect, however, transforms what is intended as a lasting demonstration of power into the memorial of a disaster.

Darius also seems to inspire others to memorialize his expedition. Mandrocles, the architect of the bridge over the Bosphorus, uses the gift from Darius to produce a painting of the crossing which, together with an inscription, he puts up in the Samian Heraeum (4.88). Showing only the triumphant crossing and a detached Darius, the static painting contrasts with Herodotus' account that also covers the less edifying subsequent events, particularly the miserable escape over another bridge, this time over the Ister. The snapshot of a moment taken by a historical agent once more proves inadequate to do justice to history.

The inappropriateness of memorials erected during or before action is thrown into relief by a proleptic comment in the Egyptian *logos* (2.110): After

---

<sup>460</sup> Cf. Hartog 1988: 57-60 on the land of the Scythians and its role in the Persian invasion. On the stelae at the river Tearus, see also Steiner 1994: 134 who notes that 'the combination of the inscribed column and the riverflow sounds a false note in Greek tradition'.

<sup>461</sup> The Persian heap of stones corresponds with the bronze bowl made of the arrowheads that the Scythian king Ariantes collects from his men (4.81.5-6). For a comparison, see Steiner 1994: 177-8.

describing the large stone statues of Sesostris and his family in front of the Hephaestus temple, Herodotus adds (2.110.2):

Many years later the priest of Hephaestus refused to let Darius the Persian erect a statue of himself in front of this group of statues, arguing that his achievements did not match those of Sesostris the Egyptian. He said that Sesostris defeated as many peoples as him and the Scythians as well, but that Darius had been unable to conquer the Scythians.

τῶν δὴ ὁ ἱεὺς τοῦ Ἥφαιστου χρόνῳ μετέπειτα πολλῶ Δαρεῖον τὸν Πέρσην οὐ περιεΐδε ἰστάντα ἔμπροσθε ἀνδριάντα, φὰς οὐ οἱ πεποιῆσθαι ἔργα οἷά περ Σεσώστρι τῶ Αἰγυπτίῳ. Σέσωστριν μὲν γὰρ ἄλλα τε καταστρέψασθαι ἔθνεα οὐκ ἐλάσσω ἐκείνου καὶ δὴ καὶ Σκύθας, Δαρεῖον δὲ οὐ δυνασθῆναι Σκύθας ἐλεῖν.

While the inscriptions put up during the Scythian expedition have either disappeared or become testimonies to defeat, the final failure bars Darius from erecting memorials in other places that could generate lasting memory as Sesostris' statues do.

#### *Xerxes as recorder of his own deeds*

Besides inheriting Darius' plan to invade Greece, Xerxes also continues his predecessor's doomed attempts to memorialize history in the making. While Darius puts up inscriptions for an expedition in progress, Xerxes' failure to wait until the end comes to the fore in his attempts to record his ongoing invasion of Europe as well as in his gaze and tendency to envision the present as if it were already past. Xerxes' wish for memory manifests itself, for example, in the canal that he dug at Mount Athos (7.24):

On reflection it seems to me that Xerxes ordered the digging of the canal out of a sense of grandiosity and arrogance, because he wanted to display his power and leave a memorial. After all, he could have saved all that hard work and had the ships dragged across the isthmus, but instead he ordered a channel to be dug for the sea, wide enough for two triremes to be rowed abreast along it.

ὡς μὲν ἐμὲ συμβαλλόμενον εὕρισκειν, μεγαλοφροσύνης εἵνεκεν αὐτὸ Ζέρξης ὀρύσσειν ἐκέλευε, ἐθέλων τε δύναμιν ἀποδείκνυσθαι καὶ μνημόσυνα λιπέσθαι· παρεὸν γὰρ μηδένα πόνον λαβόντας τὸν ἰσθμὸν τὰς νέας διειρύσαι, ὀρύσσειν ἐκέλευε διώρυχα τῇ θαλάσῃ εὖρος ὡς δύο τριήρεας πλέειν ὁμοῦ ἐλαστρεομένας.

More significantly, Xerxes appears as an embedded author in the *Histories*: when he counts his troops at Doriscus, Herodotus closely aligns the narrative with his perspective. Parallel to the mustering at the level of the action, Herodotus presents a catalogue of the Persian army, which extends over 39 chapters.<sup>462</sup> The embedding of the Herodotean narrative in Xerxes' perspective is marked at the beginning and end of the catalogue (7.59.3 ... 7.100.1):

He [i.e. Xerxes] counted his army in Doriscus during this time ... So much for the fleet. When the army had been counted and marshalled, Xerxes desired to drive through and review them himself.

ὁ δὲ ἐν τῷ Δορίσκῳ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον τῆς στρατιῆς ἀριθμὸν ἐποιέετο ... Ἐς μὲν τοσόνδε ὁ ναυτικὸς στρατὸς εἴρηται· Ζέρξης δέ, ἐπεὶ ἠριθμήθη τε καὶ διετάχθη ὁ στρατός, ἐπεθύμησε αὐτὸς σφεας διεξελάσας θεήσασθαι.

The following sentences underline the parallel between Xerxes at the level of the action and Herodotus as narrator of the *Histories* (7.100.1-2):

Later he did this, and riding on his chariot past each and every tribal unit, he asked questions, and his secretaries took notes, until he had gone from one end of the army to the other, both the cavalry and infantry. After this, the ships were hauled into the water, and Xerxes exchanged the chariot for a Sidonian ship. He sat under a golden canopy, sailed past the prows of the ships, asked questions about each group of the ships in the same way as about the army and had notes taken.

μετὰ δὲ ἐποίεε ταῦτα, καὶ διεξελαύνων ἐπὶ ἄρματος παρὰ ἕθνος ἐν ἕκαστον ἐπυνθάνετο, καὶ ἀπέγραφον οἱ γραμματισταί, ἕως ἐξ ἔσχατων ἐς ἔσχατα ἀπίκητο καὶ τῆς ἵππου καὶ τοῦ πεζοῦ. ὡς δὲ ταῦτά οἱ ἐπεποιήτο, τῶν νεῶν κατελκυσθεισέων ἐς θάλασσαν, ἐνθαῦτα ὁ Ζέρξης μετεκβὰς ἐκ τοῦ ἄρματος ἐς νέα Σιδωνίην ἴζετο ὑπὸ σκηνῇ χρυσῆι καὶ παρέπλεε παρὰ τὰς πρῶρας τῶν νεῶν, ἐπειρωτῶν τε ἐκάστας ὁμοίως καὶ τὸν πεζὸν καὶ ἀπογραφόμενος.

Not only does Herodotus' narrative follow Xerxes in viewing the army unit after unit, but the *Histories*' catalogue parallels the list that Xerxes has his

---

<sup>462</sup> Christ 1994: 174 writes: 'The construction of the narrative ... encourages the reader to view Xerxes as an objective gatherer of information.' Yet, he notes that, unlike Herodotus, Xerxes is driven by egoism. Steiner 1994: 145 contrasts Xerxes' concentration on numbers with Herodotus' attention to the diversity of the army as he describes the different nations and their attire. For Herodotus' sources, see Armayor 1978. On the epic features of the catalogue, see Erbse 1992: 125-7; Boedeker 2002: 103. They complement the *auxesis* in 7.21 according to which the Persian invasion topped all previous wars, including the Trojan War.

writers make. Xerxes' writing prefigures the writing of Herodotus<sup>463</sup> who inversely often uses words of physical movement to describe his narrative activity.<sup>464</sup>

Xerxes' role as an embedded author of his own history is even more pronounced in the battle at Salamis, where he has his secretaries write down the names of those who excel in combat (8.90.4):<sup>465</sup>

Whenever Xerxes saw an achievement produced by one of his people in the sea battle – he sat at the foot of the hill facing Salamis, Aegaleus by name – he asked who did it, and his secretaries wrote down the name of the captain, his father, and his town.

ὄκως γὰρ τινα ἴδοι Ζέρξης τῶν ἑωυτοῦ ἔργον τι ἀποδεικνύμενον ἐν τῇ ναυμαχίῃ, κατήμενος ὑπὸ τῷ ὄρει τῷ ἀντίον Σαλαμῖνος τὸ καλέεται Αἰγάλεως, ἀνεπυθάνετο τὸν ποιήσαντα, καὶ οἱ γραμματισταὶ ἀνέγραφον πατρόθεν τὸν τριήραρχον καὶ τὴν πόλιν.

The very act of writing establishes a strong parallel between Xerxes and Herodotus which can be specified further:<sup>466</sup> in judging the performances, Xerxes becomes a *histor* like Herodotus. His recordings of ἔργον τι ἀποδεικνύμενον<sup>467</sup> are reminiscent of Herodotus' prominent statement that he does not want 'achievements produced by both Greeks and Barbarians' ('ἔργα ... τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα', 1.1) to fall into oblivion. To stick with the sea-battle, Xerxes is not the only one to note the best ships; Herodotus himself gives a ranking of the Greeks' performance (8.93.1) and, just like Xerxes, identifies the captains by their patronymics and poleis. At the beginning, he even names the King's list of εὐεργέται as one of his sources (8.85.3).

As we see, Xerxes not only parallels Herodotus' writing at the level of the action, but his recordings cover the very object of the *Histories* and even resemble

---

<sup>463</sup> Cf. Rösler 2002: 88-90.

<sup>464</sup> See, for example, 1.5.3: 'I am not going to come down in favour of this or that account of events, but I will talk about the man who, to my certain knowledge, first undertook criminal acts of aggression against the Greeks. I will show who it was who did this, and then proceed with the rest of the account. I will cover minor and major human settlements equally ...' ('ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ μὲν τούτων οὐκ ἔρχομαι ἐρέων ὡς οὕτως ἢ ἄλλως κως ταῦτα ἐγένετο, τὸν δὲ οἶδα αὐτὸς πρῶτον ὑπάρξαντα ἀδίκων ἔργων ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, τοῦτον σημήνας προβήσομαι ἐς τὸ πρόσω τοῦ λόγου, ὁμοίως σμικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα ἄστυ ἀνθρώπων ἐπεξιῶν.'). On Herodotus' self-fashioning as an Odysseus, see Moles 1993: 96-7; 1996: 264-5.

<sup>465</sup> See also 8.86. On Xerxes' interest in fame, see 7.24.

<sup>466</sup> For a very different approach, cf. Steiner 1994, who argues that Herodotus presents writing as a distinctly barbarian practice. See below ???

<sup>467</sup> See also 8.89.2: '... because the crews of the ships behind them were still trying to get past the ones in front and show the King that they too could perform well, so they fell foul of the ships from their own side which were withdrawing.' ('οἱ γὰρ ὄπισθε τεταγμένοι, ἐς τὸ πρόσθε τῆσι νηυσὶ παριέναι πειρώμενοι ὡς ἀποδεξόμενοι τι καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔργον βασιλεί, τῆσι σφετέρῃσι νηυσὶ φευγούσῃσι περιέπιπτον.').

them in some ways. However, Herodotus also shows the limits of Xerxes' documentation. When Artemisia cannot flee from an Athenian ship, she simply attacks and sinks a ship of the allied Calyndans, thereby pretending to fight on the side of the Greeks (8.87.2-4). Not noting the identity of the attacked ship, Xerxes is pleased by her performance (8.88.1):

Therefore she received praise from Xerxes, although she did something bad. It is reported that as Xerxes was watching he noticed her ship ramming the other vessel, and that one of the bystanders said: 'Master, do you see how well Artemisia is fighting and that she has just sunk a ship of the enemies?'

... τοῦτο δὲ συνέβη ὥστε κακὸν ἐργασαμένην ἀπὸ τούτων αὐτὴν μάλιστα εὐδοκιμῆσαι παρὰ Ξέρξη. λέγεται γὰρ βασιλέα θεύμενον μαθεῖν τὴν νέα ἐμβαλοῦσαν, καὶ δὴ τινα εἰπεῖν τῶν παρεόντων· Δέσποτα, ὄρῳς Ἀρτεμισίην ὡς εὖ ἀγωνίζεται καὶ νέα τῶν πολεμίων κατέδυσε;

#### *Xerxes' gaze and historian-like stance*

Xerxes' failure to get the facts straight throws into relief the accuracy of Herodotus' account. An exploration of Xerxes' gaze will help to elucidate the deeper reasons for which his take on history is flawed. As David Konstan notes, Xerxes is characterised by the activity of θεᾶσθαι.<sup>468</sup> He argues that Xerxes' gaze is often linked to objectively measuring something. This he contrasts to Greek ἀρετή. In the following, I would like to suggest another reading. In the *Anabasis* chapter, we have seen that the gaze of another Eastern potentate, Cyrus, expresses control and detachment.<sup>469</sup> Xerxes' gaze follows this poetics and gives it a particular twist: it implies distance from what is happening, expresses a desire to be elevated above the level of the action and is emblematic of the crooked attempt to write history at the same time as it is processing.

Let us start with Xerxes' first viewing of his army. Before Xerxes musters and counts his troops at Doriscus, he watches them at Abydos (7.44):

When they were at Abydos, Xerxes wanted to see his whole army. On a hill there, a throne of white stone had been put up especially for him (the people of Abydos had built it to his order). From this vantage-point, he looked down onto the shore and watched both the infantry and the fleet. As he watched them, he felt the desire to see a race of the ships. When the

---

<sup>468</sup> Konstan 1987.

<sup>469</sup> Cf. ch. 3???, also on the possibility that the similarity constitutes a Herodotean intertext in the *Anabasis*.

contest took place and the Phoenicians from Sidon won, Xerxes took great pleasure in the race and in the army.

Ἐπεὶ δ' ἐγένοντο ἐν Ἀβύδῳ, ἠθέλησε Ζέρξης ιδέσθαι πάντα τὸν στρατόν. καὶ προεπεποιήτο γὰρ ἐπὶ κολωνοῦ ἐπίτηδες αὐτῷ ταύτη προεξέδρη λίθου λευκοῦ (ἐποίησαν δὲ Ἀβυδηνοὶ ἐντειλαμένου πρότερον βασιλέος), ἐνθαῦτα ὡς ἴζετο, κατορῶν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡϊόνος ἔθηϊτο καὶ τὸν πεζὸν καὶ τὰς νέας, θηεύμενος δὲ ἰμέρθη τῶν νεῶν ἄμιλλαν γινομένην ιδέσθαι. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐγένετό τε καὶ ἐνίκων Φοίνικες Σιδώνιοι, ἦσθη τῇ τε ἀμίλλῃ καὶ τῇ στρατιῇ.

Xerxes is distant from the army; he watches his men from his elevated position like Zeus observing the heroes from Mount Ida. His detached attitude matches the situation, a regatta, which shows the ships in action, but does not constitute a real battle. The performative character of the regatta gives Xerxes full control over the situation and allows him to entirely indulge in his view. The tranquillity of the scene contrasts with the unpredictable movements of future battles. Its picturesque quality is underlined by a parallel scene with Darius that I have already mentioned: the gaze of Darius at his troops at the Bosphorus is actually transformed into a painting, the work commissioned by Mandrocles that is called a *μνημόσυνον*<sup>470</sup> in the attached inscription. I suggest that, besides having a similar picturesque quality to that of Darius at the Hellespont, Xerxes also gazes at his army as if he was looking not at something taking place in the present, but at a *μνημόσυνον* recording something past. Immediately before Xerxes watches the regatta at Abydos, Herodotus has him visit the ruins of Troy (7.43.1-2):

When the army reached the Scamander, the first river that failed to provide enough drinking water for the men and animals, after they had departed from Sardis and set out on their journey – when Xerxes came to this river, he went up to Priam's Pergamon, feeling the desire to view it. He watched, heard the whole story of those events and sacrificed a thousand oxen to Athena of Ilium, and the Magi offered libations to the dead heroes.<sup>471</sup>

ἀπικομένους δὲ τοῦ στρατοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν Σκάμανδρον, ὃς πρῶτος ποταμῶν, ἐπεῖτε ἐκ Σαρδίων ὀρμηθέντες ἐπεχείρησαν τῇ ὁδῷ, ἐπέλιπε τὸ ῥέεθρον οὐδ' ἀπέχρησε τῇ στρατιῇ τε καὶ τοῖσι κτήνεσι πινόμενος, ἐπὶ τοῦτον δὴ τὸν ποταμὸν ὡς ἀπίκετο Ζέρξης, ἐς τὸ Πριάμου Πέργαμον ἀνέβη ἰμερον ἔχων θεήσασθαι. θηεσάμενος δὲ καὶ πυθόμενος

<sup>470</sup> On *μνημόσυνος* in Herodotus, see Immerwahr 1960: 266-7.

<sup>471</sup> Reinforced by the naming of Xerxes' Trojan counterpart Priam, the visit to Troy brings in the Trojan War as a foil to the Persian expedition. On this comparison in the *Histories*, see Grethlein 2006b: 503-5.

ἐκείνων ἕκαστα τῇ Ἀθηναίῃ τῇ Ἰλιάδι ἔθυσσε βοῦς χιλίας, χοὰς δὲ οἱ μάγοι τοῖσι ἥρωσι ἐχέαντο.

Herodotus reinforces the juxtaposition of Xerxes' viewing of Troy and his army through a verbal echo. In both situations, Xerxes is caught by 'desire' ('ἵμερος') to 'watch' ('θεᾶσθαι'):<sup>472</sup> Xerxes watches his ships in the same way as he looks at Troy. Not only does the gaze distance Xerxes from the action, but, as expressed by the reverberations, it transforms the deployment of his army into something that is already as fixed as the ruins of Troy. Xerxes' gaze is carried by the desire to freeze the present, give it the final status of the past and thus deprive it of all the insecurity that threatens human life. When Xerxes gazes at the crossing of his army over the Hellespont, the comment of a Hellespontine reveals his god-like stance (7.56.2):

There is a story that after Xerxes had crossed the Hellespont a local Hellespontine man said, 'Why, Zeus, do you disguise yourself as a Persian man and take the name of Xerxes instead of Zeus? If you want to devastate Greece, why do you bring the whole of mankind with you, when you could do it by yourself?'

ἐνθαῦτα λέγεται Ζέρξεω ἤδη διαβεβηκότος τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον ἄνδρα εἰπεῖν Ἑλλησπόντιον· ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δὴ ἀνδρὶ εἰδόμενος Πέρσῃ καὶ οὔνομα ἀντὶ Διὸς Ζέρξην θέμενος ἀνάστατον τὴν Ἑλλάδα θέλεις ποιῆσαι, ἄγων πάντας ἀνθρώπους; καὶ γὰρ ἄνευ τούτων ἐξῆν τοι ποιεῖν ταῦτα.<sup>473</sup>

The view of his army at Abydos prompts Xerxes first to praise himself, then to shed tears. His explanation of his tears reveals the same attitude to the present that his gaze expresses:<sup>474</sup> 'For in my reflections it occurred to me how short the sum total of human life is, and this made me feel compassion, if none of all these will be alive in a hundred years' time.' ('Ἐσῆλθε γὰρ με λογισάμενον κατοικτῖραι ὡς βραχὺς εἶη ὁ πᾶς ἀνθρώπινος βίος, εἰ τούτων γε ἐόντων τοσοῦτων οὐδεὶς ἐς ἑκατοστὸν ἔτος περιέσται.' 7.46.2). In considering that no one will be alive in a hundred years, Xerxes takes the stance of the historian who is looking back. Driven by the wish to fix the present, he musters it as if it were already past. This, however, draws his attention to the very fact of mortality and

---

<sup>472</sup> Perhaps the parallel is reinforced by the ἐπὶ τῆς ἡϊόνος that precedes ἐθηεῖτο. ἡϊών is an epic word (*Il.* 2.92; 7.462; 12.32; 14.36; 17.265; 23.61; 24.13; *Od.* 5.156; 418; 440; 6.138) and thus evokes the world of the Homeric heroes the remnants of which Xerxes has just visited at Troy. Herodotus uses ἡϊών only twice elsewhere, and one occurrence is in a Homeric context, Alexander's trip to Egypt (2.113.2; see also 8.96.2).

<sup>473</sup> On this comment, cf. Immerwahr 1954: 20-1.

<sup>474</sup> For an interesting comparison of this conversation with the arguments in the council scene, see Pelling 1991: 134-5. Cf. also Solmsen 1982: 96-8.

provokes his tears. Paradoxically, the desire to see his present bliss fixed and final alerts Xerxes to the transitory nature of human life.

Xerxes' insight, however, ought not to be overestimated.<sup>475</sup> In his rejoinder, Artabanus points out that the real crux is not human mortality, but the changeability of life. A corresponding scene similarly highlights the limits of Xerxes' understanding of the human condition.<sup>476</sup> At a joint Persian-Theban symposium, the Orchomenian Thersander shares a *kline* with a Persian who bursts into tears and predicts that most of the Persian troops will be dead within a short time. Flory points out the pattern of joy and tears that underlies both scenes.<sup>477</sup> Reinforced through the similarity, the imminence of the Persians' death in the symposiast's reflection makes Xerxes' general reflection on mortality with regard to his troops look rather inappropriate.

Xerxes' historicizing attitude towards the present also comes to the fore in the following dialogue with Artabanus whom he asks (7.47.1):

If the apparition in your dream had not been so clear, would you have kept to your original point of view and not let me march against Greece, or would you have changed your mind?

εἴ τοι ἡ ὄψις τοῦ ἐνυπνίου μὴ ἐναργῆς οὕτω ἐφάνη, εἶχες ἂν τὴν ἀρχαίην γνώμην, οὐκ ἔων με στρατεύεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ἢ μετέστης ἄν;

We have encountered counterfactuals already in the first part of this book as a device for restoring presentness to the past.<sup>478</sup> Besides highlighting the possibility of another course, counterfactuals also permit historians to probe into the relevance of events in a causal chain. Herodotus muses for example about the importance of the Athenians' resistance to the Persians for the saving of Greece (7.139.2):<sup>479</sup>

If the Athenians had been overwhelmed by fear of the impending danger and had left their country, or if they had not left, but stayed and surrendered to Xerxes, nobody would have tried to encounter the Persian King at sea.

---

<sup>475</sup> For another view, cf. Gould 1989: 134. See also Konstan 1987: 64, who sees less of an insight into life than another attempt at measuring something.

<sup>476</sup> The conversation between Xerxes and Artabanus can also be compared with Croesus' encounter with Solon. Not only does Artabanus' reflection on the end resemble Solon's (7.51.3 ~ 1.32.9), but both Xerxes and Solon consider the length of a man's life. However, while Xerxes only talks about the absolute time span, Solon elaborates on the length of a life to point out how much can happen during that time.

<sup>477</sup> Flory 1978. He emphasizes the atmosphere of joy at a symposium. However, much of the poetry that was performed at symposia contains reflections on man's fragility.

<sup>478</sup> See above ???

<sup>479</sup> On counterfactuals in Herodotus, see Kleinknecht 1940: 244-7.

εἰ Ἀθηναῖοι καταρρωδήσαντες τὸν ἐπιόντα κίνδυνον ἐξέλιπον τὴν σφετέρην, ἢ καὶ μὴ ἐκλιπόντες ἀλλὰ μείναντες ἔδοσαν σφέας αὐτοὺς Ζέρξῃ, κατὰ τὴν θάλασσαν οὐδαμοὶ ἂν ἐπειρῶντο ἀντιεύμενοι βασιλείῃ.

In that case, Herodotus goes on to reflect, the Spartans would have been left by their allies and would either have been defeated by the Persians or would have capitulated. In asking Artabanus about his support for the current expedition, Xerxes applies the device of virtual history to contemporary events; he considers Artabanus' dream as if it belonged to a series of events that has already found its closure. The tendency to take a historian-like stance also leads Xerxes to dismiss Artabanus' warnings at Abydos. Artabanus' emphasis on contingency contradicts the King's desire to consider the present as something that is already fixed.

Xerxes' conversations with Artabanus illustrate the same historicizing attitude that makes his gaze distinct. However, while Xerxes can indulge in watching his ships at Abydos in the same way as Troy's ruins and while he can muster and count his troops at Doriscus like a historian who is giving a catalogue, his gaze is disturbed in real combat. Herodotus writes about the first encounter at Thermopylae: 'It is reported that as Xerxes was watching during these attacks, he leapt from his throne three times out of fear for his army.' ('ἐν ταύτησι τῆσι προσόδοισι τῆς μάχης λέγεται βασιλέα θηεόμενον τρις ἀναδραμεῖν ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου, δέισαντα περὶ τῆ στρατιῆ.' 7.212.1). As in the other scenes, Xerxes is sitting on a throne and watching his troops.<sup>480</sup> Yet, the general reflection on man's mortality has given way to fear for his troops in the here and now. Xerxes' nervous jumping up from his detached pose on the throne reveals that the present does not freeze under his eyes; what he sees derails his distancing gaze.

That being said, although the present objects to Xerxes' authorship, he works on it as soon as it is past (8.25). Xerxes has the dead Persians be buried and leaves on the ground about a thousand of the twenty thousand corpses of Persian soldiers together with all four thousand dead Greeks. He thereby aims at concealing the high price for the victory of the Persians whom he leads onto the battlefield.<sup>481</sup> With his manipulation, Xerxes retrospectively transforms the battle at Thermopylae into an act of great bravery. Since the present proves difficult to rule, Xerxes tries to shape at least its memory. But without success: it does not even take Herodotus' scepticism; the Persians themselves figure out the manipulation (8.25.2).

Xerxes' attempt to freeze time and subject it to his control also comes to the fore in his relationship with nature. When a storm destroys the bridge over the

---

<sup>480</sup> For Xerxes' θεᾶσθαι in the battle of Salamis, see 8.86; 88.2.

<sup>481</sup> See ch. 4 ??? for a comparison of Xerxes' cosmetics of the battle-ground with the larger-than-life objects that Alexander leaves at the Ganges in Plutarch, *Alexander* 62.6-7.

Hellespont, Xerxes abuses the river and punishes it through branding it (7.35).<sup>482</sup> Behind the anthropomorphising of the river and the moralisation of a storm lurks Xerxes' unease about the unpredictability of nature and the uncontrollable flux of time. The same attitude can be found in a corresponding scene featuring an inverse treatment of nature (7.31):

... as he was travelling along this road Xerxes came across a plane-tree which was so beautiful that he presented it with golden decorations and appointed one of the Immortals as guardian to look after it. A day later he reached the capital city of Lydia.

... ταύτην ἰὼν ὁ Ξέρξης τὴν ὁδὸν εὔρε πλατάνιστον, τὴν κάλλεος εἵνεκα δωρησάμενος κόσμῳ χρυσεῷ καὶ μελεδωνῶ ἀθανάτῳ ἀνδρὶ ἐπιτρέψας δευτέρῃ ἡμέρῃ ἀπῖκετο ἐς τῶν Λυδῶν τὸ ἄστυ.

Not only is gold an imperishable material, but also the 'eternal' guardian reveals the desire to exempt the tree from the process of time.

#### *History East and West*

In *The Tyrant's Writ*, Deborah Steiner also discusses the memorials erected by Eastern kings in the *Histories*.<sup>483</sup> She focuses on the aspect of writing which contrasts with Herodotus' emphasis on oral communication: 'It rapidly gathers both sinister and pejorative associations, and appears within a complex of activities designed to illustrate the despotism of the Oriental monarchs.'<sup>484</sup> My analysis has highlighted another aspect in which Darius' and Xerxes' desire to memorialize their own deeds sheds light on Herodotus' practice. The futile attempts of the Persian Kings to memorialize their own *res gestae* demonstrate that history can only be told retrospectively – as in the *Histories*.

The implicit juxtaposition of teleological historiography à la Herodotus with attempts to record history while it is happening thus seems to be reinforced through the East-West dichotomy: the flawed attitude to memory of Barbarian characters throws into relief the superior work of the Greek historian. It has been pointed out though that Herodotus' polarization of East and West is far from stable.<sup>485</sup> Artabanus, for example, voices insights that are strongly reminiscent of Herodotus' own position, while Greeks can behave in rather un-Greek ways as when the Spartans intend to re-establish tyranny in Athens. Similar qualifications apply to memory: Herodotus praises some Easterners, namely the Egyptians, for

---

<sup>482</sup> Compare this with the spearing of the river Nile by Pheros (2.111.2) and the branding of Theban defectors at Thermopylae (7.233.2). On the semantics of Eastern practices of inscribing bodies in the *Histories*, see Steiner 1994: 154-9.

<sup>483</sup> Steiner 1994: 127-42.

<sup>484</sup> Steiner 1994: 127.

<sup>485</sup> See, e.g., Pelling 1997b.

their accurate records, on which he often relies in the *Histories* (e.g., 2.77.1). Sesostris, for one, succeeds splendidly in inscribing his memory into the landscape of Egypt.<sup>486</sup> On the other hand, the desire to gaze that characterizes Xerxes' crooked attempt to historicize the present is not alien to the Greeks. The Spartans, for example, arrive too late for the battle of Marathon: 'Although they were too late for the battle, they still desired to view the Persians. And coming to Marathon, they viewed them.' ('ὅστεροι δὲ ἀπικόμενοι τῆς συμβολῆς ἰμείροντο ὁμῶς θεήσασθαι τοὺς Μήδους· ἐλθόντες δὲ ἐς τὸν Μαραθῶνα ἐθεήσαντο.' 6.120). Couched in the same vocabulary as Xerxes' gaze at Troy, the wish to see the Persians taints the Spartans' passivity and failure to support the Athenians and Plataeans negatively.<sup>487</sup> The tombs erected at Plataea by poleis which did not participate in the battle are a rather more flagrant attempt to manipulate history than the cosmetics Xerxes applies to the battlefield of Thermopylae (9.85.3).

And yet, the zeal with which the Persian Kings try to memorialize history in flux is distinct.<sup>488</sup> Like the Persians, the Greeks put up inscriptions for the purposes of memory. However, their commemorative practice appears far less ambiguous: while Darius monumentalizes his expedition against the Scythians before he has even set eyes on his enemies, the names of those Samians who did not defect at Lade are inscribed only after the battle – and, as Herodotus notes, the stele is still visible on the agora (6.14.3). Likewise, the Athenians do not honour their men fighting against the Boeotians and Chalcidians until these have been defeated (5.77.4), and, to give yet another example, the Greek allies devote a tripod bearing their names to Delphi after Salamis. The discrepancy between Greeks and barbarians is highlighted by an inscription that a Greek incises before a battle. At Salamis, Themistocles cuts into stone not a memorial of the battle which has still to take place, but a message to the Ionians whom he asks to join the ranks of the Greeks (8.22.1). The necessary qualifications notwithstanding, it is therefore fair to argue that Herodotus uses the East-West dichotomy to reinforce his meta-historical reflection. His teleological take on history is thrown into relief by the Persian efforts to record events while they are happening.

In the introduction, I proposed that a teleological take on history empowers the historian and his readers, as it exempts them from the vagaries of time. While the present is open and the future unpredictable, hindsight grants us control over the past. Herodotus nicely illustrates this claim: the prominence of retrospect in the *Histories* is part of an anthropology that stresses human weakness. While

<sup>486</sup> Cf. Steiner 1994: 128-31.

<sup>487</sup> See also the Greek soldiers gazing at ('θεησόμενοι') the corpse of Masistius in 9.25.1 with the comment of Steiner 1994: 157 n. 80.

<sup>488</sup> Another aspect that distinguishes Greek from Persian commemorative practice in the *Histories* is that Greek inscriptions are installed by communities and focus on communal achievements, whereas the Persian inscriptions focus on the monarch, cf. Steiner 1994: 135. The case of the tripod dedicated at Delphi to commemorate Plataea reveals how problematical individual commemoration was in Greece: Pausanias' inscription recording his leadership was erased and replaced by the names of the poleis that had participated in the battle (Thuc. 1.132.3).

Darius' and Xerxes' inclination to monumentalize their own history goes hand in hand with their claim to a divine stance, Herodotus' emphasis on retrospect corresponds with his insight into human fragility. Significantly, the gnome 'to look to the conclusion of every matter, and see how it shall end', which, as I have suggested, grasps metaleptically Herodotus' agenda as historian, is part of a speech in which Solon drives home the fickleness of man's fate. Only hindsight permits us to overcome the insecurity that weighs on our lives – the writing of history constitutes a triumph over contingency, albeit only in the realm of retrospect.

## II. THE TELEOLOGICAL DESIGN OF THE *HISTORIES* AND ITS READING EXPERIENCE

### *Digressions, prolepses and patterns*

In accordance with their meta-historical reflection on how (not) to do history, the *Histories* capitalize on hindsight. As most of the features that render Herodotus' account teleological are well-explored, I shall touch on them only briefly before I explore the more ambiguous aspects of the *Histories*' teleology in the subsequent two sections. When Croesus intends to make the most powerful Greeks his friends, he learns that the outstanding poleis are Sparta and Athens (1.56.1-2). His inquiry introduces Herodotus' digression into the Spartan and Athenian history of the Archaic Age. The claim that Athens towers over the other states, however, sits uncomfortably with Herodotus' comments on its development in other passages.<sup>489</sup> After the Athenian victory over Boeotians and Chalcidians, for example, Herodotus adduces Athens as evidence for the advantages of *isegoria*: 'Under the tyrants, the Athenians were militarily in no way better than their neighbours, but after they had gotten rid of the tyrants, they became by far the first.' ('... Ἀθηναῖοι τυραννεύομενοι μὲν οὐδαμῶν τῶν σφέας περιοικεόντων ἦσαν τὰ πολέμια ἀμείνους, ἀπαλλαχθέντες δὲ τυράννων μακρῶ πρῶτοι ἐγένοντο.' 5.78). The prominence granted to the Athenians in the account of archaic Greece in book 1 reveals the retrospect of the historian who knows Athens' rise after the Persian Wars and writes history with an eye on later developments.

The very form of the digression if applied to history as in the Athenian and Spartan *logoi* of book 1 builds on retrospect: Croesus learns that the Athenians are ruled by Pisistratus and, following his inquiry, Herodotus goes back to narrate how Pisistratus had come to power (1.59-64). Likewise, the Spartan *logos* begins with the information that the Spartans had finally managed to get the better of the Tegeans and then fills in the prehistory of Sparta's dealings with her neighbours

---

<sup>489</sup> Cf. Strasburger 1955: 8-9.

(1.65-8). The function of explaining a status quo gives these and other historical digressions a strongly teleological design.

In the main account, the teleological orchestration of the narrative comes to the fore in the numerous prolepses through which Herodotus anticipates the further course of events.<sup>490</sup> To give a famous example from book 5, when the Ionians revolt against the Persian rule, the Athenians, unlike the Spartans, agree to support them (5.97.3):

So now that they had been won over, the Athenians voted to send a fleet of twenty ships to help the Ionians, and they put Melanthius – an extremely distinguished Athenian – in command of the expedition. These twenty ships proved to be the beginning of the evil for Greeks and non-Greeks alike.

Ἀθηναῖοι μὲν δὴ ἀναπεισθέντες ἐψηφίσαντο εἴκοσι νέας ἀποστεῖλαι βοηθοὺς Ἴωσι, στρατηγὸν ἀποδέξαντες αὐτῶν εἶναι Μελάνθιον, ἄνδρα τῶν ἀστῶν ἔόντα τὰ πάντα δόκιμον. αὐταὶ δὲ αἱ νέες ἀρχὴ κακῶν ἐγένοντο Ἑλλησὶ τε καὶ βαρβάροισι.<sup>491</sup>

Herodotus artfully entwines a prolepsis with an analepsis; while adumbrating future misfortune, the phrase ἀρχὴ κακῶν also evokes two passages from the *Iliad*: when Achilles sends Patroclus to Nestor to inquire about the identity of a wounded hero, the narrator adumbrates the end of Patroclus who will follow Nestor's advice to join the ranks of the Greeks in Achilles' armour: '... and this was the beginning of the evil for him.' ('... κακοῦ δ' ἄρα οἱ πέλεν ἀρχή.' 11.604). The second passage offers a closer parallel as here the ships that carried Alexander are called ἀρχέκακοι ('the beginning of the evil', 5.63). The evocation of the Trojan War as a foil underscores the evils foreshadowed by Herodotus. Here as in many other cases, the foreshadowing is vague, but it nonetheless gives the narrative a teleological drive.

Without explicitly anticipating the future, narrative patterns also serve a proleptic function in the *Histories*. Xerxes' bridging of the Hellespont, for instance, evokes earlier crossings of rivers, notably the transference of Darius' troops over the Bosphorus.<sup>492</sup> The parallel intimates that Xerxes' invasion of Greece may be no more successful than his father's expedition against the Scythians. To give another example: after learning that Oeobazus was 'overjoyed' ('περιχαρής') that Darius would allow his sons to 'stay' ('ἐπεστεῶτας', 4.84.2), that Aristagoras was 'overjoyed' about his schemes (5.32) and that Xerxes was 'overjoyed' hearing that an eclipse of the sun presaged the capture of Greece (7.37.3), the reader will not hesitate to expect a negative turn when Mardonius is

---

<sup>490</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 196-202.

<sup>491</sup> On the Homeric echo, see, e.g., Munson 2007: 153 with n. 34; Hornblower 2007: 171-2.

<sup>492</sup> See, e.g., Immerwahr 1954: 25.

‘overjoyed’ at Plataea (9.49.1) and Artaynte is ‘overjoyed’ about the *pharos* that Xerxes gives her (9.109.3).<sup>493</sup> At the macro-level, the pattern of the rise and fall of empires provides the reader with a trajectory of the *Histories*’ plot.<sup>494</sup> Like foreshadowing, narrative patterns deepen the teleological profile of Herodotus’ account.

The dense web of prolepses and patterns create a strong gap between characters and readers, on which I have elaborated in *The Greeks and Their Past*.<sup>495</sup> The *Histories* do not strive to align the reader with the perspective of the characters and are thus not mimetic in the same sense as Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War* and Xenophon’s *Anabasis* which do much to restore to the past its own temporal horizon as present. This, however, does not mean that the reader does not have an experience while reading through Herodotus. Ancient commentators already praised the *enargeia* of descriptions in the *Histories*.<sup>496</sup> The spell which the work still casts on us relies not only on exotic descriptions of the Ethiopians’ table of the sun, (3.18) the aromatics of Arabia (3.107) or of people who eat their parents like the Indian Callatae (3.38.4), but also on the temporal dynamic of the narrative. Suspense, however, is directed not so much to the ‘what’ as to the ‘how’.<sup>497</sup> If we take the account of Xerxes’ invasion of Greece, we can safely assume that Herodotus’ readers would have been familiar with the Persian defeat. Moreover, the pattern of rise and fall has been firmly established through the accounts of Croesus, Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius and is reinforced by minor patterns like the ones just mentioned. The warnings of Artabanus and Demaratus anticipate Xerxes’ disaster which is also foreshadowed in a dream of Xerxes (7.19) and several omens (7.37.2-3; 57.1-2). At the same time, suspense is generated through retardation:<sup>498</sup> the Persian Council scene, Xerxes’ change of mind and his dreams delay the beginning of the expedition. Herodotus then takes much time to give a detailed account of the march to Europe; in the long catalogue of Persian troops (7.61-99), narrative time even comes to a standstill, while the reader is yearning to learn how the disaster will come about. The teleological design makes reading the *Histories* quite an experience, but an experience that is much distanced from the experience of the characters.

### Oracles

The teleology of the *Histories* gains a special twist from the oracles featuring in the narrative. Setting aside the question of historical authenticity,

---

<sup>493</sup> For further occurrences of *περιχαρής* and its semantics in the *Histories*, see Flory 1978: 150.

<sup>494</sup> See, e.g., Immerwahr 1966; Hunter 1982: 176-225.

<sup>495</sup> Grethlein 2010a: 196-202.

<sup>496</sup> Cf. Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 775; *De imit.* 425.3-5 ???; [Longin.] *Subl.* 26.2; Hermog. *Id.* 2.12.124-5. ???

<sup>497</sup> On suspense in Herodotus, see de Jong 1999: 242-51; Rengakos 2006.

<sup>498</sup> Cf. Rengakos 2006: 191-4.

scholars have started to unwrap the complex significance of oracles in Herodotus: Maurizio has explored traces of the oral traditions behind the oracle tales; Harrison has charted the multi-faceted attitudes towards divination in the *Histories*; Kindt has argued that Herodotus uses oracles to bolster his narratorial authority; Barker has elucidated further aspects of the relation between oracles and authority; and oracles are central to Hollmann's semiotic interpretation of Herodotus as 'master of signs'.<sup>499</sup> For my argument, the temporal structure of oracles is crucial. Through oracles, a teleological structure is embedded in the action. The telos is not only inferred by the historian in retrospect, but is already encapsulated in the *res gestae*. This, however, does not imply a strictly deterministic world-view nor does it mean that the characters are in the know about what is to come. The language of the gods is obscure and the majority of the oracles in the *Histories* are misunderstood or ignored by the receivers.<sup>500</sup> Herodotus often uses this to create a gap between historical agents and reader, for example, when Croesus inquires at Delphi whether or not to attack the Persians (1.53). The Pythia's response that he is going to destroy a large empire is taken by him as a prediction of a Lydian success. Any halfway alert reader, on the other hand, will sense the ambiguity and suspect that Croesus is about to gamble away his own empire. Other oracles are no clearer to the reader than to the recipient. When the Spartans ask about their chances of capturing Arcadia, they hear from the Pythia (1.66.2):

You ask for Arcadia? You ask a lot; I will not give it to you.  
 There are many men in Arcadia, toughened by a diet of acorns,  
 And they will stop you. But I do not want to be niggardly.  
 I will give you the dance-floor of Tegea; you can caper there  
 And measure out her beautiful plain with a rope.  
 Ἄρκαδιὴν μ' αἰτεῖς; μέγα μ' αἰτεῖς· οὐ τοι δώσω.  
 πολλοὶ ἐν Ἄρκαδίῃ βαλανηφάγοι ἄνδρες ἔασιν,  
 οἳ σ' ἀποκωλύσουσιν. ἐγὼ δέ τοι οὔτι μεγαίρω.  
 δώσω τοι Τεγέην ποσσίκροτον ὀρχήσασθαι  
 καὶ καλὸν πεδίων σχοίνῳ διαμετρήσασθαι.<sup>501</sup>

The reader with no additional knowledge will probably interpret the response as the Spartans do, namely as an encouragement to invade Tegea. However, the Spartans are defeated and fulfil the oracle by working the fields of the Tegeans. In other cases, Herodotus does not mention the oracle until the event

<sup>499</sup> Maurizio 1997; Harrison 2000: 152-7; Kindt 2006; Barker 2006; Hollmann 2011, especially 94-117.

<sup>500</sup> Harrison 2000: 156.

<sup>501</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 198.

predicted takes place. The oracle that Cambyses would die in Agbatana is only introduced when, after injuring himself, Cambyses learns where he is and exclaims: ‘This is the place where Cambyses the son of Cyrus is destined to die.’ (‘Ἐνταῦθα Καμβύσεα τὸν Κύρου ἐστὶ πεπρωμένον τελευτᾶν.’ 3.64.5). Oracles may thus have different places and serve various functions in the economy of the narrative, but they all intensify its teleological design through embedding in the action signs, however obscure, of future events.

The teleological bent in the plot of the *Histories* gains in profile from the multiple media used. Besides oracles, prophecies of individuals, dreams, omens and even random sayings have the power of divination: Herodotus interprets, for example, the battle of Salamis as the fulfilment of a prophecy of Lysistratus ‘which had not been understood by any of the Greeks: the Colian women shall do their roasting with oars’ (‘τὸ ἐλελήθεε πάντας τοὺς Ἑλληνας, Κωλιάδες δὲ γυναικες ἐρετμοῖσι φρύξουσι’, 8.96.2). The cryptic sentence is taken as a prediction of the shipwrecks that the wind carries to the Colian shore after the sea-battle. While here the prediction is introduced after the event predicted, Herodotus mentions Croesus’ dream that his son will be killed by an iron spear (1.34.3) long before its fulfilment and thereby creates suspense as to when and how the dream will come true. These predictions are very precise, but omens can be vague and nonetheless render history teleological, as when Herodotus interprets the death of nearly all participants of a trip to Delphi and the collapse of a school as prefiguring the defeat of the Chians on the sea and the capture of their island by Histiaeus (6.27). The pervasiveness of viewing history teleologically is illustrated by random remarks that in retrospect appear to be prophetic:<sup>502</sup> when, for example, the Spartans follow a Delphic oracle and ask Xerxes for a requital of Leonidas’ death, Xerxes laughs and points at Mardonius who happened to be around: ‘All right, then, here’s Mardonius. He’ll pay them what they deserve.’ (‘Τοιγάρ σφι Μαρδόνιος ὄδε δίκας δώσει τοιαύτας οἷας ἐκείνοισι πρέπει.’ 8.114.2). This less than serious response turns out to be prophetic (9.64.1):

Here the process of compensating the Spartiates for the murder of Leonidas was fulfilled by Mardonius, just as the oracle had predicted, and Pausanias the son of Cleombrotus and grandson of Anaxandridas won the most glorious victory of any known to us.

ἐνθαῦτα ἢ τε δίκη τοῦ φόνου τοῦ Λεωνίδεω κατὰ τὸ χρηστήριον τοῖσι Σπαρτιήτησι ἐκ Μαρδονίου ἐπετελέετο καὶ νίκην ἀναιρέεται καλλίστην ἀπασέων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν Παισανίης ὁ Κλεομβρότου τοῦ Ἀναξανδρίδεω.

---

<sup>502</sup> Cf. Harrison 2000: 127.

We have already seen how Thucydides unmasks the teleological view inherent in oracle tales and its impact on memory:<sup>503</sup> when the Athenians are ravaged by pestilence at the very beginning of the war, the elderly recall an oracle predicting a plague at the same time as a war with Dorians (2.54.2). The discussion whether the oracle contained the word ‘plague’ (‘λοιμός’) or ‘famine’ (‘λιμός’) elicits from Thucydides the sardonic comment that ‘men shaped their memories in accordance with what they experienced’ (‘οἱ γὰρ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς ἃ ἔπασχον τὴν μνήμην ἐποιοῦντο.’ 2.54.3). The tendency to see the past in light of later events is condensed in making past predictions fit the present situation. Tales of oracles and other forms of divination, as different as they are, all embed signs in the past and thereby deepen the teleological design fostered by retrospect.

### III. THE HISTORIES’ CLOSURE: TELEOLOGY CORROBORATED AND UNDERMINED

The *Histories*’ teleological design conforms with the meta-historical emphasis on retrospect that I have traced in the Persian Kings’ flawed desire to memorialize their own deeds. We have already seen in the introduction, however, that teleology is not as clear-cut as it may first seem. The past can be envisaged from various vantage-points and the ongoing flux of time never ceases producing new perspectives on what has happened long ago. Some of the intricacies can be gleaned in Herodotus. In this section, I shall consider the end of the *Histories*. Endings can be crucial because they often provide the telos of the narrative, and therefore they are also a prominent locus for undermining teleologies.

The three stories closing the *Histories* both corroborate and undercut the work’s emphasis on teleology. The first story focuses on the politics of *eros* at the Persian court (9.108-13): Xerxes falls for the wife of his brother Masistes. His desire, however, is not fulfilled; instead he starts an affair with their daughter, Artaynte, whom he had married to his son. Artaynte persuades him to give her a *pharos* fabricated by his wife, Amestris. When Amestris learns about this, she suspects Artaynte’s mother behind it and has her mutilated. Masistes flees and is killed. In the second story, Herodotus tells the siege and capture of Sestus by the Athenians, particularly the punishment of Artayctes who had received the land from the King and had desecrated the temple of Protesilaus (9.114-21). The final paragraph looks back to a conversation between Artayctes’ grandfather, Artembares, and Cyrus. Artembares’ suggestion to leave their rough homeland and win more and richer plains does not meet with Cyrus’ full approval as ‘soft places tend to generate soft men’ (‘φιλέειν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν μαλακῶν χώρων μαλακοὺς ἄνδρας γίνεσθαι.’ 9.122.3).

---

<sup>503</sup> Cf. ch. 2 ???

The three tales form a rich and ambiguous ending that has attracted much attention in scholarship.<sup>504</sup> On the one hand, manifold resonances with the narrative of the *Histories* endow the ending with a closural function. To mention only a few points: the sexual palace intrigues cement the image of Xerxes as an Eastern despot. Moreover, a wealth of verbal and thematic parallels links Xerxes' love for Artaynte to the first story of the *Histories*, Gyges, Candaules and his wife.<sup>505</sup> The capture of Sestus restores the boundary between East and West with Artayctes being crucified at the very spot at which Xerxes had crossed the continents.<sup>506</sup> Protesilaus aptly evokes the beginning of the most famous war between Greeks and Easterners and also harks back to the beginning of the *Histories* where the rape of Helen is mentioned.<sup>507</sup> Cyrus' warning contrasts with the luxury cultivated by Xerxes; it is therefore tempting to read it as an explanation for the Persian defeat at the hands of the simpler and purer Greeks.<sup>508</sup> Seen from this perspective, in highlighting that the Persian Wars have come to an end, the final three tales fit the *Histories*' teleological design well.

On the other hand, all three tales force the reader to look beyond 479 BCE: Herodotus reports only the mutilation of Artaynte and the death of Masistes, but not the consequences for Xerxes. Trained in the *Histories*' cycle of crime and revenge, Herodotus' readers would have supplied the death of Xerxes, which was violent and, as one tradition has it, was even brought about by his son Darius, who in this case would have acted as avenger of his in-laws.<sup>509</sup> The extraordinarily cruel execution of Artayctes – he is crucified and his son is stoned before his eyes – also raises the question of retribution and the further development of Athens.<sup>510</sup> The rather barbarous act may intimate that the corruption of the Persians through wealth in the past adumbrates the trajectory of Athens in the future.<sup>511</sup> In particular the sentence καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἔτος τοῦτο οὐδὲν ἔτι πλέον τούτων

---

<sup>504</sup> Against the negative judgment on the ending in earlier scholarship, recent commentators have done much to unravel its rich texture, see, e.g., Boedeker 1988; Herington 1991; Dewald 1997; Desmond 2004; Welser 2009.

<sup>505</sup> See especially Wolff 1964.

<sup>506</sup> Herodotus also mentions a tradition, possibly of Chersonesean origin, according to which Artayctes was executed at the hill above Madytus, but seems to favour the headland of Sestus, cf. Boedeker 1988: 41-2. Immerwahr 1954: 26 emphasizes the re-establishing of the boundaries between Asia and Europe. The picture becomes messier, however, if we follow Stadter's argument that Herodotus emphasizes that the Athenians are about to follow the Persians as tyrants of the Ionians (1992). This would constitute another European transgression into Asia (1992: 800).

<sup>507</sup> E.g., Dewald 1997: 67.

<sup>508</sup> Cf. Bischoff 1932; Cobet 1971: 172-6; but Flower and Marincola 2002: *ad* 9.122 find this too simplistic.

<sup>509</sup> Cf. Welser 2009: 362-7.

<sup>510</sup> See Welser 2009: 367-70. Stadter 1992: 800 n. 46 suggests that 'Herodotus may wish to recall the similar punishment administered by the Athenians during the Samian revolt' (Plut. *Per.* 28.2 ???).

<sup>511</sup> E.g., Cobet 1971: 175-6; Lateiner 1989: 133; Steiner 1994: 156-7; Moles 1996: 273-7.

ἐγένετο ('Nothing further happened for the remainder of the year.' 9.121.3) encourages the reader to ponder on what the Athenians still had in store.<sup>512</sup>

The *Histories*' ending thus goes beyond the Persian Wars and flags a later vantage-point that has become more and more prominent in the last books.<sup>513</sup> It has been amply demonstrated how Herodotus foreshadows the rise of Athens which, he seems to insinuate, may be the next empire to go through the cycle of rise and fall.<sup>514</sup> In 8.3, for example, after noting that the Athenians yielded to the objections of the allies and did not insist on having the command over the navy, Herodotus adumbrates the later rise of Athens (8.3.2):

Once they had repulsed the Persian and fought for his territory rather than their own, they deprived the Lacedaemonians of the leadership, using Pausanias' arrogant behaviour as a pretext. But all this happened later.

ὡς γὰρ διωσάμενοι τὸν Πέρσην περὶ τῆς ἐκείνου ἤδη τὸν ἀγῶνα ἐποιεῦντο, πρόφασιν τὴν Πausανίεω ὕβριν προϊσχύμενοι ἀπέιλοντο τὴν ἡγεμονίην τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ὕστερον ἐγένετο.

A similar contrast is implied when Herodotus lists among the best fighters at Mycale the Athenian Hermolycus, who, he adds, was to die in the later war between his city and Carystus, one of the first Greek poleis to be coerced into the Delian League (9.105).<sup>515</sup> The very Athenians who liberated Greece from the threat of slavery under Persia were to subject other Greeks. In the praise for the outstanding fighters at Plataea, Herodotus jolts the reader even to the Archidamian War: the Decelean origin of Sophanes prompts him first to look back to the mythical story that Decelus or the Deceleans informed the Tyndarids about the place where Theseus had hidden Helen.<sup>516</sup> Following this analepsis up with a prolepsis, Herodotus refers to the privileges that the Spartans therefore granted to the Deceleans, including that Decelea was saved during 'the war that took place many years later between the Athenians and Peloponnesians' ('τὸν πόλεμον τὸν ὕστερον πολλοῖσι ἔτεσι τούτων γεγόμενον Ἀθηναίοισι τε καὶ Πελοποννησιοῖσι', 9.73.3).<sup>517</sup>

<sup>512</sup> Cf. Pelling 1997b; Moles 2002: 49.

<sup>513</sup> See, however, Moles 1996: 260-70, who argues for 'temporal' and 'spatial dislocations' in book 1 that evoke contemporary Athens as horizon for the history of Lydia.

<sup>514</sup> For an (incomplete) list of passages looking beyond 479 BCE, see Schmid and Stählin 1934: 590 n. 9. The article of Fornara 1971b focuses on the question of the *Histories*' date, but, together with Fornara 1971a, has proven seminal for this interpretation, see, e.g., Raaflaub 1987; Stadter 1992; Moles 1996; Munson 2001: 3-4. See also Strasburger 1955, who made a strong case against a too positive view of Athens in the *Histories*, and Moles 2002 for a more recent survey of this question.

<sup>515</sup> Cf. Stadter 1992: 801-2.

<sup>516</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 182-3.

<sup>517</sup> The aorist participle as well as the way in which Herodotus speaks about the war suggests that he considers it past, cf. Fornara 1971b: 34. See, however, Flower and Marincola 2002: *ad loc.* for

Through the dense net of references to later intra-Hellenic conflicts, Herodotus destabilizes the teleology of the *Histories*. He brings his narrative of the Persian Wars to an end, but looks beyond them to a development that has not been completed yet. The dates of the *Histories*' composition and publication are notoriously controversial, but not even Fornara has dared to push it beyond 414 BCE.<sup>518</sup> The shattering failure of the Sicilian Expedition as well as the capitulation of 404 BCE were still in the future. When Herodotus adumbrates the trajectory of the Athenian *arche*, he refers to events that were still in flux, to the extent that the major historian of that time, Thucydides, would see the hostilities between 431-421 BCE not as a complete war in itself, as Herodotus obviously did, but as the first part of what he labelled the Peloponnesian War.<sup>519</sup>

#### IV. HISTORIES AND ORACLES: 'SIGNS' OF PAST AND FUTURE

##### *Histories, 'signs' of the past – oracles, 'signs' of the future*

While undermining the telos of the Persian Wars, Herodotus comments on contemporary history in a way that is not inappropriate for a historian who hammers home the necessity to write history in retrospect.<sup>520</sup> He does not elaborate on the current intra-Hellenic conflicts, he only alludes to them. The oblique mode of reference protects Herodotus from the mistake that the Persian Kings illustrate in his narrative, that is to record history while it is happening. In this section, a comparison of the *Histories* with oracles will help elucidate the cautious way in which Herodotus evokes history still in flux. I will argue that Herodotus' response to the politics of his own time is oracular in some regards and thereby reflects his concern with retrospect.

The *Histories* not only feature numerous oracles, in a way they serve a similar function. Herodotus' work provides its readers with an insight into the past; oracles and signs, on the other hand, are 'read' to get a hold of the future. The enquiry into the 'why' corresponds to the prediction about the 'what'. What traces are for the former, signs are for the latter. Interestingly, the Greek uses the

---

a cautionary note not to press the aorist too hard, as it may anticipate the perspective of Herodotus' future readers.

<sup>518</sup> See, however, Smart 1977 for a post 404 BCE-dating. The prolepsis in 9.73.2, quoted above, is strong evidence that the *Histories* were written before the Spartans erected their fortification in Decelea in 413 BCE. On Fornara's dating, see besides 1971b also 1981. The traditional assumption that Aristophanes' *Acharnians* pose a *terminus ante quem* for the *Histories* is defended, e.g., by Cobet 1977; Sansone 1985. For further literature, see Moles 2002: 34 n. 13.

<sup>519</sup> See also ch. 1 ??? on evidence that orators deviated from Thucydides' periodization.

<sup>520</sup> See also Dewald 1997: 80-2, whose view on the openness of the *Histories*' ending is slightly different: she also argues that the ambiguity expresses Herodotus' insight into the human condition, but in my view does not pay sufficient attention to the importance of the temporal gap which permits Herodotus to see the events of the Persian Wars much more clearly than the historical agents did.

same word, σημεῖον, for both ‘sign’ and ‘trace’. In Herodotus, σημεῖον only means ‘sign’, but in Thucydides there is evidence for the meaning ‘trace’ and in the *Histories* the use of the related verb σημαίνειν expresses linguistically the parallel between historiography and oracle.<sup>521</sup> In the transition from the proem to his narrative, Herodotus writes (1.5.3):

I am not going to talk about these events, that they happened like this or in another way, but showing<sup>522</sup> the man who, to my knowledge, first began criminal acts against the Greeks, I will proceed with the rest of the account

...

ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ μὲν τούτων οὐκ ἔρχομαι ἐρέων ὡς οὕτως ἢ ἄλλως κως ταῦτα ἐγένετο, τὸν δὲ οἶδα αὐτὸς πρῶτον ὑπάρξαντα ἀδίκων ἔργων ἐς τοὺς Ἑλληνας, τοῦτον σημήνας προβήσομαι ἐς τὸ πρόσω τοῦ λόγου ...

In 1.75.1, Herodotus uses σημαίνειν again to signify his own activity: ‘So Cyrus had subdued this Astyages, who was his mother’s father, and held him captive for a reason which I shall show later in my narrative.’ (‘Τοῦτον δὲ ὦν τὸν Ἀστυάγεα Κῦρος ἐόντα ἐωυτοῦ μητροπάτορα καταστρεψάμενος ἔσχε δι’ αἰτίην τὴν ἐγὼ ἐν τοῖσι ὀπίσω λόγοισι σημανέω.’). In both passages, the object of Herodotus’ σημαίνειν is the cause of something:<sup>523</sup> in the first, the one who started the hostilities between Greeks and Persians; in the second, the reason for which Cyrus had subjugated his grandfather. Given the prominence that *aitiai* have in the first sentence of the *Histories*,<sup>524</sup> it can be claimed that the act of σημαίνειν, as it is used in the two passages, is at the core of Herodotus’ work.<sup>525</sup>

In the light of this use of σημαίνειν it is noteworthy that according to Heraclitus the Delphic oracle ‘neither speaks nor hides, but shows’ (‘οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει’, 22 B 93 DK),<sup>526</sup> and that in the *Histories*

<sup>521</sup> On σημεῖον and σημαίνειν in Herodotus, see Hollmann 2011: 9-10; 20-7.

<sup>522</sup> ‘Showing’ is surely not the best translation for σημαίνειν here and in some of the following passages, but it seems to be the best option if we try to stick with a single translation that somehow matches all occurrences.

<sup>523</sup> For another example, cf. 7.213.3: ‘This Athenades killed Ephialtes for another reason which I shall explain later in my narrative.’ (‘ὁ δὲ Ἀθηνάδης οὗτος ἀπέκτεινε μὲν Ἐπιάλτην δι’ ἄλλην αἰτίην, τὴν ἐγὼ ἐν τοῖσι ὀπίσθε λόγοισι σημανέω ...’).

<sup>524</sup> For an analysis of *aitia*’s meaning in Herodotus, see Bornitz 1968, who notes that the ‘αἰτίη-Begriff ... im Sinne einer Verfehlung, einer Schuld oder schuldigen Verpflichtung im menschlich-sozialen Bereich gebraucht wird’ (163); Immerwahr 1956: 243-7 and Erbse 1979: 189-91, who also considers the occurrences of the adjective αἰτιος.

<sup>525</sup> On σημαίνειν in Herodotus, see also Hellmann 1934: 24 n. 1, who stresses that Herodotus uses it as introduction to ‘Einzelbemerkungen’.

<sup>526</sup> Cf. Nagy 1990: 233-6, who also draws attention to 2.53.2, where Herodotus has Hesiod and Homer σημαίνειν (262). Antiphon, on the other hand, claims that ‘things past are believed because of σημεῖα, things future because of τεκμήρια’. (‘τὰ μὲν παροιχόμενα σημεῖοις πιστούσθαι, τὰ δὲ μέλλοντα τεκμηρίοις’, fr. 72 Blass-Thalheim).

themselves σημαίνει and its compound form are used for oracles and signs. In 6.123.2, Herodotus emphasizes the Alcmaeonidae's hostility towards tyrants and writes that not Harmodius and Aristogiton brought tyranny to a fall: '... it is obvious that the Alcmaeonidae liberated Athens, if they really were the ones who persuaded the Pythia to tell the Lacedaemonians to free Athens, as I have shown above.' ('... Ἀλκμεωνίδαι δὲ ἐμφανέως ἠλευθέρωσαν, εἰ δὴ οὗτοί γε ἀληθέως ἦσαν οἱ τὴν Πυθίην ἀναπείσαντες προσημαίνειν Λακεδαιμονίοισι ἐλευθεροῦν τὰς Ἀθήνας, ὡς μοι πρότερον δεδήλωται.'). In the Croesus *logos*, σημαίνειν is applied three times to other media of divination: 'The dream showed Croesus this Atys, that he would lose him from a hit by an iron spearhead.' ('τοῦτον δὲ ὦν τὸν Ἄτυν σημαίνει τῷ Κροίσῳ ὁ ὄνειρος, ὡς ἀπολέει μιν αἰχμῇ σιδηρῆ βληθέντα.' 1.34.2). In 1.45.2, Herodotus has Croesus hark back to the dream:

You are not alone to blame for the terrible thing that has happened to me, in so far as you did it involuntarily, but also somehow one of the gods, who even showed me a long time ago what was going to happen.  
εἷς δὲ οὐ σύ μοι τοῦδε τοῦ κακοῦ αἴτιος, εἰ μὴ ὅσον ἀέκων ἐξεργάσαο, ἀλλὰ θεῶν κού τις, ὅς μοι καὶ πάλαι προεσήμαινε τὰ μέλλοντα ἔσεσθαι.

And in 1.78.2 Herodotus mentions a sign: 'The emissaries arrived and learnt from the Telmessians what the omen intends to show ...' ('ἀπικομένοισι δὲ τοῖσι θεοπρόποισι καὶ μαθοῦσι πρὸς Τελμησσέων τὸ θέλει σημαίνειν τὸ τέρας ...').<sup>527</sup>

### *Oracle on the past*

Both *Histories* and signs or oracles use the mode of σημαίνειν for speaking about something not present, the *Histories* to represent the past, in particular *aitiai*, and the media of divination to reveal the future. Seen from this angle, *Histories* and oracles are complementary, providing their receivers with insights about the past and future.<sup>528</sup> The complementary relation between the *Histories* and oracles is turned into similarity in the Pythia's reply to Croesus' accusations (1.91.1-5); here the Delphic oracle does not elucidate the future, but looks back to the past. Like Herodotus, the Pythia tackles the question of *aitiai* –

<sup>527</sup> For a further example, see 4.179.3, where Triton informs Jason and his men about the future, and 6.27.1: 'Usually there are warning signals, when great disasters befall a city or a people.' ('φιλέει δὲ κῶς προσημαίνειν, εὔτ' ἂν μέλλη μεγάλα κακὰ ἢ πόλι ἢ ἔθνεϊ ἔσεσθαι.').

<sup>528</sup> For a comparison of the temporal structures of *Histories* and oracles along different lines, see Kindt 2006, especially on 43. For another view on the relation between *Histories* and oracles, see Maurizio 1997: 326, who argues that 'when Herodotus, rather than a character, introduces an oracle, Herodotus is an oracle-performer whose performances reiterate important features of the oral transmission of oracles'. Cartledge and Greenwood 2002: 358-9, on the other hand, stress that Herodotus distances his enquiry from oracles.

who is to be blamed for Croesus' downfall? And the answer provided by the Pythia resembles what most readers take as Herodotus' opinion: Croesus is himself responsible for his disaster. However, the juxtaposition of Delphi's self-justification and the *Histories* also reveals differences. The Pythia states that Apollo postponed Croesus' downfall and saved him on the pyre.<sup>529</sup> She even gives the exact number of years, three, for which the disaster was postponed. Herodotus, on the other hand, takes account of interventions by the gods, but offers them only as tentative interpretations. In many passages in which he positively states divine influence, he refrains from attributing it to a particular god.<sup>530</sup> To stay with the example of Croesus: Herodotus does not report the rescue of the King in his own words, but presents it as a Lydian account (1.87.1).<sup>531</sup> Moreover, in this account, rain quenches the flames of Croesus' pyre after he has invoked Apollo, and Cyrus concludes that Croesus must be 'in the god's favour' ('θεοφιλῆς', 1.87.2), but, unlike in the Pythia's words, the rain is not explicitly attributed to Apollo.

Another difference lies in the assessment of responsibility. As I have said, the Pythia seems to present Herodotus' judgment on Croesus' fault. Convincing as this is, it is important to stress that Herodotus does not point out Croesus' responsibility with the same clarity as the Pythia. Herodotus has Croesus agree that he is responsible, but he does not confirm the point in his own voice. Of course, his introduction of Croesus' expedition with 'due to his misunderstanding of the oracle, Croesus invaded Cappadocia' ('Κροῖσος δὲ ἀμαρτῶν τοῦ χρησμοῦ ἐποιέετο στρατηίην ἐς Καππαδοκίην', 1.71.1) suggests a judgment along the Pythia's line. This, however, is implicit and Herodotus also leaves space for other interpretations, for instance when he calls the oracle 'ambiguous/deceptive' ('κίβδηλος', 1.75.2).<sup>532</sup> The presentation of the past in the *Histories* is much more ambiguous than the Pythia's verdict. These differences in the representation of the past highlight a crucial discrepancy between oracles and the *Histories*. The detailed knowledge of the god's action and the straight-forward assessment of Croesus' responsibility are owed to the divine inspiration that allows oracles to foresee the future. Herodotus, on the other hand, presents his account as the result of *historie* which has no privileged access to the divine, but is forced to draw on a variety of sources and sometimes has to leave questions open.

### *Histories on the present and future*

<sup>529</sup> On the clarity of the response, compared with the earlier oracles, see Kindt 2006: 42-3.

<sup>530</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 193-4.

<sup>531</sup> As Gould 1989: 37-8 emphasizes, this is the only time that Herodotus mentions a source in the Lydian *logos*.

<sup>532</sup> On the meaning of κίβδηλος which need not mean 'counterfeit' in this context, see Harrison 2000: 152 n. 109; Barker 2006: 15.

The Pythia's justification partly mirrors, partly throws into relief Herodotus' account. Inversely, I suggest, the prediction made by oracles provides a foil that sheds light on the *Histories*' references to contemporary politics. The limits of this comparison are obvious: Oracles are of course intended to prognosticate the future whereas Herodotus' Persian Wars should not be reduced to a backdrop to later intra-Hellenic conflicts.<sup>533</sup> Moreover, as we have just seen, Herodotus does not lay claim to divine inspiration. These differences notwithstanding, a common temporality aligns his work with oracles: both propose seeing the present and the future in the light of the past. Herodotus' reader is invited to see the intra-Hellenic conflicts in the light of the Persian Wars just as the user of an oracle explains the present in terms of a past prediction. The link between past and present is more intense in oracles in which words from the past directly predict whereas in the *Histories* the past serves as a foil, but the *Histories* share with oracles the oblique mode of reference to events to come. The metaphors which many oracles employ correspond to the analogies through which Herodotus expresses his reflections on contemporary history.<sup>534</sup>

Let us first take a look at the hermeneutics of oracles. Some are straightforward, e.g. the Cnidians are told to stop digging a canal across the Isthmus (1.174.3-5) and Delphi reprimands the Cretans for their hesitation to support the other Greeks (7.169.2). Most of the oracles that stand at crucial junctures of the narrative, however, are quite complex; many draw on metaphorical speech – just think of the mule on the Median throne (1.55.2), the dancing Spartans (1.66.2) and the wooden wall (7.141). Barker has recently elaborated on the intricacies of interpreting oracles in the *Histories*.<sup>535</sup> While Croesus, without hesitation and consultation as well as to his own ruin, presumes to understand the meaning of the oracle that he will destroy an empire (1.54.1), the Athenians illustrate how much hermeneutic and communal effort the decoding of oracles takes: the wooden-wall oracle is not only the second oracle for which the Athenians ask, but its significance is thoroughly discussed in the assembly (7.142-3).<sup>536</sup> The official interpreters identify the wooden walls with the fortification of the Acropolis; however, Themistocles carries the day with his argument that it signifies a fleet. The danger of naïve literal interpretations of oracles is highlighted when Herodotus reports the capture of the Acropolis: among the people massacred by the Persians are those who, taking the oracle literally, had decided to stay (8.51.1).

---

<sup>533</sup> Fornara 1971a: 80 seems to imply that the comment on contemporary events is the primary intention of Herodotus. This, I think, goes too far, but it is undeniably an important aspect of the *Histories* to invite the reader to consider Athens' imperialism against the backdrop of the Eastern empires.

<sup>534</sup> On analogy in Herodotus, see Corcella 1984; Munson 2001: 45-133.

<sup>535</sup> Barker 2006. See Harrison 2000: 149 n. 101 for evidence of the general idea that oracles are in need of careful interpretation.

<sup>536</sup> Barker 2006: 19-23. He also elaborates on a second example, the oracle about the bones of Orestes (14-19).

This does not mean that it is always wrong to understand oracles literally. Besides the straight-forward oracles already mentioned, there are oracles whose literal sense is so absurd that its realization is the pun. Take, for example, a case already mentioned, the oracle that ‘the Colian women shall do their roasting with oars’ (‘Κωλιάδες δὲ γυναιῖκες ἐρετμοῖσι φρύξουσι.’ 8.96.2): a rather awkward idea which, however, comes true when the Colians use the wood of the shipwrecks from Salamis driven by winds to their coast. And yet, here as in other cases the sense of the oracle is hard to discover. Let me suggest that Croesus’ famous testing of oracles also illustrates the danger of naïve interpretations of oracular responses. In what could be dubbed a meta-oracle, Croesus sends out messengers to various oracles to enquire what he is doing on the hundredth day after their departure (1.46.2-49). Two oracles, Delphi and the oracle of Amphiaraus, are right about what he is doing – ‘he chopped up a tortoise and a lamb and cooked them together in a bronze pot with a bronze lid on the top’ (‘χελώνην καὶ ἄρνα κατακόψας ὁμοῦ ἦψεε αὐτὸς ἐν λέβητι χαλκῆν χάλκεον ἐπίθημα ἐπιθείς’, 1.48.2) - and are thus adjudged to be true oracles.<sup>537</sup> Herodotus does not elaborate on the oracle of Amphiaraus, but gives the response from Delphi (1.47.3):

I know the number of grains of sand and the measures of the sea;  
 I understand the dumb and hear the speechless.  
 The smell of tough-shelled tortoise comes to my senses,  
 cooked in bronze together with the flesh of lambs;  
 beneath it lies bronze, and bronze covers it.  
 οἶδα δ’ ἐγὼ ψάμμου τ’ ἀριθμὸν καὶ μέτρα θαλάσσης,  
 καὶ κωφοῦ συνίημι καὶ οὐ φωνεῦντος ἀκούω.  
 ὀδμή μ’ ἐς φρένας ἦλθε κραταιρίνοιο χελώνης  
 ἐφομένης ἐν χαλκῷ ἄμ’ ἄρνείοισι κρέεσσιν,  
 ἧ χαλκὸς μὲν ὑπέστρωται, χαλκὸν δ’ ἐπιέσται.

Kindt points out that Croesus only pays attention to the last three verses.<sup>538</sup> The fact that these lines only convey what Croesus knows anyway is symptomatic of his detrimental tendency to read into oracular messages the answers he desires.<sup>539</sup> His ignoring of the first two lines, which emphasize the omniscience of the oracle, illustrates his hubris which, I think, consists not only in putting the oracle to test, but also comes to the fore in the specific manner of the test: Croesus literalizes what could and will be a metaphoric oracular response – this illustrates the poor hermeneutics with which he approaches oracles otherwise.

<sup>537</sup> On the text of Delphi’s reply, see Wormell 1963.

<sup>538</sup> Kindt 2006: 39 notes that whereas Croesus only understands the second part of the oracle, conversely the readers can at first grasp only the meaning of the first part and understand the second part only when Herodotus later relates what Croesus had done.

<sup>539</sup> Cf. Barker 2006: 10-11.

Like oracles, Herodotus' comments on contemporary politics are not straightforward, but demand hermeneutic skills.<sup>540</sup> The 'father of history' does not explicitly examine the political situation of his day; instead a dense web of prolepses invites the reader to envisage the intra-Hellenic conflicts of the second half of the fifth century through patterns discovered in the history of Eastern empires. Herodotus thus uses the mode of analogy to reflect on the present and future. In the form of exempla, analogies have been arguably the most common way of engaging with the past in ancient Greece since Homer. However, while poets and orators tend to evoke past exempla in order to glorify the present, Herodotus also employs analogies to highlight and criticize questionable aspects: the suggested parallel to the development of Eastern empires, for example, implies a strong critique of Athens' *arche*.<sup>541</sup> Moreover, the *Histories* reveal how difficult it is to learn from the past; analogies are no less slippery than the metaphors which oracles deploy.<sup>542</sup> learning from his own downfall, Croesus becomes a wise advisor to Cyrus, and yet he cannot save him from his fall. Artabanus learns the right lessons from past expeditions, but under the impression of the dream finally gives up his resistance to the invasion of Greece. Historical analogies are good to think with, but they are in no way insurance against contingency and require similar hermeneutic skills as oracles.

To sum up, Herodotus brings the Persian Wars to an end in his narrative, but they do not form its ultimate vantage-point. The oblique and in some regards oracle-like way of referring to contemporary events, notably Athens' imperialism, undercuts the teleological structure of the *Histories* while simultaneously hammering home the significance of retrospect. Herodotus looks beyond the end of the Persian Wars, but refers to the intra-Hellenic conflicts, which are still in flux, only *via analogiae*.

#### IV. SOCLES' SPEECH: *HISTORIES*, ORACLES AND SHIFTING VANTAGE-POINTS

##### *Oracular comment on Athens' tyranny*

In the final section of this chapter, I shall turn to the speech of Socles. This speech furnishes us with a case in which the oracular fashion of Herodotus' comment on contemporary politics is particularly obvious. It also reveals some of the intricacies of teleology: even once events have come to an end, their meaning is not stable, but continuously shifts with new vantage-points. A linguistic

---

<sup>540</sup> Moles 1996: 270 also highlights Herodotus' oblique approach and interprets it as 'figured speech'. I doubt though that 'requirements of tact' (270) and 'the need to create interpretative challenges' (279) are the reason for Herodotus' caution.

<sup>541</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 181-7.

<sup>542</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2009b: 202-5.

peculiarity suggests Herodotus' awareness that also his own work is subject to this instability.

When the Spartans propose re-installing Hippias as tyrant in Athens, the majority of their allies are opposed to this plan, but only one, the Corinthian Socles makes a stand. In order to castigate the vices of tyranny, he narrates the story of Cypselus and Periander (5.92) and thereby encourages the other allies to speak up and vote against the Spartan proposal. Socles' speech is the longest speech in the *Histories* and, as the vast literature on it indicates, particularly complex and rich.<sup>543</sup> Scholars have pondered in particular on its appropriateness and have discussed what seem to be tensions, if not outright contradictions, between the tales narrated by Socles and the argumentative point he is trying to prove. Others have interpreted the speech as part of Herodotus' multi-faceted exploration of liberty and tyranny. Mythical elements, the folk-tale character of the stories and the underlying oral traditions have also become the object of scrutiny.

For my argument, the crucial observation is that Herodotus zooms in the later development of Athens as hegemonical power. Oracles predict that the Athenians will inflict harm on the Spartans (5.91.1), who think that 'the Attic people, given its freedom, would become a match for them, whereas if it was oppressed by tyranny, it would be weak and submissive' ('ὡς ἐλεύθερον μὲν ἐὼν τὸ γένος τὸ Ἀττικὸν ἰσόρροπον τῷ ἐωυτῶν ἂν γίνοιτο, κατεχόμενον δὲ ὑπὸ τυραννίδος ἀσθενὲς καὶ πειθαρχέεσθαι ἔτοιμον', 5.91.1) and warn the allies against the growing power of Athens (5.91.2). In his response to Socles, Hippias remarks that 'the Corinthians would be the first to miss the Pisistratidae when the time comes for them to suffer at Athenian hands' ('ἢ μὲν Κορινθίους μάλιστα πάντων ἐπιποθήσειν Πεισιστρατίδας, ὅταν σφι ἤκωσι ἡμέραι αἱ κύρια ἀνιάσθαι ὑπ' Ἀθηναίων', 5.93.1). The attention of the reader is thus drawn to the future repression coming from Athens; in particular the Corinthian's defence of Athenian interests rings ironically with a conference in 432 BCE at which the Corinthians would argue vehemently in favour of the destruction of Athens.<sup>544</sup> The polis that, thanks to the intervention of Socles, is saved from a tyrant's rule would herself set up a tyranny over the states of the Delian League. The similarity between the Corinthian tyrants and Athens' tyranny is flagged when the Spartans point out that the Athenian demos 'has raised itself upright out of difficulties' ('ἀνέκυψε', 5.91.2), echoing the name of Cypselus. In a similar vein, the oracle

---

<sup>543</sup> For surveys of the speech and scholarship on it, see, e.g., Weçowski 1996; Moles 2002, who defends the appropriateness of the speech. While Stahl 1983 and Gray 1996 read the speech as an exploration of the pitfalls of power and tyranny, van der Veen 1996: 68-89 gives it a rather Thucydidean interpretation. On the mythical elements, see Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 244-84; on the transformation of oral traditions, see Forsdyke 1999; 2002: 542-5; and for a very different view from hers: Giangliulo 2005; 2010. For references to contemporary politics, see Strasburger 1955; Raaflaub 1979: 239-41; Stadter 1992: 781-2. Without denying these references, Johnson 2001 emphasizes that Socles' argument makes good sense in its own historical context.

<sup>544</sup> The conference is reported in Thuc. 1.67-88. Cf. Strasburger 1955: 13-14; Raaflaub 1979: 240.

that Labda's son would be a 'strong lion that eats raw flesh' ('λέοντα/ καρτερόν ὠμηστήν', 5.92β.3) corresponds with Agariste's dream that she will give birth to a lion (6.131.5) and aligns Cypselus with the champion of Athenian imperialism, Pericles.<sup>545</sup>

The allusions to Athens' later carrier do not translate into a clear-cut message.<sup>546</sup> Particularly Periander's transgressions demonstrate the horrors of tyranny and, if applied to Athens, taint her rise in dark colours. On the other hand, the idea that the Greeks should have kept Athens small and weak jars with her major contribution to the liberation of Greece from the Persians emphasized by Herodotus in other passages (e.g., 7.139.5). The notion of tyranny may have yet another application in the context of the speech as first nobody dares to voice his disagreement with the Spartan plan. Seen from this perspective, Socles' narrative is also intended to shake up the allies who should not simply accept Spartan hegemony.<sup>547</sup>

Most importantly for my argument, the reference to contemporary politics which Herodotus encapsulates in the speech is oblique. In the preceding section, I have argued that Herodotus' comments on later intra-Hellenic conflicts can be fruitfully compared with the riddled messages of oracles. In the Socles episode, Herodotus uses the very voice of oracles to evoke Athens' imperialism, namely the oracle about the harm the Athenians will inflict on the Spartans (5.91.1). Its vague prolepsis is buttressed by further enigmatic references such as the lion imagery in the second Cypselus oracle that links up with Agariste's dream about her offspring: like the interpreter of an oracle, the reader has to spot the resonance of the imagery and establish a link to a later situation in which the tables have been turned. In the same vein, the etymological play (Cypselus- 'ἀνέκυψε') is reminiscent of oracular speech. Even then the meaning of the speech remains ambiguous; instead of clearly predicting something, it opens up a prism in which the present and future appear in a new light. Socles' speech thus nicely illustrates the similarity between oracular predictions and the cautious way in which Herodotus reflects on history that is still in flux.

### *The continuous proliferation of historical meaning*

Socles' account of Corinth's tyranny permits reflection on a second point that qualifies Herodotus' emphasis on teleology; it highlights that the meaning of history changes with the vantage-point even after a course of events has come to an end. For Socles and his audience, the story of Cypselus and Periander signifies the vices of tyranny as constitution of the polis. From the vantage-point of

---

<sup>545</sup> Cf. Strasburger 1955: 17; Gray 1996: 386-7. On lion imagery in Herodotus., see McNellen 1997.

<sup>546</sup> Cf. Strasburger 1955: 14 on further ambiguities.

<sup>547</sup> Thus Johnson 2001: 5-12; Moles 2007: 253-4.

Herodotus and his audience, the story has taken on additional significance as it also comments implicitly on the relation between states, especially Athens' hegemony. The past is contested ground in the *Histories*: in the controversy about the left wing at Plataea, for example, the Athenians, besides rejecting the exempla adduced by the Tegeans as ancient, counter the Tegeans' narrative of Echemus' victory over Hyllus with their help for the Heraclidae (9.27).<sup>548</sup> In Socles' speech, the shift of focus from the polis to interstate relations illustrates that not only opponents wrangle over the capital of the past, but that its meaning also changes with time. This makes Herodotus' teleological stance more complex: the meaning of historical events is not fixed by a single telos, but shifts with the vantage-point.

Let me suggest that this instability of meaning is already indicated in Socles' narrative. Hermeneutics loom large in the tales, particularly through the three oracles on the reign of the Cypselids two of which teem with metaphors. For my argument, the anecdotes on Periander are particularly interesting. In the first, Periander sends a messenger to Thrasyboulus to inquire 'what was the safest kind of government for him to establish, which would allow him to manage the state best' ('ὄντινα ἂν τρόπον ἀσφαλέστατον καταστησάμενος τῶν πρηγμάτων κάλλιστα τὴν πόλιν ἐπιτροπέοι'). Thrasyboulus takes the messenger on a walk (5.92ζ.2):

Meanwhile, every time he saw an ear of grain standing higher than the rest, he broke it off and threw it away, and he went on doing this until he had destroyed the choicest, tallest stems in the crop.

... καὶ ἐκόλουε αἰεὶ ὅκως τινὰ ἴδοι τῶν ἀσταχύων ὑπερέχοντα, κολούων δὲ ἔρριπτε, ἐς ὃ τοῦ ληίου τὸ κάλλιστόν τε καὶ βαθύτατον διέφθειρε τρόπῳ τοιούτῳ.

Back in Corinth, the messenger reports what he has seen and Periander 'understood Thrasyboulus' actions and realized that he had been advising him to kill outstanding citizens, and from then on he treated his people with unremitting brutality.' ('συνεῖς τὸ ποιηθὲν καὶ νόῳ σχῶν ὥς οἱ ὑπετίθετο Θρασύβουλος τοὺς ὑπερόχους τῶν ἀστῶν φονεύειν, ἐνθαῦτα δὴ πᾶσαν κακότητα ἐξέφαινε ἐς τοὺς πολιήτας', 5.92η.1).

The enacted metaphor which juxtaposes corn with citizens is clear<sup>549</sup> and it is taken for granted by interpreters that Periander succeeds in decoding Thrasyboulus' message. Let me argue though that it has further significance which is only revealed in retrospect. For this, we have to take a brief look at the later course of Periander's life which Herodotus reports in 3.50-3: Periander kills his wife. Her father then asks her two sons if they know who is the murderer of

<sup>548</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 173-9.

<sup>549</sup> See, however, Forsdyke 1999 who shows traces of how an originally aristocratic tale has been adapted to a democratic context.

their mother. Only the younger, brighter son, Lycophron, takes these words to heart and consequently refuses to speak to his father. Periander finally ships his unrelenting son off to Corcyra. On the threshold of old age, however, seeing that his older son is not suited to take over the rule, Periander tries to effect a rapprochement, but Lycophron shows his messenger the cold shoulder and, when Periander sends his daughter, responds that he will not return until his father is dead. He finally accepts the proposal to take over the tyranny of Corinth on the condition that Periander leave the city and settle down in Corcyra. However, when the Corcyrians learn about this plan, they kill Lycophron to prevent the arrival of Periander.

The Periander *logos* involves a broad cast of family members, including the maternal grandfather as well as the two sons and one daughter. Periander kills his wife and causes indirectly the death of the only son that could succeed him; he thereby brings the dynasty of the Cypselids to an end after only two generations. Given the common agricultural imagery for human reproduction,<sup>550</sup> it is not too fanciful to link Thrasyboulus' enacted metaphor with the ruin of his own family. Besides having normative force and advising Periander how to deal with the Corinthians, the cutting of the corn also works descriptively and prefigures the killing of members of his family.<sup>551</sup> A detail, the cutting of *all* ears, ties in nicely with this interpretation: the barren field represents the end of the Cypselid dynasty. This meaning can only be grasped in retrospect though and thereby illustrates the impact of the vantage-point for the meaning of the past. Only Periander's death and the end of his dynasty uncover the further significance of Thrasyboulus' cutting of corn.

The second Periander tale may yield similar insight into the nature of historical meaning.<sup>552</sup> When Periander inquires at the Acheron *nekromanteion* about where the treasure of a guest-friend is to be found, the dead Melissa refuses to help him because 'she was cold and naked; the clothes Periander had buried her in were no use, the ghost explained, unless they were burnt.' ('ρίγοῦν τε γὰρ καὶ εἶναι γυμνή· τῶν γὰρ οἱ συγκατέθαψε εἰμάτων ὄφελος εἶναι οὐδὲν οὐ κατακαυθέντων.' 5.92η.2). She seals her response with a *symbolaion*, cryptically saying that Periander has put the loaves of bread into a cold oven. Again, Periander has no problem decoding the riddle: 'Now, this coded information convinced Periander, because he had had sex with Melissa's corpse ...' ('πιστὸν γὰρ οἱ ἦν τὸ συμβόλαιον, ὃς νεκρῶ ἐούση Μελίσση ἐμίγη.' 5.92η.3). He strips all Corinthian women of their clothes and burns the garments. The success of

<sup>550</sup> See the formula παίδων ἐπ' ἀρότρῳ γνησίῳν (I.G. 14.1615) in the Athenian marriage contract and such passages as Aesch. *Eum.* 658-61; Soph. *Ant.* 569; *OT* 1255-7; Eur. *Tro.* 134-6. Cf. DuBois 1988: 39-85.

<sup>551</sup> Moles 2002: 256 suggests that it corresponds with the castration of 300 noble youths from Corcyra that Periander attempts in 3.48.

<sup>552</sup> For a semiotic analysis of the tale, see Pellizer 1993.

Periander's hermeneutics is confirmed subsequently when the ghost of Melissa reveals the location of the treasure.

I nonetheless think that the riddle of the *symbolaion* has further significance. Its metaphor is metonymically linked to the metaphor of Thrasyboulus' walk with the messenger: bread is made of wheat.<sup>553</sup> It refers not only back to the necrophiliac act, but, taking up the imagery and continuing the deeper meaning of Thrasyboulus' message, also anticipates the end of the dynasty. In this interpretation, the loaves signify not the phallus, but the offspring: the older brother is too dumb to rule and Lycophron will die before he is able to take over the tyranny just as the loaves will not be baked in a cold oven. The oven is not only particularly interesting for psychoanalytical readings,<sup>554</sup> but also resonates with the preceding tale of Cypselus: the cold oven which metaphorically signifies that Periander will not have a successor contrasts with the literal box in which Labda saves Cypselus and thereby juxtaposes the rise and fall of the dynasty.

As with the corn, only Socles' audience, not Periander, can grasp this meaning of the loaves which is not revealed until the Cypselids' reign comes to an end. The additional significance that the cryptic messages to Periander have for Socles and his listeners mirrors the new meaning which Socles' lecture on tyranny receives for Herodotus and his readers in light of contemporary politics. While it is crucial to wait for the end, as Solon has it, Socles' speech illustrates that the *telos* does not freeze the meaning of history. New vantage-points continuously elicit new significance from events that are already past. Lives, reigns and events may come to an end; their meaning, however, continues to proliferate.

### *Historicizing the Histories*

Stadter has emphasized the meta-historical quality of Socles' speech. Unlike other speakers in the *Histories*, Socles does not analyze the situation in theoretical terms, but makes his point through narrative: 'The speech suggests a model for responding to Herodotus' *Histories*.'<sup>555</sup> This observation can be expanded: like the *Histories*, Socles' speech features direct speech, oracles and episodes that interact in multiple ways. Moles even advances the claim that 'Socles isn't really Socles: he's Herodotus ... Socles, then, speaks with unique "author-ity".'<sup>556</sup> I do not see the point of such an identification of Socles with Herodotus, which does not do justice to the complexity of their juxtaposition, but the similarities between their narratives makes a meta-historical interpretation very attractive indeed. There are both differences and similarities: while Socles

---

<sup>553</sup> Cf. DuBois 1988: 113; Gray 1996: 379.

<sup>554</sup> For a psychoanalytical reading of the oven in Herodotus and other ancient authors, see DuBois 1988: 110-29.

<sup>555</sup> Stadter 1992: 781-2.

<sup>556</sup> Moles 2007: 265.

orally addresses an audience trying to influence a decision, Herodotus has written the *Histories* without such a clearly defined pragmatic goal. At the same time, the openness of meaning which, I have argued, comes to the fore in and within Socles' speech applies *a fortiori* to the *Histories* which are less defined by a specific context. That its narrative appears in a new light seen against the backdrop of post-Herodotean events is illustrated by Moles' reflection on the reaction of the Spartans to Socles' speech and their later attitude towards Athens: 'It would be interesting to run Herodotus' account of the events of 506-4 against the year 403.'<sup>557</sup>

Such considerations are more than idle speculation. A linguistic peculiarity indicates Herodotus' awareness that his own work is part of history and therefore subject to shifting significance. Herodotus tends to use the present tense when he reports on customs, places and material objects, but particularly in the case of perishable objects he combines an adverbial phrase like καὶ ἐς ἐμέ with the imperfect.<sup>558</sup> Most striking is the programmatic closure of the proem (1.5.3-4):

... I will cover minor and major human settlements equally, because most of those which were important in the past have diminished in significance by now, and those which were great in my own time were small in times past. I will mention both equally because I know that human happiness never remains long in the same place.

... ὁμοίως σμικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα ἄστυα ἀνθρώπων ἐπεξιών. τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε, τὰ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμεῦ ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρὰ. τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ὧν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τῶντῳ μένουσαν ἐπιμνήσομαι ἀμφοτέρων ὁμοίως.

While the future forms project the image of an author who is in the process of writing, the imperfect in τὰ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμεῦ ἦν μεγάλα takes the perspective of the reader. Naiden, who surprisingly does not take into account this passage, aptly compares Herodotus' use of the prospective imperfect with the epistolary imperfect as both tenses express the future stance of the receiver. However, 'unlike a letter, the text of Herodotus has a future that is indefinite, perhaps infinite ... As such, it is comparable to objects envisioned as permanent and in particular to the "great works" that Herodotus says should not "lack renown".'<sup>559</sup> There is, I think, a close parallel in the very kind of memorials with which Herodotus implicitly juxtaposes his work in the proem: in inscriptions, we find the adverb ποτέ applied to recent events.<sup>560</sup> An epigram placed next to the Council

<sup>557</sup> Moles 2007: 266.

<sup>558</sup> Cf. Naiden 1999.

<sup>559</sup> Naiden 1999: 142.

<sup>560</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 78-9.

Hall on the Metroon, for one, praises the men who ‘once upon a time,/ were the first to stop those who ruled with unjust laws,/ putting their own lives at risk’ (‘ΠΟΤΕ τοὺς ἀδίκους/ θεσμοῖς ἄρξαντας πόλεως πρῶτοι καταπαύειν/ ἤρξαν, κίνδυνον σώμασιν ἀράμενοι’, Aeschin. 3.190). The inscription was installed less than a year after the event,<sup>561</sup> but the ποτέ envisions it from the stance of future readers like the prospective imperfect in Herodotus.

Whether we compare the prospective imperfect with the epistolary imperfect or the inscriptional ποτέ, it historicizes the *Histories*. Rösler has linked this to the new medium of writing, as ‘this would have been quite impossible in an oral delivery’.<sup>562</sup> From my perspective, it is noteworthy that Herodotus does not consider his viewpoint as absolute, but anticipates future vantage-points which, if we follow up the meta-historical reflection of the Socles’ speech, will bestow new significance on the narrative of the *Histories*.

Herodotus’ take on hindsight is more complex than it may first seem. The *Histories* reflect on the value of retrospect and themselves feature a strong teleology. This teleology, however, is made made dynamic not only by oblique references to contemporary politics, but also by the insight into the generation of new meaning through the permanently shifting vantage-point. While this insight is only implicit in Herodotus’ narrative, it becomes the object of explicit reflection for the author to whom we turn next: Polybius.

---

<sup>561</sup> See Raubitschek 1941: 294-5.

<sup>562</sup> Rösler 2002: 92, a condensed repetition of Rösler 1991.

## 7. Polybius, *Histories*

Since antiquity readers have complained about Polybius' cumbersome style of writing, but in the rather sombre picture that most scholars paint of Hellenistic historiography his virtues shine brightly.<sup>563</sup> On account of his methodological severity, he is often hailed as a, if not the, successor of Thucydides.<sup>564</sup> Concerning the futures past, however, Polybius deviates from the model of Thucydides. In his attempt to make the past present, Thucydides is at pains to downplay hindsight and is very reticent with narratorial interventions. Of Polybius' history only the first five books and excerpts of the other thirty-five have survived, but what we have sufficiently illustrates a strong teleological design (I), together with an awareness of its intricacies (II). Besides an emphasis on retrospect, perhaps the most conspicuous narratorial persona in ancient historiography impedes the experiential quality of Polybius' account (III). At first glance, even his numerous methodological reflections seem to oppose mimetic narratives, but a closer look reveals that mimesis has its place in Polybius' theorizing (IV). Accordingly, there are vivid passages that, despite the teleological design and the narrator's strong presence, endow Polybius' narrative with at least some experiential appeal (V). Nonetheless, it is worth noting the discrepancy from Thucydides whose mimetic aspirations were taken up rather by other Hellenistic historians, albeit differently accentuated (VI).

### I. TELEOLOGY: HISTORY AND NARRATIVE

Herodotus, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, highlights the significance of retrospect - history can only be written when events have come to an end. At the same time, the *pater historiae* reflects on the intricacies of teleologies, which are easily challenged by shifting vantage-points. Polybius shares with Herodotus the tendency to favour retrospect; indeed, he unabashedly capitalizes on the advantage of hindsight. I will first elaborate on the prominence of the telos in Polybius' presentation of the past and then consider it against the background of Aristotle's *Poetics* and the modern notion of history. Although Polybius rhetorically blurs a clear borderline between historical events and their narrative presentation, it can be shown that his teleological view leads away from the perspective of the historical agents and has been faulted for misrepresenting

---

<sup>563</sup> For an early critique of Polybius' style, see Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 4, who ranks him among the authors whose work nobody can read to the end. For a survey of the critical views of Hellenistic historiography, see Marincola 2003: 286-8. On the other hand, Strasburger 1966: 78-96 offers a less negative view. For an attempt to contextualize Polybius more strongly in the mainstream of Hellenistic historiography, see Clarke 1999: 73-4, who emphasizes his geographical, ethnographical and cultural interests.

<sup>564</sup> See, e.g., Momigliano 1990: 59; 47. See, however, also Schepens 2005: 146 n. 11 for a more critical view and Rood 2012 for a new assessment of Polybius' debt to Thucydides.

the past. That being said, as we will see in the next section, like Herodotus Polybius is aware of the issues of teleology and even goes for a more radical solution.

### *The telos in universal historiography*

The significance of the end for Polybius' historical approach comes to the fore in a reflection on beginnings (5.32):<sup>565</sup>

For the ancients, saying that the beginning is half of the whole, advised that in all matters the greatest care should be taken to make a good beginning. And although this dictum is thought to be exaggerated, in my own opinion it falls short of the truth. One may indeed confidently affirm that the beginning is not merely half of the whole, but reaches as far as the end. For how is it possible to begin a thing well without having present in one's mind the completion of one's project, and without knowing its scope, its relation to other things, and the object for which one undertakes it? And again how is it possible to sum up events properly without referring to their beginnings, and understanding whence, how, and why the final situation was brought about? So we should think that beginnings do not only reach half way, but reach to the end, and both writers and readers of a general history should pay the greatest attention to them. And this I shall endeavour to do.

οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀρχαῖοι τὴν ἀρχὴν ἥμισυ τοῦ παντός εἶναι φάσκοντες μεγίστην παρήνουν ποιεῖσθαι σπουδὴν ἐν ἐκάστοις ὑπὲρ τοῦ καλῶς ἄρξασθαι· δοκοῦντες δὴ λέγειν ὑπερβολικῶς ἑλλιπέστερόν μοι φαίνονται τῆς ἀληθείας εἰρηκέναι. θαρρῶν γὰρ ἂν τις εἴπειεν οὐχ ἥμισυ τὴν ἀρχὴν εἶναι τοῦ παντός, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὸ τέλος διατείνειν. πῶς γὰρ ἄρξασθαί τινος καλῶς οἶόν τε μὴ προπεριλαβόντα τῷ νῶ τὴν συντέλειαν τῆς ἐπιβολῆς μηδὲ γινώσκοντα ποῦ καὶ πρὸς τί καὶ τίνος χάριν ἐπιβάλλεται τοῦτο ποιεῖν; πῶς δὲ πάλιν οἶόν τε συγκεφαλαιώσασθαι πράγματα δεόντως μὴ συναναφέροντα τὴν ἀρχὴν πόθεν ἢ πῶς ἢ διὰ τί πρὸς τὰς ἐνεστώσας ἀφίκται πράξεις; διόπερ οὐχ ἕως τοῦ μέσου νομίζοντας διατείνειν τὰς ἀρχάς, ἀλλ' ἕως τοῦ τέλους, πλείστην περὶ ταύτας ποιητέον σπουδὴν καὶ τοὺς λέγοντας καὶ τοὺς ἀκούοντας περὶ τῶν ὄλων. ὃ δὴ καὶ νῦν ἡμεῖς πειρασόμεθα ποιεῖν.

Polybius trumps the proverb in order to emphasize the importance of the beginning, but the argument also reveals the prominence that the end has for his historical thinking: the assumption that the beginning reaches to the end implies

---

<sup>565</sup> On the significance of the beginning in historiographic accounts, see also 3.48.9.

that the end is contained in the beginning. While Herodotus has his characters muse about the significance of the ending, Polybius proclaims himself that the beginning can only be viewed from the vantage-point of the end. Polybius' reflection highlights the importance of teleology for historical explanation: whoever wants to explain a course of events, needs to know where these events are heading. Without having the telos before his eyes, the historian cannot explain why history followed the path it took. Historiography thus leads historians necessarily beyond the perspective of the agents; only retrospect allows them to grasp the larger picture.

In accordance with the thesis that the beginning encapsulates the ending, Polybius flags the telos of his history, that is, Rome's dominion over the world, prominently in his proem (1.1.5-6):<sup>566</sup>

For who is so worthless or indolent as not to wish to know by what means and under what system of polity the Romans in less than fifty-three years have succeeded in subjecting nearly the whole inhabited world to their sole government – a thing unique in history? Or who again is there so passionately devoted to other spectacles or studies as to regard anything as of greater moment than the acquisition of this knowledge?

τίς γὰρ οὕτως ὑπάρχει φαῦλος ἢ ῥάθυμος ἀνθρώπων ὃς οὐκ ἂν βούλοιο γνῶναι πῶς καὶ τίνι γένοι πολιτείας ἐπικρατηθέντα σχεδὸν ἅπαντα τὰ κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην οὐχ ὅλοις πεντήκοντα καὶ τρισὶν ἔτεσιν ὑπὸ μίαν ἀρχὴν ἔπεσε τὴν Ῥωμαίων, ὃ πρότερον οὐχ εὐρίσκεται γεγονός, τίς δὲ πάλιν οὕτως ἐκπαθῆς πρὸς τι τῶν ἄλλων θεαμάτων ἢ μαθημάτων ὃς προουργιαίτερον ἂν τι ποιήσαιτο τῆσδε τῆς ἐμπειρίας;<sup>567</sup>

The rhetorical questions spell out the link between retrospect and historical explanation on which Polybius muses in abstract terms in the passage quoted above: it is his goal to explain Rome's dominion which forms the telos of his account. The forceful teleological design is remarkable given that Polybius claims to be the first universal historian after Ephorus.<sup>568</sup> One of the many problems that make universal historiography as tricky as it is fascinating is the end: while historical monographs easily find closure in the death of a hero or the downfall of an empire, such clearly defined points are harder to find in universal

<sup>566</sup> Rood 2007b: 177 notes that neither Herodotus nor Thucydides nor Xenophon starts his work by mentioning its end.

<sup>567</sup> For further references to the telos in Polybius, see 1.2.7; 1.4.1; 3.1.4; 3.1.9; 3.2.6; 3.3.9; 3.4.2; 3.118.9; 6.2.3; 8.2.3; 29.8.7.

<sup>568</sup> 5.33.2. In 2.37.4, Polybius even claims that he is the first 'to describe the events occurring in all known parts' ('ὁμοῦ δὲ τὰς ἐν τοῖς γνωριζομένοις μέρεσι τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀναγράφειν'). On Polybius as universal historian, see Hartog 2010; Sheridan 2010. On universal historiography in antiquity, see besides the contributions to Liddel and Fear 2010 also Alonso-Núñez 2002; Marincola 2007a.

historiography. Polybius, on the other hand, not only endows the telos with much prominence, but also declares that it is the events defining the telos of his narrative which necessitate a universal approach (1.4.1):

For what gives my work its peculiar quality, and what is most remarkable in the present age, is this. Fortune has guided almost all the affairs of the world in one direction and has forced them to incline towards one and the same end; a historian should likewise bring before his readers under one synoptical view the operations by which she has accomplished her general purpose.

τὸ γὰρ τῆς ἡμετέρας πραγματείας ἴδιον καὶ τὸ θαυμάσιον τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς καιρῶν τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὅτι, καθάπερ ἡ τύχη σχεδὸν ἅπαντα τὰ τῆς οἰκουμένης πράγματα πρὸς ἓν ἔκλινε μέρος καὶ πάντα νεύειν ἠνάγκασε πρὸς ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν σκοπὸν, οὕτως καὶ (δεῖ) διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας ὑπὸ μίαν σύνοψιν ἀγαγεῖν τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι τὸν χειρισμὸν τῆς τύχης, ᾧ κέχρηται πρὸς τὴν τῶν ὅλων πραγμάτων συντέλειαν.

Since in the 140<sup>th</sup> Olympiad the various affairs of the world have become entangled with one another, they can only be rendered in the form of universal historiography. Ἱστορίαι κατὰ μέρη fail to do justice to a world in which politics is not local anymore, but part of a larger scene. The telos of Rome's rise thus not only permeates Polybius' history, but also determines its specific form.

#### *Polybius' teleology, Aristotle's Poetics and German historicism*

We can elucidate Polybius' teleological view of history by envisaging it against the background of Aristotle's *Poetics* and the modern concept of history. In a much-quoted passage, Polybius reflects on the structure of the events covered in his narrative (3.1.4-5):

The subject I have undertaken to treat, the how, when, and wherefore of the subjection of all known parts of the world to the dominion of Rome, is a unity, and it has a recognized beginning, a fixed duration, and an end which is not a matter of dispute. Therefore, I think, it will be advantageous to give a brief prefatory survey of the chief parts of this whole from the beginning to the end.

ὄντος γὰρ ἐνὸς ἔργου καὶ θαύματος ἐνὸς τοῦ σύμπαντος, ὑπὲρ οὗ γράφειν ἐπικεχειρήκαμεν, τοῦ πῶς καὶ πότε καὶ διὰ τί πάντα τὰ γνωριζόμενα μέρη τῆς οἰκουμένης ὑπὸ τὴν Ῥωμαίων δυναστείαν ἐγένετο, τούτου δ' ἔχοντος καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν γνωριζομένην καὶ τὸν χρόνον ὠρισμένον καὶ τὴν συντέλειαν ὁμολογουμένην, χρήσιμον ἡγούμεθ' εἶναι καὶ τὸ περὶ τῶν μεγίστων ἐν αὐτῷ μερῶν, ὅσα μεταξὺ

κεῖται τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ τοῦ τέλους, κεφαλαιωδῶς ἐπιμνησθῆναι καὶ προεκθέσθαι.

Commentators have been struck by the echo of the reflections on plot in Aristotle's *Poetics*. It is hard to ascertain whether Polybius knew the *Poetics* or whether he drew on some Hellenistic reception of Aristotle, but even if we exclude any reference to Aristotelian thought at all, the similarity warrants a comparison.<sup>569</sup> Aristotle elaborates on the significance of unity and adduces beginning, middle and end as the three basic parts of tragedy.<sup>570</sup> Polybius' emphasis on the end in particular is reminiscent of the prominence of the end in the *Poetics*. The parallel is peculiar: Aristotle's discussion of unity is devoted to poetry which he strictly separates from, and declares superior to, historiography (ch. 9). Polybius, on the other hand, privileges historiography over tragedy whose influence can detract from the use of history (2.56.10-12). Hartog puts it pointedly: 'Polybius refuted him [i.e. Aristotle], or rather jostled and plagiarised him, by turning Aristotle's own weapons against him.'<sup>571</sup> And yet, even if we follow Hartog in the assumption that Polybius knew the *Poetics*, it is important to keep in mind that the similarity with Aristotle's theory of tragedy concerns the matter of unity, whereas his critique of tragedy goes against the tendency to evoke pity at any price.

In light of the parallel between Polybius' reflection on unity and Aristotle's analysis of tragedy, some theatrical metaphors are striking. Polybius is fond of the image of *tyche* as a stage-director. When he reports, for example, that Philip killed not only many Macedonian men, but also their sons, he adds: '... Fortune as if of set purpose bringing their misfortunes on the stage at one and the same time' ('... τῆς τύχης ὡσπερ ἐπίτηδες ἀναβιβάζουσῃς ἐπὶ σκηνῆν ἐν ἐνὶ καιρῷ τὰς τούτων συμφορὰς.' 23.10.16). The image of *tyche* as stage-director implies viewing history as a drama, a concept that seems highly appropriate for a historian who reflects on his work in terms very similar to those employed by Aristotle for tragedy. The image is drawn out further in a speech of a character.<sup>572</sup>

---

<sup>569</sup> For the thesis that Polybius was directly influenced by the *Poetics*, see, e.g., von Scala 1890: 126-53; Williams 2007. Ziegler 1952: 1468; 1470, on the other hand, argues against the possibility that Polybius knew the *Poetics*. Halliwell 2002: 263-4 observes that the *Poetics* was not a prominent text in the Hellenistic period. Hoffmann 2002: 210-11 makes a case for an indirect reception. The question is ultimately linked to the debate on a tragic/Peripatetic school of historiography for which see below n. ???

<sup>570</sup> The three parts are defined in 1450b26-30.

<sup>571</sup> Hartog 2010: 37.

<sup>572</sup> Cf. Walbank 1957-79: *ad* 11.5.8 on the image of *tyche* as stage-director: 'Here it seems to reflect P[olybius]'s vocabulary rather than Thrasycrates' own words.' 29.19.2 is very similar. See also 1.4.5 ('ἀγωνισμᾶ') with Walbank 1945: 9 n. 1; 2.35.5 ('ἐπεισόδια τῆς τύχης'); 23.10.12, where, however, the reference to the δρᾶμα staged by *tyche* may belong to the excerptor (cf. Walbank 1957-79: *ad loc.*) and fr. 212. For further theatre metaphors in Polybius, see Wunderer 1909: 53-5.

at an Aetolian congress in 207 BCE, an orator, identified as Thrasycrates by a note on the margin of the manuscript, appeals to his audience (11.5.8-9):

This was not formerly understood, but now the case of the people of Oreum and that of the unhappy Aeginetans have exposed you to all, Fortune having of set purpose as it were mounted your mistake on the stage. Such was the beginning of this war, such are already its consequences, and what must we expect its end to be, if all falls out entirely as you wish? Surely the beginning of terrible disaster to all the Greeks.

καὶ ταῦτα πρότερον μὲν ἠγνοεῖτο· νυνὶ δὲ διὰ τῆς ὤρειτων καὶ τῶν  
ταλαιπώρων Αἰγινητῶν ἅπασι γέγονατε καταφανεῖς, τῆς τύχης  
ὥσπερ ἐπίτηδες ἐπὶ τὴν ἐξώστραν ἀναβιβαζούσης τὴν ὑμετέραν  
ἄγνοιαν. ἢ μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴ τοῦ πολέμου καὶ τὰ νῦν ἤδη συμβαίνοντα  
τοιαῦτ' ἐστί· τὸ δὲ τέλος, ἂν ὅλως πάντα κατὰ νοῦν ὑμῖν χωρήσῃ,  
ποῖόν τι δεῖ προσδοκᾶν; ἄρ' οὐ κακῶν ἀρχὴν μεγάλων ἅπασι τοῖς  
Ἕλλησιν;

Polybius does not speak *sua voce*, but it is noteworthy that he has the Aetolian speaker link the dramatic imagery to a reference to the beginning and ending of a chain of events, highlighting the very aspect in which his own reflections are reminiscent of Aristotle's analysis of drama. Even if we have to leave open the question of whether or not Polybius refers to the *Poetics*, these passages demonstrate that the notion of drama helps Polybius to conceptualize the unity of the history he was writing about. The parallels to the *Poetics* highlight the force of Polybius' teleological design: Ricoeur's use of the neat order of Aristotle's *mythos* as counterbalance to the discordance of our experiences illustrates the central role of teleology in the *Poetics*.<sup>573</sup>

Polybius' teleological view of history can also be set in relief by the concept of history that emerged around 1800 in Germany. At first sight, Polybius' use of *historie* resembles the modern term of history: he calls not only the historical account but also the events themselves *historie* (1.3.4):<sup>574</sup>

But ever since this date history has been an organic whole, and the affairs of Italy and Libya have been intertwined with those of Greece and Asia, all leading up to one end.

ἀπὸ δὲ τούτων τῶν καιρῶν οἰοεὶ σωματοειδῆ συμβαίνει γίνεσθαι  
τὴν ἱστορίαν, συμπλέκεσθαι τε τὰς Ἰταλικὰς καὶ Λιβυκὰς πράξεις ταῖς

---

<sup>573</sup> Ricoeur 1983-5: I: 66-104.

<sup>574</sup> See also 6.58.1; 8.2.11; 12.25a3. On the early history of *historie*, see Snell 1924: 59-71, who, however, does not pay sufficient attention to the difference between *res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum*.

τε κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν καὶ ταῖς Ἑλληνικαῖς καὶ πρὸς ἓν γίνεσθαι τέλος τὴν ἀναφορὰν ἀπάντων.

The use of the same term for *res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum* is reminiscent of the coinage of the modern term ‘Geschichte’ which, I think, is still fundamental for our historical thinking.<sup>575</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century, ‘Geschichte’ was not used as a plural anymore, but in the singular, embracing all events as belonging to one process. Moreover, in addition to this, ‘Geschichte’ came also to signify their account. In the words of Hegel: ‘History encompasses in our language the objective as well as the subjective aspect and signifies both *historiam rerum gestarum* and the *res gestas* themselves.’<sup>576</sup> The parallel in Polybius’ take on the past is striking: he inversely applies the term for historiography also to the events themselves so that, just as the singular ‘Geschichte’, *historie* signifies both *res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum*.

The semantic parallel between Polybius and the Historicists seems to be due to similar concepts of history: the idea of progress, then, toned down somewhat, of development, was crucial for the coinage of the term ‘Geschichte’ just as Polybius’ history is under the sway of teleology. Significantly, the reference to history as *res gestae* just quoted occurs in a sentence that elaborates on the telos. Furthermore, Polybius’ use of organic metaphors for history, for example *σωματοειδής*, is reminiscent of Herder’s view of history as plant-like.<sup>577</sup> There are also parallels for the theatre metaphors popular with Polybius in some of the works presenting the new idea of history in the late eighteenth century. Carl Renatus Hausen, for instance, writes in *Von dem Einfluß der Geschichte auf das menschliche Herz*: ‘Indeed, examples of vice, which appear in the theatre of history, in various disguise just as in the theatre of the world, affect the human heart.’<sup>578</sup>

The striking similarities though should not conceal important differences which throw into relief Polybius’ view. The Historicist focus on developments and the uniqueness of epochs forcefully challenged the topos *historia magistra vitae*.<sup>579</sup> To quote Hegel again: ‘The instructive aspect of history is different from the reflections resulting from it. No case is like the other ... Experience and history teach however that people and governments have never learnt from history

---

<sup>575</sup> See Koselleck 1975; 1985.

<sup>576</sup> Hegel <sup>5</sup>1955 [1837]: 164: ‘Geschichte vereinigt in unserer Sprache die objective sowohl und subjective Seite und bedeutet ebensowohl die *historiam rerum gestarum* als die *res gestas* selbst.’

<sup>577</sup> See 1.3.4; 14.12.5: *σωματοειδής*. See also 1.6.3: *συναύξησης* (cf. Walbank 1957-79: *ad* 1.3.4). Lorenz 1931: 87 n. 92; 99 n. 227 and Walbank 1975: 198-9 argue that Polybius takes the metaphor of *σωματοειδής* from Hellenistic literary theory, but their earliest evidence is Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

<sup>578</sup> Hausen 1779: 8: ‘Eben so stark warden freylich auch die Beyspiele des Lasters, welches auf dem Theater der Geschichte, eben so, als auf dem Theater der Welt, in mannigfaltigen Gestalten verkleidet, erscheint, auf das menschliche Herz würken.’ See also Weishaupt 1788: 228.

<sup>579</sup> Cf. Koselleck 1985: 21-38.

or acted in accordance with the lessons to be derived from history.<sup>580</sup> Polybius also notes progress in the arts and sciences and emphasizes the uniqueness of Rome's ascent to hegemony.<sup>581</sup> And yet, this view does not lead him to question the exemplary use of the past; on the contrary, he is convinced that his readers have a great deal to learn from his account.<sup>582</sup>

This discrepancy is linked to a more profound difference. The modern notion of history embraces all times and places as belonging to one process: 'Above the stories there is history', as Droysen writes in his *Historik*.<sup>583</sup> Polybius, on the other hand, sees the *symploke* as a specific historical development that defines the time after the 140<sup>th</sup> Olympiad.<sup>584</sup> There was no unified chain of events before the various threads of world history were interwoven under the auspices of Rome's hegemonic aspirations. And Polybius also envisages a time after the Roman Empire which, it may be conjectured, could witness a dispersal of the *symploke* (3.4.7).<sup>585</sup> The telos of Polybius' history is thus far more limited than the telos which led to the construction of the modern notion of history.<sup>586</sup> Even though Polybius applies *historie* in the singular to *res gestae*, it does not imply the same degree of abstraction as the Historicist concept of history. The instance behind the specific events in Polybius is *tyche*, a rather unstable concept that, oscillating from goddess to abstract notion of chance does not lend itself to generating the unity underlying the modern notion of history.<sup>587</sup>

#### *The gap between res gestae and historia rerum gestarum*

---

<sup>580</sup> Hegel 1955 [1837]: 19: 'Das Bildende der Geschichte ist etwas anderes als die daraus hergenommenen Reflexionen. Kein Fall ist dem andern ganz ähnlich ... Was die Erfahrung aber und die Geschichte lehren, ist dies, daß Völker und Regierungen niemals etwas aus der Geschichte gelernt und nach Lehren, die aus derselben zu ziehen gewesen wären, gehandelt haben.'

<sup>581</sup> On the progress in arts and sciences, see, e.g., 9.2.5 (cf. Schepens 1990a: 42 n. 10 for more passages); On uniqueness, see, e.g., 1.1.5.

<sup>582</sup> For a comparison of the modern critique of historical exempla with their intricacies in Herodotus and Thucydides, see Grethlein 2011a.

<sup>583</sup> Droysen 1977 [1868]: 354: 'Über den Geschichten ist die Geschichte'.

<sup>584</sup> On Polybius' notion of a *symploke*, see Walbank 1975.

<sup>585</sup> See also Walbank 1975: 211-12 and 2002: 288-91 on hints at Roman decline in book 6. Meier 1975: 605 n. 58 even suggests that the *ταραχή* and *κίνησις* mentioned in 3.4.12 come after the end of the unity of world history. Against this, I will argue below that the tumults only seemed to end Rome's rule, but still fall under the *symploke*.

<sup>586</sup> This may also help to illuminate the relation between the reflection on the history of constitutions in book 6 and the rest of Polybius' history. Momigliano 1977: 188-9 claims that the cyclical view of history underlying the *anakyklosis* is strictly to be separated from Polybius' reconstruction of the past on which it has no influence (see also Cornell, Fear and Liddel 2010: 4). He ignores, however, that book 6 featured an account of the emergence of Rome's mixed constitution (for a cautious reconstruction of this account, see Walbank 2002: 283-8). Due to the limited nature of the telos of Polybius' history, there is not necessarily a contradiction between teleological and cyclical views of history. The mixed constitution makes Rome a special case and Polybius hints at her decline (see n. ??? above). On the relation between the notions of telos and *kyklos* in Polybius, see Petzold 1977.

<sup>587</sup> See, e.g., Walbank 2007.

While the parallels with the Aristotelian *Poetics* underline the force which the teleological design of Polybius' history has, its comparison with the modern concept of history reveals that it does not express an abstract notion of history, but a specific chain of events. The use of *historie* for both *res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum* is part of Polybius' rhetoric of blurring the borderline between events and their account. Another term that illustrates this rhetoric is the word ἐπιβολή: in 1.3.9, for instance, Polybius writes about the Romans who 'embarked on that enterprise which has made them lords over land and sea in our part of the world' ('πρὸς ταύτας ὥρμησαν τὰς ἐπιβολάς, δι' ὧν καὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ τῆς θαλάττης τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐγένοντο πάσης ἐγκρατεῖς'). Not much later, in 1.4.2, he states: 'Indeed it was this chiefly that invited and encouraged me to undertake the enterprise of history.' ('καὶ γὰρ τὸ προκαλεσάμενον ἡμᾶς καὶ παρορμησαν πρὸς τὴν ἐπιβολὴν τῆς ἱστορίας μάλιστα τοῦτο γέγονεν ...'). This may not be a pointed echo, but the use of the same word for the activities of historical agent and historian aligns *historia rerum gestarum* with *res gestae*. Polybius' account seems to be modelled directly on the course of the events. The blending together of history and narrative also extends to the telos. Besides being the telos of Polybius' narrative, Rome's dominion over the world is the goal that according to Polybius the Romans pursued since the end of the Second Punic War.<sup>588</sup> Thus, Polybius' teleology seems to be encapsulated in the historical action itself, the historian's telos being prefigured in the agents' goals.

Polybius' self-fashioning, however, should not blind us to the fact that the teleological structure creates a strong discrepancy between his account and the past as experienced by the characters. The strong retrospective stance significantly slants Polybius' account. This is most obvious in his view of Roman imperialism with which many modern historians disagree.<sup>589</sup> To give a specific example, in an influential article Alfred Heuß argues that Polybius gets the historical background of Rome's first major military encounter with Carthage wrong. Besides making Carthage more aggressive than it was and exaggerating its power, particularly in Spain, he anachronistically construes a geopolitical dichotomy: 'We rather have to see them [i.e. Polybius' reflections on the year 264 BCE] as the attempt to motivate the great war with Carthage, which resulted from the Roman decision in these days, already in its inception as it appeared in light of its exclusive importance and of the experiences to which it would lead in Rome as well as particularly of the way in which it was finally ended. The arguments are but a justification *ex eventu*, and the lucidity and persuasive force they still carry at first

<sup>588</sup> E.g., 1.3.6. For further passages in Polybius some of them with other points of departure for Rome's ambitions, see Harris 1979: 108-9. This blending of the telos of history with the goal of historical agent ties in nicely with the explication of why Polybius has extended his account down to 146 BCE: he justifies the examination of what the Romans did with their rule after they attained it, by invoking the utilitarian character of human action. See below ???

<sup>589</sup> For a survey of the complex debate on Roman imperialism, see Raaflaub 1996.

sight today only exemplifies the rationality typical of retrospective assessments that rest on historical experience.<sup>590</sup>

Heuß' argument has not gone unchallenged,<sup>591</sup> but even if we were to accept Polybius' assumptions about Rome's ambitions, the rule over the entire world is first only a goal to which the Romans aspire. Polybius, on the other hand, presents it to his readers as a fact to be realized. The shift is crucial: what was still future, open and undecided has become the vantage-point from which the historian presents the past. The gap which Polybius creates between his readers and the historical agents is well illustrated by a passage from his account of the Second Punic War. When in 216 BCE the Romans are devastatingly defeated at Cannae, they lose control of Italy and fear that Hannibal will capture Rome. A striking prolepsis to the telos of Polybius' account creates a strong discrepancy between the perception of this situation by the historical agents and the readers (3.118.8-9):

For though the Romans were now incontestably beaten and their military reputation shattered, yet by the peculiar virtues of their constitution and by wise counsel they not only recovered their supremacy in Italy and afterwards defeated the Carthaginians, but in a few years made themselves masters of the whole world.

ὁμολογουμένως γὰρ Ῥωμαίων ἠττηθέντων τότε καὶ παραχωρησάντων τῆς ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις ἀρετῆς, τῇ τοῦ πολιτεύματος ιδιότητι καὶ τῷ βουλευέσθαι καλῶς οὐ μόνον ἀνεκτήσαντο τὴν τῆς Ἰταλίας δυναστείαν, νικήσαντες μετὰ ταῦτα Καρχηδονίους, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπάσης ἐγκρατεῖς ἐγένοντο μετ' ὀλίγους χρόνους.

While the Romans fear for their existence, the reader is made to think of Rome's final triumph. Polybius' work illustrates that a strong emphasis on teleology downplays the experience of the agents and can even lead to serious misconceptions.

## II. TELOS QUALIFIED

---

<sup>590</sup> Heuß 1970: 21-9, quotation from 28: 'Wir haben in ihnen [i.e. Polybius' reflections on the year 264 BCE] vielmehr den Versuch zu sehen, den großen Krieg mit Karthago, der sich aus der römischen Entscheidung dieser Tage ergeben hat, in seinem Entstehungsstadium gleich so zu motivieren, wie es seiner ausschließlichen Bedeutung und den Erfahrungen, die Rom in ihm machen sollte, und vor allem der Art und Weise, wie er schließlich zu Ende geführt wurde, entsprach. Die Argumente sind nichts anderes als eine Rechtfertigung *ex eventu*, und die Klarheit und Suggestivkraft, mit der sie noch heute beim ersten Eindruck bestechen, ist nur ein Beispiel für eine Rationalität, wie sie rückschauender, auf historischer Erfahrung beruhender Betrachtung eigen ist.'

<sup>591</sup> Against Heuß, see, e.g., Harris 1979: 110-12; Lazenby 1996: 38. Hoyos 1998: 17-32, on the other hand, is sceptical about the inevitability of a war as claimed by Polybius. On Polybius' reliability as historian of the First Punic War in general, see Bleckmann 2002: 19-35. See also Schepens 1990b.

### *The deferral of the telos*

In the preceding chapter, we have seen that Herodotus destabilizes the closure of his *Histories* by adumbrating events after the Persian Wars. Polybius goes further and defers the end of his account. As large as the telos looms in the narrative, it is not clear-cut and is qualified by some probing reflections. In his proem, Polybius announces as the end of his history Rome's ascent to universal dominion, which is gained with the victory over the Macedonians in 168/167 BCE. However, his history as we have it narrates the fall of the Macedonian monarchy in book 29 and continues with ten more books devoted to the events until 145 BCE. The carrying on of the narrative beyond what is first envisaged as its end undercuts the notion of a clear telos<sup>592</sup> just as the beginning is destabilized.<sup>593</sup> Polybius announces the 140<sup>th</sup> Olympiad as the starting point of his work (1.3.1), but devotes the first two books to a *prokataskeue* narrating the events from 264 to 220 BCE. Embedded in the *prokataskeue* is yet another look back, a eight-page run through the history from 386 to 264 BCE, presented as an examination of the cause of Rome's crossing to Sicily (1.12.5). While it is easy to label this an analepsis, both the length of the *prokataskeue* and Polybius' signposting make it hard to define what to consider the actual beginning of his account. In some passages, he mentions 220 as the starting point, in others 264 BCE.<sup>594</sup>

Polybius justifies the extension of his account at the beginning of book 3: were it sufficient just to report the outcome in order to judge Rome's struggle for hegemony (3.4.1-3), his account could stop with 168/167 BCE as envisaged in the proem (3.4.4-5):

But since judgments regarding either the conquerors or the conquered based purely on performance are by no means final – what is thought to be the greatest success having brought the greatest calamities on many, if they do not make proper use of it, and the most dreadful catastrophes often turning out to the advantage of those who support them bravely ...

ἐπεὶ δ' οὐκ αὐτοτελεῖς εἰσιν οὔτε περὶ τῶν κρατησάντων (οὔτε περὶ τῶν) ἐλαττωθέντων αἱ ψιλῶς ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν ἀγωνισμάτων διαλήψεις, διὰ τὸ πολλοῖς μὲν τὰ μέγιστα δοκοῦντ' εἶναι τῶν κατορθωμάτων, ὅταν μὴ δεόντως αὐτοῖς χρήσωνται, τὰς μεγίστας ἐπενηροχένας συμφοράς, οὐκ ὀλίγοις δὲ τὰς ἐκπληκτικωτάτας περιπετείας, ὅταν εὐγενῶς αὐτὰς ἀναδέξωνται, πολλάκις εἰς τὴν τοῦ

<sup>592</sup> On the extension of Polybius' history, see Walbank 1977; Foulon 2003: 40-4.

<sup>593</sup> On the intricacies of Polybius' point of departure, see Foulon 2003: 36-40; Fromentin 2008: 66-8.

<sup>594</sup> For 264 BCE, see, e.g., 1.5.1; 1.12.5-6; 39.8.4; for 220 BCE, see, e.g., 1.3.1-4; 2.37.2; 3.5.9. Cf. Rood 2007b: 172-3.

συμφέροντος περιπεπτωκέναι μερίδα ...

Therefore, Polybius has decided to go further and to look at the comportment of the victors, the reactions of the defeated and the efforts of both sides (3.4.6). This, he points out, will permit contemporary readers to decide whether or not to accept Roman rule and future readers to evaluate it, the greatest use that Polybius' history can offer (3.4.7-8).

Polybius then shifts the argument to a more general level, observing that human actions are always driven by goals. The historian therefore has to render account of whether or not these goals are achieved. In his case, Polybius examines the situation after Rome's ascent until the *ταραχή καὶ κίνησις*. He adds that he originally wanted to report the 'disturbed and troubled time' (Walbank) in another work, literally 'making another start' ('*προήχθην οἷον ἀρχὴν ποιησάμενος ἄλλην γράφειν*') for the events were great and unexpected and, most important, he himself was not only a witness, but also a historical agent (3.4.12-13).

Walbank has called these chapters 'singularly confused'.<sup>595</sup> The argument, he claims, is muddled and barely conceals Polybius' real motive, namely the integration into his work of the material that he collected while accompanying Scipio to Spain and Africa. While making a wealth of lucid observations in his close reading, Walbank fails to do justice to the logic of the argument. Polybius' reasoning is coherent and carried by a profound reflection on endings in history that ought to be taken seriously. According to Walbank, Polybius' musings about the reversal of fortune do not pertain to Rome and therefore offer no valid reason for the extension. He rightly points out that Rome did not lose her power between 168 and 146 BCE, but misreads the argument. Polybius does not claim to add the extension in order to demonstrate such a reversal, but in order to check whether or not there has been one. The two kinds of reversals are only *possible* developments that illustrate why it is important to look beyond victories.<sup>596</sup> The following paragraph thus provides not a new point, as Walbank has it,<sup>597</sup> but an elaboration: the course of action following upon Pydna, whether seen from the perspective of the victors or from the viewpoint of the defeated, will prove the stability of

---

<sup>595</sup> Walbank 1977: 159. Besides the extensive argument in Walbank 1977, see also Walbank 1972: 182-3; 1974: 22-7. I am pleased to see that Walbank 2002: 21 is inclined to consider Polybius' reasoning as more than a 'smoke-screen' for his desire to integrate his personal story. Ferrary 1988: 289-90 takes Polybius' reflections seriously, but runs into new problems. See n. ??? For a critique of Walbank's reading, see also Shimron 1979/80: 104-11.

<sup>596</sup> Ferrary 1988: 340-1 argues that 3.4-5 contain the same reproach of Rome as uttered by the critics of Rome in 36.9.5-8. However, in that later passage Rome's desire for power is at stake, whereas here her fortune is discussed. It may also be doubted that Polybius' view of Rome's rule is as positive as Ferrary 1988: 289-348 has it. Shimron 1979/80: 105 speaks of 'one of the general maxims so beloved by Polybius for giving his work a sort of philosophical flavour, although or perhaps because they are not very profound or original'.

<sup>597</sup> Walbank 1977: 146.

Rome's rule. Only a look at the period after Rome's rise permits us to assess her victory: 'Time is the most reliable historian.'<sup>598</sup>

Polybius' argument is coherent and backed up by the anthropological reflection on goals. The decision to consider the period after Rome's rise corresponds with the utilitarian nature of human action. As Polybius has it, men fight not for the sake of fighting, but in order to rule; it therefore makes good sense to limit the account not to the period of fighting, but also to deal with the ensuing time of rule. Polybius thus claims that in extending his history he only follows the structure inherent in the events.

It is hard to say what motives actually led Polybius to continue his account beyond Pydna – the desire to report his own experiences may have been an important factor – but his argument in 3.4 offers a reflection on ends in history which is just as profound as the preceding reference to the hermeneutic circle (3.1.7).<sup>599</sup> On the one hand, Polybius underscores the importance of hindsight in historiography: the historian can judge past actions only from their end and, what is more, therein follows the utilitarian nature of human action. On the other, Polybius destabilizes the notion of a telos. I have argued that Herodotus' *Histories* implicitly illustrate that the significance of historical events can shift with the vantage-point.<sup>600</sup> Polybius makes this point explicitly: Rome's ascension to dominion ends in 168 BCE, but later events may put it into a new perspective.

This deferral of the end is liable to open an endless spiral. If the success of Rome's rise can only be judged from the following period, this period itself will need to be evaluated from a later vantage-point, which may lead to a new assessment of the starting point ... While the extension of the history undercuts the notion of a clear telos by the means of narrative, the discussion at the beginning of the third book erodes it in an abstract reflection. Polybius may claim that 'this has a recognized beginning, a fixed duration, and an end which is not in dispute' ('τούτου δ' ἔχοντος καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν γνωριζομένην καὶ τὸν χρόνον ὠρισμένον καὶ συντέλειαν ὁμολογουμένην', 3.1.5), but the following reflections as well as the narrative reveal a greater sensitivity to the problems of beginning and ending.

### ταραχὴ καὶ κίνησις

The instability of the telos seems to be reflected in the discussion of the period of the extension. Walbank argues that Polybius distinguishes between 'the period which provides the material for judging Rome' and the ταραχὴ καὶ

---

<sup>598</sup> Novalis 1999 [1798/9]: 286: 'Die Zeit ist der sicherste Historiker.'

<sup>599</sup> Ultimately, the relation between the ending and a story illustrates the dynamic between part and whole. It is therefore not surprising that Polybius mentions both together in 39.8.3: '... establishing both in general and in particular the connexion between the beginning and the end' ('... οἰκείωσαντες τὴν ἀρχὴν τῷ τέλει καὶ καθόλου καὶ κατὰ μέρος.').

<sup>600</sup> Cf. ch. 6 ???

κίνησις.<sup>601</sup> He suggests the year 152/151 BCE as dividing line. This accords well with the position of the geographical book 34 that would mark the division and also with the fact that from 152/151 BCE onward Polybius became more involved in Roman politics as Scipio's right hand. The big problem, however, as Walbank admits, are some of the events that Polybius adduces as instances of *ταραχή καὶ κίνησις* in 3.5: the war between Attalus II and Prusias II took place between 156 and 154 BCE and Ariarathes recovered the kingdom of Cappadocia already in 158/157 BCE. If *ταραχή καὶ κίνησις* mark a period of itself that begins in 152/151 BCE, why does Polybius attribute to it earlier events in his summary?<sup>602</sup> In addition to this flagrant inconsistency, it makes but little sense that Polybius should exempt the seditions and mutinies from the period against which Rome's ascension is to be viewed. Are they not exactly the kind of events that throw light on the success of Rome's dominion?

Another reading is possible that avoids the problems created by Walbank's interpretation. If I see it correctly, Walbank's view hinges ultimately on his understanding of the following sentence (3.4.12):

So the final end achieved by this work will be, to gain knowledge of what was the condition of each people after all had been crushed and had come under the dominion of Rome, until the disturbed and troubled time that afterwards ensued again.

διὸ καὶ τῆς πραγματείας ταύτης τοῦτ' ἔσται τελεσιούργημα, τὸ γνῶναι τὴν κατάστασιν παρ' ἑκάστοις, ποία τις ἦν μετὰ τὸ καταγωνισθῆναι τὰ ὅλα καὶ πεσεῖν εἰς τὴν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐξουσίαν ἕως τῆς μετὰ ταῦτα πάλιν ἐπιγενομένης ταραχῆς καὶ κινήσεως.

Walbank assumes that *ταῦτα* refers back to *κατάστασις*. Then the period of *ταραχή καὶ κίνησις* comes indeed after the time which permits a proper judgment of Rome's success. However, *ταῦτα* can also hark back to τὸ καταγωνισθῆναι τὰ ὅλα καὶ πεσεῖν εἰς τὴν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐξουσίαν and signify the time of Rome's ascension. In this case, the second *μετά* repeats the first, replacing the object with a pronoun, and goes closely with *πάλιν*,<sup>603</sup> marking that in some way the disturbances resemble the confrontations during Rome's rise to power. In Walbank's reading, *ἕως* is exclusive; in the one advanced here, it is inclusive: the period of *ταραχή καὶ κίνησις* still belongs to the time which allows us to judge the ultimate success of Rome. Philologically, both readings are possible. The advantage of my interpretation is that it avoids the issue as to why the period of *ταραχή καὶ κίνησις* does not qualify as a touchstone for Rome's success as well as the problem of dates raised by Walbank's identification of the

<sup>601</sup> Walbank 1977: 149.

<sup>602</sup> Cf. Shimron 1979/80 who opts for 158/157 BCE as division line (110).

<sup>603</sup> It is significant that Walbank 1974: 24 leaves out *πάλιν* in his translation of the passage.

events with the content of books 36-9. It ties in much better with Polybius' narrative of the history after 168 BCE in which, as Walbank himself observes, 'the "period of judging" slides away imperceptibly into the "period of confusion"''.<sup>604</sup>

Nonetheless, even with the new reading, the notion of the *telos* in 3.4 remains intricate. Polybius remarks that he had first planned to write the *ταραχή καὶ κίνησις* 'making another start', that is to tackle it in a separate monograph. Walbank proposes that Polybius did not realize this idea, because 'there was no unity of theme, but merely a succession of chaotic movements and irrational risings'.<sup>605</sup> My reading of the passage suggests another reason: as great and unexpected as the tumults were, Rome managed to cope with them and, after the destruction of Carthage and the subjection of the Macedonians, was stronger than before. What thus on first glance appeared to be the beginning of a new era turned out to be still part of the period of Rome's dominion.

Polybius' reflections on the period of *ταραχή καὶ κίνησις* indicate that in his eyes Rome's dominion is not the end of history. This illustrates the difference from the teleological concept which led to the modern idea of history. Whereas in the Judaeo-Christian tradition the idea of an end allows viewing the entire course of history as a single process, Polybius attributes unity only to a specific chain of events that will be followed by others. Polybius' comments also highlight the importance of retrospect for history and drive home the gap between historical agents and historians: what looks like a beginning for the former, may ultimately belong to an end as the latter can see.

In the last book of Polybius' history, we find the following statement (39.5.4-6):

So that while they had from the first generally approved and honoured Polybius, in this latter period, and in their satisfaction with what he advised as I narrated above, each city now took every means to confer the highest honours on him during his life and after his death. And this was universally thought to be fully justified; for had he not perfected and drawn up the laws on the subject of common jurisdiction, all would have remained undecided and in the utmost confusion. So we should consider this to be the most brilliant achievement of Polybius among all those I mentioned.

διὸ καὶ καθόλου μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀποδεχόμενοι καὶ τιμῶντες τὸν ἄνδρα, περὶ τοὺς ἐσχάτους καιροὺς καὶ τὰς προειρημένας πράξεις εὐδοκούμενοι κατὰ πάντα τρόπον ταῖς μεγίσταις τιμαῖς ἐτίμησαν αὐτὸν κατὰ πόλεις καὶ ζῶντα καὶ μεταλλάξαντα. πάντες (δ') ἔκριναν κατὰ λόγον τοῦτο ποιεῖν· μὴ γὰρ ἐξεργασασμένου τούτου καὶ

---

<sup>604</sup> Walbank 1974: 27. Cf. Shimron 1979/80: 109-10.

<sup>605</sup> Walbank 1977: 161, cf. 155.

γράφαντος τοὺς περὶ τῆς κοινῆς δικαιοδοσίας νόμους ἄκριτα πάντα ἦν καὶ πολλῆς γέμοντα ταραχῆς. διὸ καὶ τοῦτο κάλλιστον Πολυβίῳ πεπερᾶσθαι νομιστέον πάντων τῶν προειρημένων.

There is no reason to disagree with the commentators that this is the voice of a posthumous editor,<sup>606</sup> but it may be added that the reference is particularly fitting in the work of an author who reflects so intently both on the importance and intricacies of the end in history. Commenting on the death of the author, the work extends its reach just as the author has himself deferred and shifted its ending.

### III. A CONSPICUOUS NARRATOR

The experiential quality of Thucydides' and Xenophon's histories is enhanced by the reticence of their narrators. Only rarely do they intrude on the narratives, which by and large seem to follow the events directly. The Polybian narrator, on the other hand, continuously advertises his presence.<sup>607</sup> The frequent interventions remind the readers of the mediating instance of the narrator and undermine the mimetic appeal of the account. Plutarch has already given me a chance to point out how the visibility of the narrator may undermine the mimetic appeal of his account,<sup>608</sup> Polybius furnishes good material to elaborate a bit more on such narratorial intrusions. The interruption of the narrative mimesis through simple references to the narrator's *origo* as in οἱ καθ' ἡμᾶς καιροί (e.g., 1.4.1) or, spatially, in ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς οἰκουμένη (e.g., 3.37.1) is slight, but their abundance makes the presence of the narrator consistently felt. Polybius enters his narrative more ostentatiously in three roles, as investigator, as narrator and as commentator: he explains, for example, his detailed knowledge about Hannibal's war preparations by a bronze inscription that he saw on Cape Lacinium (3.33.17-18). Numerous references draw the reader's attention to the act of narrating (3.57.1):

Now that I have brought my narrative, the two generals and the war into Italy, I desire, before entering upon the struggle, to say a few words on what I think proper to my method in this work.

Ἡμεῖς δ' ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὴν διήγησιν καὶ τοὺς ἡγεμόνας ἀμφοτέρων καὶ τὸν πόλεμον εἰς Ἰταλίαν ἡγάγομεν, πρὸ τοῦ τῶν ἀγώνων ἄρξασθαι βραχέα βουλόμεθα περὶ τῶν ἀρμοζόντων τῇ πραγματείᾳ διελεῖν.

Polybius even reflects explicitly on the composition of his work, as when he points out that, due to the annalistic structure of his account, causes are

---

<sup>606</sup> Cf. Walbank 1957-79: *ad loc.*; Rood 2004b: 155.

<sup>607</sup> Cf. Marincola 1997: 10-11; Rood 2004b; McGing 2010: 11.

<sup>608</sup> See above ch. 4 ???.

sometimes told after their effects in other war theatres (15.24a; 28.16.10-11).

While both Thucydides and Xenophon are very restrained with explicit comments, there are only few things on which Polybius does not voice his opinion. Particularly striking, given his praise for impartiality, are the devastating evaluations of the Aetolians and their comportment, for instance, in 4.27.2:<sup>609</sup>

I really scarcely find words in which to express myself about this matter. After declaring by a public decree that they were not going to war, to make an expedition in full force and pillage the countries of their neighbours and then, instead of punishing any of the guilty persons, to honour by electing to their chief offices the directors of these proceedings seems to me the very height of villainy.

ὑπὲρ ὧν οὐκ οἶδα πῶς χρῆ λέγειν. τὸ γὰρ κοινῶ μὲν δόγματι (μὴ) πολεμεῖν, πανδημεὶ δὲ στρατεύοντας ἄγειν καὶ φέρειν τὰ τῶν πέλας, καὶ κολάζειν μὲν μηδένα τῶν αἰτίων, στρατηγούς δ' αἰρεῖσθαι καὶ τιμᾶν τοὺς προεστῶτας τῶν τοιούτων ἔργων, ἐμοὶ μὲν δοκεῖ τῆς πάσης γέμειν κακοπραγμοσύνης.

#### *Digressions and anachronies*

Narratorial interventions, as understood here, do not necessarily require a first person.<sup>610</sup> The mimesis of the narrative can be undermined by different textual devices. Countless digressions of various length interrupt the flow of the narrative, whether Polybius devotes an entire book to geographical matters (34), reflects in nine chapters on the art of generalship (9.12.20) or is prompted by the Messenian attempt at avoiding war in 480/479 BCE to reflect briefly on the value of peace (4.31).<sup>611</sup> Within his narrative, he also tends to go from specific historical events to general observations. The invitation of Pyrrhus by the Tarentians in 212 BCE, for example, elicits from Polybius a comment on the inclination of free cities to look for a master after a while (8.24). On Hannibal's desire to engage the Romans in a battle, Polybius comments: 'For when a general has brought his army into a foreign country and is engaged in such a risky enterprise, his only hope of safety lies in constantly keeping alive the hopes of his allies.' ('τῶ γὰρ εἰς ἀλλοτρίαν καθέντι χώραν στρατόπεδα καὶ παραδόξοις ἐγχειροῦντι πράγμασιν εἷς τρόπος ἐστὶν οὗτος σωτηρίας, τὸ συνεχῶς καινοποιεῖν ἀεὶ τὰς τῶν συμμάχων ἐλπίδας.' 3.70.11). General conclusions like this support Polybius' didactic aims at the price of the experiential appeal of his narrative.

Anachronies, i.e. deviations from the sequence in which the events have taken place, highlight the shaping hand of the narrator and challenge the

---

<sup>609</sup> On Polybius' view of the Aetolians, see, e.g., Mendels 1984-6.

<sup>610</sup> Cf. Gribble 1998: 47 on Thucydides.

<sup>611</sup> Cf. Walbank 1972: 46-8 on digressions in Polybius.

impression of a direct correspondence between events and narrative. I have already mentioned the frequent foreshadowing of Rome's final domination of the world, but there are also other events that are anticipated. For example, when Polybius reports how Philipp V and Antiochus III divided up Egypt, he jumps forward to their downfall (15.20.5). There is no shortage of narratorial analepses either. Polybius often brings them in to 'illuminate the comportment and lives of ... noteworthy men' ('τῶν ἀξιολόγων ἀνδρῶν τὰς ἐκάστων ἀγωγὰς καὶ φύσεις ... ὑποδεικνύναι', 10.21.2). It has been noted that the bulk of references to the past is directed towards the fourth century BCE,<sup>612</sup> but also earlier events such as the Persian Wars or myths are mentioned. In some cases, the anachronies come with cross-references that draw the reader's attention to the constructedness of the text (e.g., 4.1.4).

### *Alternative versions and counterfactuals*

The mimesis of Polybius' account is also interrupted by the consideration of alternative versions. When, for example, Marcius advises the Rhodians to act as mediators in a war, probably the one between Perseus and Rome,<sup>613</sup> Polybius muses about his motif (28.17.5-9):

Now it is a question whether he did this because he was apprehensive lest Antiochus should conquer Alexandria, and they should find in him a new and formidable adversary – for the war about Coele-Syria was already in progress – supposing that the war with Perseus lasted long; or whether, seeing that this latter war was on the brink of being decided, as the Roman legions were already encamped in Macedonia, and hoping for a favourable issue, he wished to stimulate the Rhodians to try to mediate in the war, and by this action to give the Romans a plausible pretext for treating them in any way they thought fit. It is not easy to say definitely which was his reason, but I am induced to think it was the latter, judging from what soon afterwards happened to Rhodes.

πότερα δὲ τοῦτ' ἐποίει τὸν Ἀντίοχον ὑποπτεύων μὴ ποτε κρατήσας τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας βαρὺς ἔφεδρος αὐτοῖς γένηται, τοῦ πρὸς τὸν Περσέα πολέμου χρόνον λαμβάνοντος· ἤδη γὰρ τότε συνέβαινε συγκεχύσθαι τὸν περὶ Κοίλης Συρίας πόλεμον· ἢ θεωρῶν ὅσον οὐπω κριθησόμενα τὰ κατὰ τὸν Περσέα, τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν στρατοπέδων ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ παραβεβληκότων, καὶ καλὰς ἐλπίδας ἔχων ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀποβησομένων ἐβούλετο τοὺς Ῥοδίους προνύξας μεσίτας ἀποδείξαι, καὶ τοῦτο πράξαντας δοῦναι τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ἀφορμὰς εὐλόγους εἰς τὸ βουλευέσθαι περὶ αὐτῶν ὡς ἂν αὐτοῖς φαίνηται, τὸ μὲν ἀκριβὲς οὐ

---

<sup>612</sup> Walbank 2002: 189. See also Lehmann 1989/90.

<sup>613</sup> Cf. Walbank 1957-79: *ad* 28.17.4.

ῥάδιον εἰπεῖν, δοκῶ δὲ μᾶλλον τὸ τελευταῖον εἰρημένον, ἐξ ὧν ἐμαρτύρησε τὰ μετ' ὀλίγον συμβάντα τοῖς Ῥοδίοις.

We have seen that Tacitus uses narratorial uncertainty to recreate for the reader the insecurity to which Romans were exposed under Tiberius and during the Pisonian Conspiracy.<sup>614</sup> In the passage just quoted, on the other hand, the spelling out of diverging accounts merely highlights that the narrator has no direct access to the past.

In the first part of this study we have seen that counterfactuals and 'Beinahe'-episodes alert the reader to the possibility of a different course history could have taken. The longer and more elaborate the scenario is, the more the openness of the past is brought to the attention of the reader. Polybius often entertains, with or without counterfactuals, alternative scenarios,<sup>615</sup> but these passages often feature a strong narratorial voice which undermines their mimetic quality. In his report of the battle of Caphyae in 220 BCE, for example, Polybius criticizes Aratus for attacking the Aetolians when they had already started ascending the hills (4.11.7-8):

Now if he had decided to engage the enemy, he should not have attacked their rear after they had already got over the level ground, but their van the moment they entered the plain; for thus the whole battle would have been on flat ground, where the Aetolians are very inefficient, owing to their accoutrement and general tactics, while the Achaeans, owing to their total difference in both these respects, are very capable and strong.

καίτοι γ' εἰ μὲν ἦν κινδυνευτέον, οὐ πρὸς τὴν οὐραγίαν ἐχρῆν συμπλέκεσθαι, διηνυκότεων ἤδη τῶν πολεμίων τοὺς ὀμαλοὺς τόπους, πρὸς δὲ τὴν πρωτοπορείαν, εὐθέως ἐμβαλόντων εἰς τὸ πεδίον. οὕτως γὰρ ἂν τὸν ἀγῶνα συνέβη γενέσθαι τὸν ὅλον ἐν τοῖς ἐπιπέδοις καὶ πεδινοῖς τόποις, οὗ τοὺς μὲν Αἰτωλοὺς δυσχρηστοτάτους εἶναι συνέβαινε διὰ τε τὸν καθοπλισμὸν καὶ τὴν ὅλην σύνταξιν, τοὺς δ' Ἀχαιοὺς εὐχρηστοτάτους καὶ δυναμικωτάτους διὰ τὰναντία τῶν προειρημένων.

Polybius here evokes an alternative possible development, but the narratorial voice comes to the fore in the critical comment and undermines the experiential quality of the 'sideshadow'. The plundering of Thermus by Philip is another case in point (5.9-10): here, Polybius looks both back and to the future in order to illustrate how Philip should have behaved. Antigonus' magnanimous treatment of Sparta, Philip's humanity after Chaeronea and Alexander's generosity furnish past examples for how to make use of military victories.

---

<sup>614</sup> Cf. ch. 4 ???

<sup>615</sup> For a list of counterfactuals in Polybius, see Rood 2004b: 155 n. 23.

Moreover, Polybius muses about the fame which Philip would have won had he proceeded more moderately (5.11.7). The anachronies as well as the moral verdict highlight the narrator's presence and deprive the alternative scenario of a strong mimetic appeal.<sup>616</sup> In the discussion of the battle at Zama below, we will see that Polybius can also use 'Beinahe'-episodes in a more experiential fashion.

### *Rhetorical questions and exclamations*

Rhetorical questions also go against the mimetic illusion. In order to underline a point, they interrupt the narrative flow. In the *Histories* of Herodotus, there are ten rhetorical questions raised by the narrator, more than half of them in ethnographic contexts, Thucydides has only two.<sup>617</sup> The reader of Polybius, on the other hand, encounters hundreds. Many of them can be found in discursive sections,<sup>618</sup> but others punctuate narrative passages. To give an example from the Punic Wars, after the meeting of Scipio and Hannibal at Zama, Polybius emphasizes the historical significance of the situation (15.9.3-4):

Is there anyone who can remain unmoved in reading the narrative of such an encounter? For it would be impossible to find more valiant soldiers, or generals who had been more successful and were more thoroughly exercised in the art of war, nor indeed had Fortune ever offered to contending armies a more splendid prize of victory ...

ἐφ' ἃ τίς οὐκ ἂν ἐπιστήσας συμπαθῆς γένοιτο κατὰ τὴν ἐξήγησιν; οὔτε γὰρ δυνάμεις πολεμικωτέρας οὔθ' ἡγεμόνας ἐπιτυχεστέρους τούτων καὶ μᾶλλον ἀθλητὰς γεγονότας τῶν κατὰ πόλεμον ἔργων εὔροι τις ἂν ἑτέρους, οὐδὲ μὴν ἄθλα μείζω τὴν τύχην ἐκτεθεικυῖαν τοῖς ἀγωνιζομένοις τῶν τότε προκειμένων.

A device, which seems to be entirely absent from the authorial narrative in Herodotus and Thucydides, is the exclamation *vῆ Δία*, for instance in 4.16.4:<sup>619</sup>

The Aetolians at least, continuing to behave in this manner, constantly pillaging Greece and committing frequent acts of war without declaration, not only never thought it worth the trouble to defend themselves against complaints, but ridiculed anyone who called them to account for their past offences or even, by Zeus, for their future designs.

<sup>616</sup> The mimetic quality of alternative scenarios is even lower in those passages in which Polybius entertains alternative scenarios in order to question the accounts of other historians, e.g. 3.8.9-10 on Fabius Pictor and 3.20 on anonymous historians. The narratorial voice is less prominent, but still felt through general comments in 2.70.3 and 16.10.

<sup>617</sup> For Herodotus, see Lang 1984: 37-51; for Thucydides, see Hornblower 1994: 149.

<sup>618</sup> E.g., in the proem: 1.1.5-6; in the description of the funeral rites in Rome: 6.53.10.

<sup>619</sup> Cf. de Foucault 1972 with n. 2.

‘Αἰτωλοὶ γοῦν τούτῳ τῷ τρόπῳ χρώμενοι, καὶ ληστεύοντες συνεχῶς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, καὶ πολέμους ἀνεπαγγέλτους φέροντες πολλοῖς, οὐδ’ ἀπολογίας ἔτι κατηξίουσιν τοὺς ἐγκαλοῦντας, ἀλλὰ καὶ προσεχλεύαζον, εἴ τις αὐτοὺς εἰς δικαιοδοσίας προκαλοῖτο περὶ τῶν γεγονότων ἢ καὶ νῆ Δία τῶν μελλόντων.

Exclamations like this, limited to character speech in Herodotus and Thucydides, but not uncommon in Polybius, do not interrupt the narrative flow significantly, but nonetheless make the narrator’s voice felt.

These examples may suffice to illustrate the conspicuousness of the Polybian narrator. He continually interrupts the narrative through digressions and makes his presence felt through various devices that include frequent references to the first person as well as anachronies, multiple versions, rhetorical questions and exclamations. As Gribble has pointed out, a certain amount of narratorial intervention is crucial to support the claim of historiography to objectivity. Otherwise, the historian ‘risks giving readers the impression that what they are reading is in some sense fictional’.<sup>620</sup> In Polybius, however, the presence of the narrator is marked so strongly that the mimetic appeal of his account is affected.

#### IV. REFLECTIONS ON MIMETIC HISTORIOGRAPHY

Both the intrusive narratorial persona and pronouncedly teleological structure of Polybius’ narrative work against a strong mimetic effect. In accordance with this tendency, various methodological reflections seem at first glance to question mimesis as a goal of historiographic writing. A closer look, however, will reveal that mimesis has a place in Polybius’ concept of historiography. An examination of Polybius’ explicit reflections pertaining to history and experience in this section will pave the way for exploring some experiential passages in section V.

##### *Polybius’ critique of mimesis*

In a long invective against Phylarchus, triggered by his version of Cleomenes’ capture of Megalopolis, Polybius rants (2.56.7-8):<sup>621</sup>

In his eagerness to arouse the pity and attention of his readers he treats us to a picture of clinging women with their hair dishevelled and their breasts bare, or again of crowds of both sexes together with their children and aged parents weeping and lamenting as they are led away to slavery. This sort of thing he keeps up throughout his history, always trying to bring

---

<sup>620</sup> Gribble 1998: 43.

<sup>621</sup> On Polybius’ critique of Phylarchus, see especially Meister 1975: 93-126; Schepens 2005.

horrors vividly before our eyes.

σπουδάζων δ' εἰς ἔλεον ἐκκαλεῖσθαι τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας καὶ συμπαθεῖς ποιεῖν τοῖς λεγομένοις, εἰσάγει περιπλοκὰς γυναικῶν καὶ κόμας διερριμμένας καὶ μαστῶν ἐκβολὰς, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις δάκρυα καὶ θρήνους ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν ἀναμῖξ τέκνοις καὶ γονεῦσι γηραιοῖς ἀπαγομένων. ποιεῖ δὲ τοῦτο παρ' ὅλην τὴν ἱστορίαν, πειρώμενος (ἐν) ἑκάστοις ἀεὶ πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν τιθέναι τὰ δεινά.

Polybius here takes issue with narrative features crucial to *enargeia*: as we have seen in the introduction, visual appeal is the core aspect of *enargeia* as used by such authors as Dionysius and Ps.-Longinus. Beginning with Gorgias and going back to the *Odyssey*, the arousal of emotions, notably pity, looms large in ancient criticism. A wealth of details, here indicated through the various responses to the capture, also forms part of *enargeia* as the definition of Demetrius illustrates: 'Vividness derives foremost from exactness and from neither leaving out nor cutting anything.' ('γίνεται δ' ἡ ἐνάργεια πρῶτα μὲν ἐξ ἀκριβολογίας καὶ τοῦ παραλείπειν μηδὲν μηδ' ἐκτέμνειν ...', *Eloc.* 209).

Polybius, on the other hand, reflects on his omission of the details in his account of the fights between the Carthaginian and Roman troops in Sicily in 247 BCE (1.56.11-57.4):

These combats I am unable to describe in detail here. For as in a boxing-match when two champions, both distinguished for pluck and both in perfect training, meet in the decisive contest for the prize, continually delivering blow for blow, neither the combatants themselves nor the spectators can note or anticipate every attack or every blow, but it is possible, from the general action of each, and the determination that each displays, to get a fair idea of their respective skill, strength, and courage, so it was with these two generals. The causes or the modes of their daily ambushes, counter-ambushes, attempts, and assaults were so numerous that no writer could properly describe them, while at the same time the narrative would be most tedious as well as unprofitable to the reader. It is rather by a general pronouncement about the two men and the result of their rival efforts that a notion of the facts can be conveyed.

περὶ ὧν οὐχ οἶόν τε διὰ τῆς γραφῆς τὸν κατὰ μέρος ἀποδοῦναι λόγον· καθάπερ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῶν διαφερόντων πυκτῶν καὶ ταῖς γενναιότησι καὶ ταῖς εὐεξίαις, ὅταν εἰς τὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ στεφάνου συγκαταστάντες καιρὸν διαμάχωνται πληγὴν ἐπὶ πληγῇ τιθέντες ἀδιαπαύστως, λόγον μὲν ἢ πρόνοιαν ἔχειν ὑπὲρ ἑκάστης ἐπιβολῆς καὶ πληγῆς οὔτε τοῖς ἀγωνιζομένοις οὔτε τοῖς θεωμένοις ἐστὶ δυνατόν, ἐκ δὲ τῆς καθόλου τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐνεργείας καὶ τῆς ἑκατέρου φιλοτιμίας ἐστὶ καὶ τῆς ἐμπειρίας αὐτῶν καὶ τῆς δυνάμεως, πρὸς δὲ καὶ τῆς

εὐψυχίας, ἰκανὴν ἔννοιαν λαβεῖν, οὕτως δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν νῦν λεγομένων στρατηγῶν. τὰς μὲν γὰρ αἰτίας ἢ τοὺς τρόπους, δι' ὧν ἂν' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν ἐποιοῦντο κατ' ἀλλήλων ἐνέδρας, ἀντενέδρας, ἐπιθέσεις, προσβολάς, οὐτ' ἂν ὁ γράφων ἐξαριθμούμενος ἐφίκοιτο, τοῖς τ' ἀκούουσιν ἀπέραντος ἅμα δ' ἀνωφελῆς ἂν ἐκ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως γίνοιτο χρεία· ἐκ δὲ τῆς καθολικῆς ἀποφάσεως περὶ αὐτῶν καὶ τοῦ τέλους τῆς φιλοτιμίας μᾶλλον ἂν τις εἰς ἔννοιαν ἔλθοι τῶν προειρημένων.

Analytical understanding trumps an account that covers all movements. In a discussion of historical monographs, Polybius explicitly questions accounts that are too detailed (29.12.1-4):<sup>622</sup>

Other writers again have \*\*\* about the war in Syria. The reason of this I have frequently explained. For when dealing with a subject which is simple and uniform they wish to be thought historians not because of what they accomplish, but because of the multitude of their books, and to make such an impression as I have described, they are compelled to magnify small matters, to touch up and elaborate brief statements of fact and to convert quite incidental occurrences of no moment into momentous events and actions, describing engagements and pitched battles in which the infantry losses were at times ten men or it may be a few more and the cavalry losses still fewer. As for sieges, descriptions of places, and such matters, it would be hard to describe adequately how they work them up for lack of real matter.

\*\*\* πάλιν ἕτεροι περὶ τοῦ Συριακοῦ πολέμου· τούτου δ' αἰτίον ἐστὶν ὅπερ ἡμῖν εἴρηται διὰ πλειόνων. ὅταν γὰρ ἀπλᾶς καὶ μονοειδεῖς λαβόντες ὑποθέσεις βούλωνται μὴ τοῖς πράγμασιν, ἀλλὰ τῶν πλήθει τῶν βύβλων ἱστοριογράφοι νομίζεσθαι καὶ τὴν τοιαύτην ἐφέλκεσθαι φαντασίαν, ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι τὰ μὲν μικρὰ μεγάλα ποιεῖν, τὰ δὲ βραχέως εἰρημένα διασκευάζειν καὶ λογοποιεῖν, ἕνια δὲ τῶν ἐν παρέργῳ πεπραγμένων ἔργα καὶ πράγματα κατασκευάζειν, ἀγῶνας διατιθεμένους καὶ παρατάξεις ἐξαγγέλλοντας, ἐν αἷς ἐνίοτε πεζοὶ μὲν ἔπεσον δέκα, ποτὲ (δὲ) μικρῶν πλείους, ἵππεῖς δ' ἔ(τι) τούτων ἐλάττους. πολιορκίας μὲν γὰρ καὶ τοπογραφίας καὶ τὰ παραπλήσια τούτοις οὐκ ἂν εἴποι τις ἀξίως ἐφ' ὅσον ἐξεργάζονται διὰ τὴν ἀπορίαν τῶν πραγμάτων.

Another invective against monographs reveals a further point in which Polybius' concept of historiography goes against the ideal of an experiential

---

<sup>622</sup> On the tendency to expatiate upon small things in monographs, see also 7.7.6; 12.23.7. On Polybius' stance on monographs, see, e.g., Bollansée 2005.

narrative: ‘... and next because they omit those contemporary events by a comparative review and estimation of which we can assign its true value to everything much more surely than by judging from particulars.’ (‘... εἴτα διὰ τὸ τὰς καταλλήλους τῶν πράξεων παραλείπειν, ὧν ἐκ παραθέσεως συνθεωρουμένων καὶ συγκρινομένων ἀλλοιοτέρας ἕκαστα τυγχάνει δοκιμασίας τῆς κατὰ μέρος διαλήψεως ...’, 3.32.5). Polybius takes a strong interest in synchronies which do not feature in monographs and tend to be also beyond the perspective of historical agents. He thereby emphasizes the importance of connections that evade the perspective of contemporaries.

Speeches have proven an important means of making the past present in the hands of Thucydides, Xenophon and also Tacitus. Polybius’ critique of speeches embedded in historiography can therefore be inserted into this list of reflections hostile towards the ideal of narrative mimesis. On Timaeus’ use of speeches, for example, Polybius writes (12.25a5-b1):

For he has not set down the words spoken nor the sense of what was really said, but having made up his mind as to what ought to have been said, he recounts all these speeches and all else that follows upon events like a man in a school of rhetoric attempting to speak on a given subject, \*\*\* and shows off his oratorical power, but gives no report of what was actually spoken. The peculiar function of history is to discover, in the first place, the words actually spoken, whatever they were, and next to ascertain the reason why what was done or spoken led to failure or success.

οὐ γὰρ τὰ ῥηθέντα γέγραφεν, οὐδ’ ὡς ἐρρήθη κατ’ ἀλήθειαν, ἀλλὰ προθέμενος ὡς δεῖ ῥηθῆναι, πάντας ἐξαριθμεῖται τοὺς ῥηθέντας λόγους καὶ τὰ παρεπόμενα τοῖς πράγμασιν οὕτως ὡς ἂν εἴ τις ἐν διατριβῇ πρὸς ὑπόθεσιν ἐπιχειροίη \*\*\* ὥσπερ ἀπόδειξιν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμεως ποιούμενος, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐξήγησιν τῶν κατ’ ἀλήθειαν εἰρημένων. Ὅτι τῆς ἱστορίας ἰδίωμα τοῦτ’ ἐστὶ τὸ πρῶτον μὲν αὐτοὺς τοὺς κατ’ ἀλήθειαν εἰρημένους, οἳοί ποτ’ ἂν ὦσι, γνῶναι λόγους, δεύτερον τὴν αἰτίαν πυθθάνεσθαι, παρ’ ἣν ἢ διέπεσεν ἢ κατωρθώθη τὸ πραχθὲν ἢ ῥηθέν.

### *Polybius’ critique reconsidered*

The invective against Timaeus reveals however that Polybius, whose work features numerous speeches, does not object to the integration of speeches itself; he merely objects to speeches that are made up and unfitting to historiography.<sup>623</sup> Similar qualifications also apply to the critique of vividness and wealth of details

---

<sup>623</sup> On speeches in Polybius, see Pédech 254-302; Wooten 1974; Wiedemann 1990; Nicolai 2006 with full bibliography on 75 n. 2.

that I have already discussed. The critique of Phylarchus' vivid narrative, as we will see, does not go against mimesis in itself.<sup>624</sup>

It is important first to note that pity is not the only emotion which histories may elicit from their readers.<sup>625</sup> For instance, Polybius expects historical works to instil ζῆλος in the readers as his critique of its absence in Timaeus illustrates (12.25h4).<sup>626</sup> Moreover, what Polybius questions is not so much the evocation of pity in itself as the use of fiction for this purpose. While free inventions are unproblematic in tragedy whose ultimate goal is emotional appeal, they do not suit the didactic intentions of historiography that depend on truthfulness (2.56.11-12). Nonetheless, as the following sentence implies, there is a way in which histories can properly evoke pity (2.56.13):

Apart from this, Phylarchus simply narrates most of such catastrophes and does not even suggest their causes or the nature of these causes, without which it is impossible in any case to feel either legitimate pity or proper anger.

χωρίς τε τούτων τὰς πλείστας ἡμῖν ἐξηγεῖται τῶν περιπετειῶν, οὐχ ὑποτιθεῖς αἰτίαν καὶ τρόπον τοῖς γινομένοις, ὧν χωρὶς οὔτ' ἔλλειν εὐλόγως οὔτ' ὀργίζεσθαι καθηκόντως δυνατὸν ἐπ' οὐδενὶ τῶν συμβαινόντων.

The reference to cause and mode of the events adds a further nuance to the requirements for pity in history besides truthfulness. An examination of cause and mode may be part of the accuracy to which historians are obliged, but also brings in the necessity of a moral evaluation. This aspect is illustrated by Polybius' examples, which show that pity should be limited to the just (2.56.14-15): in accordance with Aristotle, only those deserve pity whose suffering is undeserved.<sup>627</sup> The arousal of pity is thus not to be condemned per se, but needs to be based on a truthful account and moral evaluation. While criticizing Phylarchus for making pity the goal of his work and thereby aligning historiography with tragedy, Polybius does not exclude it from proper historiography. Historiography may even be tragic, but only if the events were tragic. Polybius does therefore not contradict his theoretical reflections when he gives the story of Philip a tragic plotment<sup>628</sup> or caps a colourful report of a massacre of soldiers with the comment: '... the picture presented by the stream was indeed tragical and

---

<sup>624</sup> Cf. Levene 1997: 134; Marincola 2003: 300-1; Schepens 2005: 162-3.

<sup>625</sup> See the argument against reducing emotions in historiography to pity and fear in Marincola 2003.

<sup>626</sup> On ζῆλος as an emotion evoked by history, see Marincola 2003: 303-6.

<sup>627</sup> E.g., Arist. *Poet.* 1453a4-6; *Rh.* 1385b13-14. Cf. Levene 1997: 134 who emphasizes that Polybius shares cognitivist assumptions about emotions with Aristotle.

<sup>628</sup> Cf. Walbank 1938.

extraordinary ...' ('... τραγικήν καὶ παρηλλαγμένην φαίνεσθαι τοῦ ρεύματος τὴν φαντασίαν ...', 5.48.9).

Polybius' critique of histories revelling in details is also qualified. The examples adduced by him, such as an encounter in which nine men die, indicate that the critique is levelled at narratives on subjects unworthy of such a treatment. The idea that, on the other hand, important subjects deserve a detailed treatment comes to the fore in Polybius' discussion of accounts of Agathocles (15.35.1):

It is not therefore advisable, as I said, to deal at excessive length with the fate of such a man, but it is otherwise with the Sicilian Agathocles and Dionysius and certain other rulers of renown.

Διόπερ οὐ χρή τοῖς τοιούτοις προσάπτειν τὸν ἐπιμετροῦντα λόγον, καθάπερ εἶπα, τῷ δ' Ἀγαθοκλεῖ καὶ Διονυσίῳ τοῖς Σικελιώταις καὶ τισὶν ἑτέροις τῶν ἐν πράγμασιν ἐπ' ὀνόματος γεγονότων.<sup>629</sup>

Thus, Polybius does not condemn detailed narratives per se, but insists on the appropriateness of the subject as well as on the truthfulness of the account.

Polybius, these passages suggest, does not reject the notion of narrative mimesis itself; another passage even intimates that he assigns it a not insignificant value.<sup>630</sup> Perhaps the most piercing reproach levelled against Timaeus is his lack of experience. Being an armchair historian, Timaeus is liable to miss the truth (12.25h2-4):

... and if he ever comes near the truth he resembles those painters who make their sketches from stuffed bags. For in their case the outlines are sometimes preserved but we miss that vividness and animation of the real figures which the graphic art is especially capable of rendering. The same is the case with Timaeus and in general with all who approach the work in this bookish mood. We miss in them the vividness of facts, as this impression can only be produced by the personal experience of the author. Those, therefore, who have not been through the events themselves do not succeed in arousing the interest of their readers.

κἂν ποτε δὲ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐπιψάυση, παραπλήσιός ἐστι τοῖς ζωγράφοις τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν (ἀνασσο)αγμένων θυλάκων ποιουμένοις τὰς ὑπογραφάς· καὶ γὰρ ἐπ' ἐκείνων ἢ μὲν ἐκτὸς ἐνίοτε γραμμὴ σῶζεται, τὸ δὲ τῆς ἐμφάσεως καὶ τῆς ἐνεργείας τῶν ἀληθινῶν ζώων ἄπεστιν, ὅπερ ἴδιον ὑπάρχει τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης. τὸ δ' αὐτὸ συμβαίνει καὶ περὶ Τίμαιον καὶ καθόλου τοὺς ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς βυβλιακῆς ἕξεως ὀρμωμένους· ἢ γὰρ ἔμφασιν τῶν πραγμάτων αὐτοῖς ἄπεστι διὰ τὸ

<sup>629</sup> In his examination of battle descriptions, D'Huys 1990: 282-7 emphasizes that Polybius draws on *topoi* and delves into details only for particularly important events.

<sup>630</sup> Cf. Schepens 1975; 2005: 162-3.

μόνον ἐκ τῆς αὐτοπαθείας τοῦτο γίνεσθαι τῆς τῶν συγγραφέων· ὅθεν οὐκ ἐντίκτουσιν ἀληθινούς ζήλους τοῖς ἀκούουσιν οἱ μὴ δι' αὐτῶν πεπορευμένοι τῶν πραγμάτων.

The comparison of narrative with painting to conceptualize its mimetic capacity is a firmly established topos which we have already encountered in the Plutarch chapter.<sup>631</sup> Its use here underlines Polybius' appreciation of narrative mimesis. Vividness appears as a positive quality which historians without any experiences in real life will miss. To us, the idea that the vividness of a representation depends on taking a real model may be less than convincing, but Polybius backs it up further by voicing the insight of οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν that historians depend on experience for *emphasis* in their writing (12.25h.5). No matter who these predecessors are,<sup>632</sup> the association with *autopatheia* endows narrative vividness with special dignity in the eyes of a historian who rates experience and the stance of the eyewitness as highly as Polybius. By being aligned with the historian's experience, narrative vividness is even linked to the use of history, as the reference to *emphasis* in 12.25g2 implies:

So that as nothing written by mere students of books is written with experience or vividness, their works are of no practical utility to readers. For if we take from history all that can benefit us, what is left is quite contemptible and useless.

λοιπὸν οὐτ' ἐμπείρως ὑπὸ τῶν βιβλιακῶν οὐτ' ἐμφαντικῶς οὐδενὸς γραφομένου συμβαίνει τὴν πραγματείαν ἄπρακτον γίνεσθαι τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσιν· εἰ γὰρ ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας ἐξέλοι τις τὸ δυνάμενον ὠφελεῖν ἡμᾶς, τὸ λοιπὸν αὐτῆς ἄζηλον καὶ ἀνωφελὲς γίνεται παντελῶς.

Particularly in his discussion of Phylarchus, but also in other passages Polybius takes issue with devices that enhance the experiential appeal of historiographic narratives. Polybius' critique, however, is not directed against mimesis in itself. On the contrary, narrative vividness has a firm place in Polybius' methodological reflections. On the one hand, it is bound to, and limited

---

<sup>631</sup> Cf. ch. 5 ???, see also, e.g., Pl. *Phdr.* 275d; Arist. *Poet.* 1447a18 (see Gudeman 1934: *ad loc.* for further passages).

<sup>632</sup> Pédech 1964: 135 and Roveri 1964: 76 think of Ephorus and Theopompus, a suggestion which is successfully refuted by Schepens 1975, who argues for the influence of Duris and the so-called tragic historians on Polybius. While I do not think that we can speak of a distinct school of tragic or Peripatetic historiography, I fully agree that Polybius' reflections align him with the ideas on mimesis voiced in Duris 76 F1 *FGrH*. See, however, Sacks 1981: 144-70, who denies any influence of other historians and stresses the independence and idiosyncrasy of Polybius' ideas. Marincola 2003: 301-2 is also sceptical about Aristotelian background and draws attention to the importance of the terms used by Polybius in rhetoric.

by, truthfulness and appropriateness; on the other, it gains weight from its close association with *autopatheia*.

## V. MIMETIC NARRATIVE

We have seen that Polybius does not condemn experiential historical accounts per se, but insists on historical accuracy and appropriateness to the events. Despite his teleological inclination and a strong narratorial presence, his narrative features mimetic passages. Due to the spectre of tragic historiography, many discussions of Polybius' narrative technique have focused on episodes with a certain 'tragic' character including the end of Philip and the case of Agathocles.<sup>633</sup> This is not the place to enter into the long and complex debate on tragic historiography, as my argument focuses on Polybius, but anyone surveying the ancient sources will be struck by how little evidence there is for a school of tragic historiography. In addition, Walbank's argument that influences of tragedy on historiography precede Aristotle and ultimately go back to Homer is very convincing.<sup>634</sup> For the purposes of my argument, it is also important to notice that mimetic and experiential are not synonymous with tragic. As important as narrative vividness may be to make readers fully feel tragedy's force, it is not limited to tragic structures. To underline this, I will illustrate the mimetic quality of Polybius' writing through a story that is not particularly tragic, before touching upon further examples.

### *The battle at Zama (15.5.3-16)*<sup>635</sup>

When Scipio catches Carthaginian spies, he gives them a tour of his camp and then sends them back (15.5.3-7). This extraordinary behaviour astonishes Hannibal and prompts him to ask his opponent for a meeting in which he argues that Romans and Carthaginians should not go beyond their traditional home zones. He emphasizes the power of *tyche* of which Scipio, spoilt by his good luck, may not be sufficiently aware, but which his own fate illustrates so well. Scipio ought to take this into account and content himself with peace on the conditions

---

<sup>633</sup> On the end of Philip, see Walbank 1938; on the Agathocles drama, see Bollansé 2005. On *enargeia* in Polybius, see Manieri 1998: 158-62.

<sup>634</sup> Walbank 1955; 1960. The debate about a tragic/Peripatetic school of historiography was initiated by Schwartz 1897 who argued that Duris applied the ideas of Aristotle's *Poetics* to historiography. This thesis was taken up, modified and developed further by, among others, Scheller 1911; von Fritz 1972: 331-49. Ullman 1942, on the other hand, tried to show that Duris' plea for mimesis and *hedone* in historiography cannot have derived from Aristotle who limits these concepts to poetry. Instead he argues for an Isocratean origin of the notion of mimesis in historiography. For a survey of the debate, see Meister 1975: 109-26; Sacks 1981: 144-70.

<sup>635</sup> The majority of works has focused on the comparison of Polybius' with Livy's account: Cavallin 1947; 1948; Lambert 1948; Edlund 1967. D'Huys 1990 examines the use of two topoi, the war cries of the soldiers and the corpses on the battlefield.

that Hannibal offers, essentially a withdrawal of Carthage from Sicily, Sardinia and Spain (15.6.4-7.9). In his rejoinder, Scipio stresses the responsibility of the Carthaginians for the current war and, while briefly acknowledging the power of *tyche*, envisages the Roman success as divine punishment for the Carthaginians. Peace as suggested by Hannibal would have been a possibility as long as the Carthaginian army was still in Italy, but is out of the question now that the Romans have crossed over to Africa. The conditions offered by Hannibal fall short of the terms of treaty stipulated after the defeat of Carthage. Especially after the Carthaginian violation of this treaty, it would be impossible to approach the senate with Hannibal's proposal. The only alternative to a battle left under the current circumstances is a capitulation of the Carthaginians (15.8).

The speeches are followed by a narratorial comment on the significance of the battle in which not only Libya and Europe, but the dominion of the world is at stake (15.9.1-5). Polybius then reports the battle order of the Romans and the address which Scipio directs to his troops. Scipio forcefully juxtaposes the opportunities to be gained from a victory with the situation the soldiers have to face in case of a defeat (15.9.6-10.7). Parallel to this, Polybius describes the Carthaginian dispositions and Hannibal's exhortation speech that dwells on past triumphs over the Romans. The account of the battle itself takes three chapters (15.12-14) that are capped by two chapters in which Polybius comments upon the course of the battle (15.15-16).

Various devices render the Zama narrative mimetic. It is first noteworthy that Polybius refrains from anticipating the outcome of the battle. Of course, most readers would be familiar with Scipio's victory and in the preceding narrative Polybius has often mentioned Rome's final success, but within the account of Zama he is at pains to limit his representation to the vantage-point of the historical agents. At the beginning, the narrative switches back and forth between the two camps. These narratorial changes of perspective follow the action as they are prompted by the moves of spies and messengers. The reader accompanies Hannibal's spies first to the Roman camp (15.5.3-5), then back to the Carthaginians (15.5.8). When Hannibal sends a messenger to Scipio, the narrative also shifts to the Roman side (15.5.9) whence it again returns to the Carthaginians in the footsteps of a messenger (15.6.1). The close correspondence between narratorial perspective and movements at the level of action is well-known from Homeric epic where it is frequently employed to shift from one scene to another.<sup>636</sup> Historians, on the other hand, take greater liberty in scene changes so that the use of this device in the passage just mentioned is striking. It helps to create an account which seems to be directly modelled on the action.

While the site of Scipio's camp is excellent in all regards, Hannibal chooses a place without a spring close by: 'And indeed his men suffered considerable hardship owing to this.' (καὶ πολλὴν ταλαιπωρίαν ὑπέμενον οἱ

---

<sup>636</sup> See, e.g., Hellwig 1964: 95-7; Richardson 1990: 110-19.

στρατιῶται περὶ τοῦτο τὸ μέρος ...’, 15.6.2). This is a detail of no relevance to the further course of the action, but the very superfluousness of such pieces of information creates the kind of *effet de réel* which we have already noticed in Xenophon.<sup>637</sup> It enhances the experiential quality of the narrative just as the step by step description of how the two generals approach one another: ‘On the following day both generals came out of their camps accompanied by a few horsemen, and then, leaving their escorts behind, met each other alone, having an interpreter with them.’ (‘... κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐξῆς ἡμέραν προῆλθον ἀπὸ τῆς ἰδίας παρεμβολῆς ἀμφοτέροι μετ’ ὀλίγων ἰππέων, κᾶπειτα χωρισθέντες ἀπὸ τούτων αὐτοὶ συνῆλθον εἰς τὸ μέσον ἔχοντες ἑρμηνέα μεθ’ αὐτῶν.’ 15.6.3).

In his presentation of the two speeches, Polybius slides from indirect to direct speech. He follows therein a tendency in oral communication to shift from more complex to less complex forms and enhances the mimetic quality of his account as direct speech minimizes the mediating role of the narrator.<sup>638</sup> Hannibal and Scipio offer diverging views on the situation: while Hannibal emphasizes the role of *tyche* to which Romans and Carthaginians are subject alike, Scipio differentiates between the two powers and foregrounds the Carthaginians’ moral shortcomings. Both speeches join though in drawing up a backdrop against which the reader may view the battle at Zama. Hannibal’s reflections on *tyche* are strongly reminiscent of Polybius’ view of *tyche*’s role in history and offer a meta-historical frame.<sup>639</sup> Scipio’s emphasis on the Carthaginians’ previous behaviour evokes the historical events that have led to the battle at Zama. The speeches thus provide the account with a yardstick against which the reader can assess the current situation. The embedding of this material in the action helps avoiding a narratorial intervention while also enriching the presentation of the action.

Additionally, the speeches serve a ‘sideshadowing’ function: Hannibal’s proposal lays out a very different course history could have taken. While Polybius’ readers are well aware of Rome’s final triumph, they are alerted to the possibility of a very different development. Had Scipio accepted Hannibal’s proposal, Rome would not have attained dominion of the *oikumene*; the world would have continued to be split in two halves, one ruled by Rome, the other by Carthage. Due to Scipio’s rejection of Hannibal’s offer, this remains unrealized and becomes merely alternative history. At the same time, Scipio further qualifies this alternative history when he points out that the Romans may well have agreed to a peace treaty as long as they were still in Italy. From his point of view, Hannibal’s offer comes too late, but sketches a scenario that was not unrealistic in the past.

Before the battle account proper, Polybius gives yet another pair of speeches of the two generals; these exhortatory addresses have been criticized as a

---

<sup>637</sup> Cf. ch. 3 ???

<sup>638</sup> On the mimetic aspect of direct speech, cf. above ch. 2???

<sup>639</sup> Cf. Cavallin 1948: 69.

‘series of commonplaces’,<sup>640</sup> but nonetheless fulfil important narrative functions. It is striking that whereas Scipio delivers a single speech, Hannibal first briefs the leaders of the mercenaries and those of the Carthaginians how to encourage their men and then turns towards his own men for a speech that Polybius reports at length. Polybius thereby underscores the diversity and lack of unity in the Carthaginian army, a point to which he later returns. The exhortatory speeches also reinforce the mimetic appeal of the narrative. Scipio emphasizes the significance of the situation: nothing less than the dominion over the world is at stake. Moreover, his musings about the aftermath of a defeat evoke an alternative course – how would the Roman soldiers in case of a Carthaginian victory fare on foreign soil – and drive home the openness of the past when it still was present. The readers are forcefully reminded that the outcome with which they are familiar, a Roman victory, was still future and unknown to the historical agents. Hannibal who in his encounter with Scipio has touched upon the past only as an illustration of the force of *tyche*, now delves into Carthage’s past triumphs over Rome. This retrospective further fills in the background against which the reader is to view the current situation. As in the case of the meeting of Hannibal with Scipio, the integration of this background into the action endows the past with its own temporal horizon and strengthens the mimesis of the narrative.

Critics have pointed out that Livy’s account, in which the exhortation speeches are shorter, is less long-winded, more economic and ultimately more elegant than Polybius’ narrative.<sup>641</sup> I would not dare to join this debate with a judgment of my own, but I think it is safe to claim that the extensive report on the battle preparations in Polybius also serves a narrative function. It retards the action, creates suspense and thereby helps the readers to put themselves into the shoes of the historical agents.

Polybius’ report of the battle at Zama itself does not feature single engagements as does Appian’s account,<sup>642</sup> but nonetheless some passages furnish details that enhance its experiential quality (15.12.8-9):<sup>643</sup>

When the phalanxes were close to each other, the Romans fell upon their

<sup>640</sup> Walbank 1957-79: *ad* 15.6.3-8.14; cf. *ad* 15.10.2.

<sup>641</sup> See, e.g., Cavallin 1947: 31-2; Lambert 1948: 62.

<sup>642</sup> In 8.44-5, Appian reports a duel between Hannibal and Scipio, in 8.46 between the former and Massinissa.

<sup>643</sup> Polybius mixes two Iliadic verses, 4.437-8 (οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἦεν ὁμός θρόος οὐδ’ ἴα γῆρυς,/ ἀλλὰ γλῶσσ’ ἐπέμικτο· πολύκλητοι δ’ ἔσαν ἄνδρες.) and 2.804 (ἄλλη δ’ ἄλλων γλῶσσα πολυσπερέων ἀνθρώπων.). The main part of Polybius’ quote stems from the Homeric account of the preparations for the first battle day, but I do not think we should press the reference to the Iliadic passages. While here the Carthaginian cacophony is aligned with the noise of the Trojans, a later Iliadic quote parallels Hannibal with Hector (15.16.3). It seems that Polybius is interested not so much in the specific context of the quoted lines as, more generally, in an heroic air. Cf. Vercruyssen 1990: 297-8 on the Homeric echo and D’Huys 1990: 274-8 on the topos of noise in battle.

foes, raising their war-cry and clashing their shields with their spears as is their practice, while there was a strange confusion of shouts raised by the Carthaginian mercenaries, for, as the poet says, their voice was not one, but

Mixed was the murmur, and confused the sound,  
Their names all various,

as appears from the list of them I gave above.

ἐπειδὴ δ' ἐγγύς ἦσαν ἀλλήλων, οἱ μὲν Ῥωμαῖοι κατὰ τὰ πάτρια συναλαλάξαντες καὶ συμψοφήσαντες τοῖς ξίφεσι τοὺς θυρεοὺς προσέβαλλον τοῖς ὑπεναντίοις, οἱ δὲ μισθοφόροι τῶν Καρχηδονίων ἀδιάκριτον ἐποίουν τὴν φωνὴν καὶ παρηλλαγμένην· οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἦν κατὰ τὸν ποιητὴν ὁ αὐτὸς θροῦς

οὐδ' ἴα γῆρυς,

ἄλλη δ' ἄλλων γλῶσσα, πολύκλητοι δ' ἔσαν ἄνδρες,  
καθ' ἅπερ ἀρτίως ἐξηριθμησάμην.

Here as in other battle narratives, sound adds to the vividness of the battle description. The Homeric quote interrupts the narrative flow, but is nonetheless important. It underlines the lack of unity in the Carthaginian ranks and bestows on the encounter of Romans and Carthaginians the gravity of epic warfare. In evoking the world of heroic combat, the reference to Homer may also stimulate the fantasy of the reader and prompt her to draw out further the image in her mind.

A passage replete with details and particularly vivid can be found in 15.13.10-14.2:

They were therefore obliged to retreat towards the wings and the open ground beyond. The space which separated the two armies still on the field was now covered with blood, slaughter, and dead bodies, and the Roman general was placed in great difficulty by this obstacle to his completing the rout of the enemy. For he saw that it would be very difficult to pass over the ground without breaking his ranks owing to the quality of slippery corpses which were still soaked in blood and had fallen in heaps and the number of arms thrown away at haphazard.

ὄθεν ἠναγκάσθησαν οὗτοι μὲν ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ἀποχώρησιν ἐπὶ τὰ κέρατα καὶ τὰς ἐκ τούτων εὐρυχωρίας, γενομένου δὲ τοῦ μεταξὺ τόπου τῶν καταλειπομένων στρατοπέδων πλήρους αἵματος, φόνου, νεκρῶν, πολλὴν ἀπορίαν παρεῖχε τῷ τῶν Ῥωμαίων στρατηγῷ τὸ τῆς τροπῆς ἐμπόδιον· ὃ τε γὰρ τῶν νεκρῶν ὄλισθος, ὡς ἂν αἰμοφύρτων καὶ σωρηδὸν πεπτωκότων, ἢ τε τῶν χύδην ἐρριμμένων ὄπλων ὁμοῦ τοῖς πτώμασιν ἀλογία δυσχερῆ τὴν δίοδον ἔμελλε ποιήσῃν τοῖς ἐν τάξει διαπορευομένοις.

The internal focalization through Scipio brings the reader close to the scene which the gory details render very gripping. Polybius is infamous for his convoluted style, but here the absolute genitives piercing both sentences as well as the heavy attribute qualifying ἀλογία make the obstacles that the Romans are facing syntactically tangible for the reader. The imperfect forms of παρείχε and ἔμελλε may express a durative aspect, but if we follow Bakker's thesis on the aspect of tenses, also place the account in the past and let the reader follow the action as if she were an eyewitness.<sup>644</sup>

As we can see, various devices give the Zama narrative a strong experiential appeal. It simultaneously illustrates the conspicuous voice of the narrator that undermines its mimesis. The account of the battle is followed by two chapters in which Polybius analyses the course of the battle and evaluates in particular Hannibal's genius as general (15.15-16). Even the preceding narrative contains at least one extensive narratorial intervention (15.9.3-5):

Is there anyone who can remain unmoved in reading the narrative of such an encounter? For it would be impossible to find more valiant soldiers, or generals who had been more successful and were more thoroughly exercised in the art of war, nor indeed had Fortune ever offered to contending armies a more splendid prize of victory, since the conquerors would not be masters of Africa and Europe alone, but of all those parts of the world which now hold a place in history; as indeed they very shortly were.

ἐφ' ἃ τίς οὐκ ἂν ἐπιστήσας συμπαθῆς γένοιτο κατὰ τὴν ἐξήγησιν; οὔτε γὰρ δυνάμεις πολεμικωτέρας οὔθ' ἡγεμόνας ἐπιτυχεστέρους τούτων καὶ μᾶλλον ἀθλητὰς γεγονότας τῶν κατὰ πόλεμον ἔργων εὖροι τις ἂν ἑτέρους, οὐδὲ μὴν ἄθλα μείζω τὴν τύχην ἐκτεθεικυῖαν τοῖς ἀγωνιζομένοις τῶν τότε προκειμένων· οὐ γὰρ τῆς Λιβύης αὐτῆς οὐδὲ τῆς Εὐρώπης ἔμελλον κυριεύειν οἱ τῇ μάχῃ κρατήσαντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων μερῶν τῆς οἰκουμένης, ὅσα νῦν πέπτωκεν ὑπὸ τὴν ἱστορίαν. ὃ καὶ συνέβη γενέσθαι μετ' ὀλίγον.

The rhetorical question, the deictic νῦν and the prolepsis, which is vague, but nevertheless highlights the historian's retrospect, formally underscore the interruption of the narrative through the evaluation of the narrator. As commentators note, the narratorial evaluation is far more explicit than in Livy's account which is otherwise heavily indebted to Polybius.<sup>645</sup> It is characteristic of Polybius not to content himself with an assessment implicit in the narrative, but to

<sup>644</sup> Cf. ch. 2 ???

<sup>645</sup> Cavallin 1948: 68; Edlund 1967: 166-7.

buttress it in his narratorial voice, even using the same terms as the characters.<sup>646</sup> These qualifications notwithstanding, the high degree of vividness in the Zama narrative and the variety of devices used for its mimesis are noteworthy.

### *Mimesis in central passages*

It is not too difficult to find other episodes with a similar mimetic quality. Take, for example, the Isthmus declaration (18.46): Polybius first gives the various opinions entertained by the Greeks about how far Roman generosity would reach (18.46.1-3):

This having been decided and the Isthmian Games being now close at hand, the most distinguished men from almost the whole world having assembled there owing to their expectation of what would take place, many and various were the reports prevalent during the whole festival, some saying that it was impossible for the Romans to abandon certain places and cities and others declaring that they would abandon the places which were considered famous, but would retain those, which while less illustrious, would serve their purpose equally well, even at once naming these latter out of their own heads, each more ingenious than the other.

Δοξάντων δὲ τούτων, καὶ τῆς Ἰσθμίων πανηγύρεως ἐπελθούσης, καὶ σχεδὸν ἀπὸ πάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων ἀνδρῶν συναληλυθότων διὰ τὴν προσδοκίαν τῶν ἀποβησομένων, πολλοὶ καὶ ποικίλοι καθ' ὅλην τὴν πανήγυριν ἐνέπιπτον λόγοι, τῶν μὲν ἀδύνατον εἶναι φασκόντων Ῥωμαίους ἐνίων ἀποστῆναι τόπων καὶ πόλεων, τῶν δὲ διοριζομένων ὅτι τῶν μὲν ἐπιφανῶν εἶναι δοκούντων τόπων ἀποστήσονται, τοὺς δὲ φαντασίαν μὲν ἔχοντας ἐλάττω, χρείαν δὲ τὴν αὐτὴν παρέχεσθαι δυναμένους καθέξουσι. καὶ τούτους εὐθέως ἐπεδείκνυσαν αὐτοὶ καθ' αὐτῶν διὰ τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους εὐρεσιλογίας.

After rendering the declaration in direct speech, Polybius then reports in detail the reaction of the crowd. Due to the noise, some do not understand the announcement, others do not believe what they have just heard - the herald has to proclaim the declaration for a second time (18.46.6-9). In their exuberant joy, the Greeks nearly kill Flaminius (18.46.12):

For some of them, longing to look him in the face and call him their saviour, others in their anxiety to grasp his hand, and the greater number

---

<sup>646</sup> E.g., 15.10.5: τῆς δ' οὖν τύχης ἡμῖν τὰ μέγιστα τῶν ἄθλων εἰς ἑκάτερον τὸ μέρος ἐκτεθεικυίας ... echoes 15.9.4: ... οὐδὲ μὴν ἄθλα μείζω τὴν τύχην ἐκτεθεικυίαν τοῖς ἀγωνιζομένοις τῶν τότε προκειμένων.

throwing crowns and fillets on him, they all but tore the man in pieces.

οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀντοφθαλμῆσαι κατὰ πρόσωπον καὶ σωτῆρα προσφωνῆσαι βουλόμενοι, τινὲς δὲ τῆς δεξιᾶς ἄψασθαι σπουδάζοντες, οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ στεφάνους ἐπιρριπτοῦντες καὶ λημνίσκους, παρ' ὀλίγον διέλυσαν τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

Together with the internal focalization through the Greeks, the details instil a great degree of vividness in Polybius' account. The reader not only learns about the historical fact, i.e. the liberty of Greece, but is invited to view it from the perspective of the Greeks present at the Isthmus.

It can even be argued that the mimetic quality of the account is implicitly marked (18.46.9):

But when the herald, again coming forward to the middle of the stadium and silencing the noise by his bugler, made the same identical proclamation, such a mighty burst of cheering arose that those who listen to the tale today cannot easily conceive what it was.

ὡς δὲ πάλιν ὁ κῆρυξ, προελθὼν εἰς τὸ μέσον καὶ κατασιωπησάμενος διὰ τοῦ σαλπικτοῦ τὸν θόρυβον, ἀνηγόρευσε ταῦτά καὶ ὡσαύτως τοῖς πρόσθεν, τηλικοῦτον συνέβη καταρραγῆναι τὸν κρότον ὥστε καὶ μὴ ῥαδίως ἂν ὑπὸ τὴν ἔννοιαν ἀγαγεῖν τοῖς νῦν ἀκούουσι τὸ γεγονός.

The term 'those who listen to the tale today' closely aligns the reader with the original audience that listened to Flaminius at the Isthmus. The parallel between the two audiences is deepened by their reactions: even though the cause of the astonishment is different – the readers will not easily grasp the volume of the noise, the audience in 167 BCE was overwhelmed by the declaration – Polybius insinuates that the reaction of his readers will somehow mimic the reaction of the original audience. The grandeur of the moment, it seems, still echoes in the present, as it is conveyed by Polybius' narrative. At the same time, as mimetic as the narrative of the Isthmus declaration is, the Polybian narrator remains conspicuous and adds a lengthy comment on the importance of the event in his own voice (18.46.13-15).

The destruction of Carthage also seems to have been told with great vividness. Although we do not have the original text of this passage and are forced to rely on excerpts and the texts of Diodorus and Appian for its tentative reconstruction, enough is preserved to attest a great wealth of details: supplicated by Hasdrubal, Scipio comments in direct speech on *tyche* and the fragility of man (38.20.1):

When Hasdrubal, the Carthaginian commander, threw himself as a suppliant at Scipio's knees, the general turning to those round him said,

‘Look, my friends, how well Fortune knows to make an example of inconsiderate men’.

‘Ὅτι τοῦ Ἀσδρούβου τοῦ τῶν Καρχηδονίων στρατηγοῦ ἰκέτου παραγενομένου τοῖς τοῦ Σκιπίωνος γόνασιν, ὁ στρατηγὸς ἐμβλέψας εἰς τοὺς συνόντας “Ὁρᾶτ’” ἔφη ‘τὴν τύχην, ὦ ἄνδρες, ὡς ἀγαθὴ παραδειγματίζειν ἐστὶ τοὺς ἀλογίστους τῶν ἀνθρώπων.’

Scipio directs his words to his entourage, but, given the similarity to Polybius’ reflections,<sup>647</sup> many readers will feel directly addressed by the imperative. Thus, in addition to the embedding of central reflections in the action, the blending together of internal and external audiences raises the immediacy of the narrative. Its mimetic appeal is further enhanced by detailed descriptions such as that of Hasdrubal’s wife (38.20.7):

At this moment his wife, seeing Hasdrubal seated with Scipio in front of the enemy, came out from the crowd of deserters, herself dressed like a great lady, but holding her children, who wore nothing but their smocks, by each hand and wrapping them in her cloak.

Κατὰ δὲ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ἡ γυνὴ θεωροῦσα τὸν Ἀσδρούβαν προκαθήμενον μετὰ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ προῆλθεν ἐκ τῶν αὐτομόλων, αὐτὴ μὲν ἐλευθερίως καὶ σεμνῶς ἡμφιεσμένη, τοὺς δὲ παῖδας ἐν χιτωνίσκοις ἐξ ἑκατέρου τοῦ μέρους προσειληφυῖα ταῖς χερσὶ μετὰ τῶν ἰδίων ἐνδυμάτων.

Another excerpt from the fall of Carthage narrates the tears of Scipio meditating about the fate of his enemies.<sup>648</sup> The reconstruction of the passage is difficult; the beginning of the excerpt is badly damaged and the two later sources drawing on Polybius – Appian *Pun.* 132 and Diod. 32.24, itself only an excerpt – offer divergent accounts. It can nonetheless be reasonably conjectured that in the original text Scipio weeps and, asked by Polybius why, reflects on the fickleness of fortune that might also affect Rome one day, quoting Hector’s prediction of Ilion’s fall (*Il.* 6.448-9).<sup>649</sup> The detail of the conversation which seems to be rendered at least partly in direct speech contributes to the mimetic appeal of Polybius’ account of the destruction of Carthage. In addition, several layers of

---

<sup>647</sup> Not only what Scipio says about *tyche*, but also the form of his reflection, namely the rhetorical question in 38.20.3, is reminiscent of Polybius.

<sup>648</sup> See Astin 1967: 282-7 and Walbank 1957-79: *ad* 38.21.1-3 with further literature. Astin 1967: 283 makes the important point that we do not know how long the section between Hasdrubal’s supplication and Scipio’s tears may have been.

<sup>649</sup> This reconstruction follows the argument of Astin 1967: 282-3 and Walbank 1957-79: *ad* 38.21.1-3 who favour Appian over Diodorus: while Diodorus has Polybius ask about the tears of Scipio who, in his rejoinder, after expressing his concern about Rome, quotes the Homeric lines, in Appian Polybius inquires about the meaning of the Homeric quote with which Scipio caps his reflection on the fall of various empires.

meaning enhance its expressiveness: intratextually, the tears of the victorious Scipio evoke the tears shed by his father seeing the humiliation of royal ladies in Carthage Nova (10.18.13) and the tears of Antiochus III when Achaeus is brought to him (8.20.3).<sup>650</sup> Intertextually, besides the explicit quote of Homer, other texts may be echoed: Hieronymus seems to have mentioned that Antigonus broke into tears when he saw the head of Pyrrhus.<sup>651</sup> Tim Rood argues that ‘the general stress on mutability also looks back to Herodotus’ reflection that cities once great were now small and that cities now great were once small (1.5.4) and to Thucydides’ anticipation of Athens and Sparta as ruins (1.10.2)’.<sup>652</sup> Yet another possible reference are the tears of Xerxes at Abydos (Hdt. 7.45-6).<sup>653</sup> Scipio ponders on the end of Rome while its power is at its peak just as Xerxes reflects on the mortality of his troops who are now in their prime. Through the intertexts, Polybius inserts Scipio and Rome into a long series of men and empires most of which underwent a downfall after their great successes.

The kaleidoscope in which Polybius has various times refract and mirror each other deserves a closer look. Scipio’s Homeric quote harks back to a heroic past and refers to a prediction about what is still future for Hector, but already past for him as well as the narrator and the readers: the capture of Troy. This event serves as a mirror to the fall of Carthage, present for Scipio and past for the narrator. At the same time, Scipio makes it adumbrate something that is future not only for him, but also for the narrator: the downfall of Rome. Thus, besides embedding in the action a general reflection that applies directly to the world of his readers, Polybius also sets up a temporal horizon that unites him with the historical agents. The future past that creates a gap between historical agents and historian is transformed into a pure future, the distinction between the former and the latter being erased. These temporal intricacies may not be directly related to the mimetic dimension of the narrative, but they align the past closely with the present and thereby render it relevant to the readers. Through a narratorial comment (38.21.3), Polybius drives home the general message that

at the moment of our greatest triumph and of disaster to our enemies to reflect on our own situation and on the possible reversal of circumstances, and generally to bear in mind at the season of success the mutability of Fortune, is like a great and perfect man, a man in short worthy to be remembered.

τὸ γὰρ (ἐν) τοῖς μεγίστοις κατορθώμασι καὶ ταῖς τῶν ἐχθρῶν συμφοραῖς ἔννοιαν λαμβάνειν τῶν οἰκείων πραγμάτων καὶ τῆς ἐναντίας περιστάσεως καὶ καθόλου πρόχειρον ἔχειν ἐν ταῖς ἐπιτυχίαις

<sup>650</sup> Cf. Momigliano 1975: 22-3.

<sup>651</sup> Cf. Hornblower 1981: 104-5.

<sup>652</sup> Rood 2007b: 181.

<sup>653</sup> On this passage, see ch. 6 above ??? On the possibility of Herodotean influence on Polybius, stated boldly by Dryden, see McGing 2010: 52-8; 2012.

τὴν τῆς τύχης ἐπισφάλειαν ἀνδρός ἔστι μεγάλου καὶ τελείου καὶ συλλήβδην ἀξίου μνήμης.

All the examples of a strongly mimetic mode of writing considered so far narrate crucial turning points in history. However, given that only a small portion of Polybius' history has been preserved, such an observation requires caution. Even what we have contains an episode that seems to be of no greater significance and yet belongs to the most mimetic narratives in Polybius: the Agathocles story (15.25-33), labelled by one scholar 'one of the most ferocious and vivid pieces in all of Greek historiography'.<sup>654</sup> The seventeen pages in the Buettnner-Wobst edition devoted to the rise and fall of a minister of Ptolemy IV Philopater after the death of his master contain many tableaux brimming with details such as the preparations for the torture of a bodyguard (15.27.6-28.4). The narrative is followed by three paragraphs criticizing other historians for their accounts (15.34-36).<sup>655</sup> Even if we take into account that Polybius polemicizes not so much against length and details per se as against sensational elements and narratorial reflections that are not justified by the subject,<sup>656</sup> it remains noteworthy that events which, Polybius reckons, offer neither profit nor pleasure receive such a detailed treatment.<sup>657</sup>

On the whole, however, it seems that, in accordance with his emphasis on appropriateness, Polybius applies a strongly mimetic mode of writing mostly to throw into relief events of major significance. Generally speaking, mimesis does not constitute a value in itself for Polybius, but serves as a vehicle to history's ultimate didactic goal. This accords with the observation that even in mimetic passages the narratorial voice remains conspicuous and ensures that the readers learn their lessons.

## VI. POLYBIUS, THUCYDIDES AND HELLENISTIC HISTORIOGRAPHY

In considering Polybius the most important heir of Thucydides in ancient historiography, Momigliano voices an opinion to which many scholars would subscribe without further ado. He elaborates: 'Not only did he accept in substance Thucydides' method (even though, as far as I know, he cites Thucydides only once in the surviving text), but he also demolished systematically Timaeus, the only great historian of the third century who aligned himself with Herodotus. And

---

<sup>654</sup> Préaux 1965: 367: 'un des morceaux les plus féroces et les plus vivants de toute l'historiographie grecque' On the Agathocles narrative, see Verdin 1990; Bollansée 2005.

<sup>655</sup> Cf. Sacks 1981: 210-17; Verdin 1990: 448-54 and Bollansée 2005: 245-50. Walbank 1957-79: *ad* 15.34-6, emphasizes the argumentative weakness of 'this attempt at an aesthetic theory'.

<sup>656</sup> Cf. Verdin 1990: 452; Bollansée 2005: 249-50.

<sup>657</sup> Bollansée 2005: 251-3 argues that Polybius wanted to highlight the detrimental consequences of the factionalism at the Ptolemaic court and the anarchic potential of the mob. Even if this is the case, the tension remains between a highly mimetic account and the explicit statement that the story does not lend itself to more general reflections.

while Timaeus had initially found imitators in Rome (Fabius Pictor), the success of Polybius meant the triumph of Thucydides' school in Rome.'<sup>658</sup> The futures past yields a new perspective: concerning the balance between experience and teleology, Polybius deviates strongly from his prominent model and finds himself allied with Herodotus. He fully capitalizes on hindsight and interrupts the mimesis of his narrative further through 'his almost constant authorial intervention to explain, disagree, or ruminate discursively'.<sup>659</sup>

While Polybius flies the flag of Thucydides' methodological rigour, it seems that Thucydides' mimetic efforts have been continued rather by other Hellenistic historians. This view clashes with the established genealogy of ancient historiography: scholarship has in general not hesitated to adopt Polybius' devastating verdict over Phylarchus and other historians of the same period; and yet, in a fascinating 'Wesensbestimmung der antiken Geschichtsschreibung' Strasburger advances a positive assessment of what he calls tragic historiography. He contrasts it with a line of historians which, deriving from Thucydides, reduces history to the bare skeleton of facts:<sup>660</sup> 'It is the remarkable contribution of the Hellenistic Age to historical scholarship, to have countered such a process, notably through the simple thesis that history only achieves its full essence and becomes fruitful as experience (*Erlebnis*) ... The Hellenistic theoreticians label their new ideal style *μίμησις*, that is to say, imitation of reality as in drama, thereby making the reader a witness as in theatre. *Mutatis mutandis*, we speak of "realism".'<sup>661</sup>

The Thucydides chapter has shown, I hope, that Strasburger underestimates the experiential quality of his narrative.<sup>662</sup> I also doubt that our sources warrant the assumption of a distinct school of historians who applied concepts of Aristoteles' *Poetics* and further Peripatic works to historiography, and yet Strasburger's positive view of vividness in Hellenistic historiography is worth considering. Unfortunately, our meagre relics do not permit us to explore the issue

<sup>658</sup> Momigliano 1966 (= 1961/2): 18: 'Non solo egli in sostanza accettò il metodo tucidideo (sebbene, che io sappia, citi Tucidide una volta sola nelle parti superstiti), ma demolì sistematicamente Timeo, l'unio grande storico del III sec. che si riconnatesse a Erodoto. E poichè Timeo aveva cominciato a far scuola in Roma (Fabio Pittore), il successo di Polibio significò di fatto il trionfo della scuola di Tucidide a Roma.' Cf. note 2 above ???

<sup>659</sup> McGing 2010: 11.

<sup>660</sup> Strasburger 1966: 78-96.

<sup>661</sup> Strasburger 1966: 78: 'Es ist der unverächtliche Beitrag des hellenistischen Zeitalters zur Geschichtswissenschaft gewesen, sich solchem Fortgang bereits bewußt entgegengestellt zu haben, und zwar durch die schlichte These, daß Geschichte ihren vollen Wirklichkeitsgehalt nur habe und fruchtbar nur werden könne als Erlebnis ... Die hellenistischen Theoretiker nennen den von ihnen zum neuen Ideal erhobenen Darstellungsstil *μίμησις*; gemeint ist damit: Nachahmung der Wirklichkeit wie im Schauspiel, durch die der Leser zum Miterlebenden gemacht wird wie ein Zuschauer im Theater. Wir können *mutatis mutandis* von "Realismus" sprechen.'

<sup>662</sup> Strasburger 1966: 80 mentions the possible influence of Thucydides on the prominence of mimesis in Hellenist historiography (80), but ultimately stresses the differences. In focussing only on graphic vignettes, Strasburger underestimates the experiential quality of *The History of the Peloponnesian War*.

of futures past in such authors as Phylarchus, Posidonius and Agatharchides. At the same time, some of the fragments as well as the polemics of Polybius and other critics give us at least a glimpse. Let me briefly illustrate the mimetic efforts of Hellenistic historians through two fragments of Duris of Samos: a scholion on Euripides' *Hecuba* gives us Duris' account of a defeat of the Athenians at the hands of the Aeginetans. The only surviving Athenian is sent to Athens as eyewitness of the battle (*FGrH* 76 F24):

When he arrived, the women of the dead surrounded him, some inquiring about their husbands, others about their sons, yet others about their brothers. They happened to wear at that time Dorian clothing. Taking the pins from their shoulders, they first blinded and then killed the man.

τὸν δέ, ὡς ἦλθεν, περιέστησαν αἱ τῶν τεθνεώτων γυναῖκες, αἱ μὲν ἐρωτῶσαι τοὺς ἄνδρας τί γέγονασιν, αἱ δὲ τοὺς υἰούς, αἱ δὲ τοὺς ἀδελφούς· ἐτύγχανον δὲ φοροῦσαι κατ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον Δωρίδα στολήν. τὰς περόνας οὖν ἀπὸ τῶν ὤμων ἐλκυσάμεναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον πρῶτον ἐξετύφλωσαν, εἶτα ἀπέκτειναν.

A comparison with the parallel account in Herodotus is instructive (5.87.2-3):

And when the wives of the men who had gone on the expedition to Aegina heard the news, they were furious that he should be the only one to survive. They surrounded him, grabbed hold of him, and stabbed him to death with the brooches of their clothes, while each of them asked him where her husband was. That was how he met his death...

πυθομένας δὲ τὰς γυναῖκας τῶν ἐπ' Αἴγινα στρατευσαμένων ἀνδρῶν, δεινόν τι ποιησαμένας κεῖνον μοῦνον ἐξ ἀπάντων σωθῆναι, πέριξ τὸν ἄνθρωπον τοῦτον λαβούσας καὶ κεντεύσας τῆσι περόνησι τῶν ἱματίων εἰρωτᾶν ἐκάστην αὐτέων ὅκου εἶη ὁ ἐωυτῆς ἀνὴρ. καὶ τοῦτον μὲν οὕτω διαφθαρῆναι ...

Duris' version is very close to the model of Herodotus, but the small differences highlight its *enargeia*.<sup>663</sup> In Duris, the women first enquire about the men, notably not only husbands, but also sons and brothers. While Herodotus simply reports that they kill the messenger with their brooches, Duris explains the brooches as part of the Dorian dress they wore and has the women first draw the brooches from their shoulders, before he narrates the blinding and killing. The details yield a highly graphic scene that is far easier to visualize than the more summary version in Herodotus.

---

<sup>663</sup> Cf. Strasburger 1966: 83 n. 4.

In another fragment, Duris gives a minute description of the attire that Demetrius used to don (76 F14 *FGrH*):

For the footwear that he wore was made at great expense; as to the shape in which it was made, it was practically a half-boot, but it had a felt covering of the costliest purple; into this the manufacturers had woven, behind and in front, a very intricate pattern of gold. His riding-cloaks had a lustrous dark-grey colour, and the universe with its golden stars and the twelve signs of the Zodiac were woven in it. His headband was spangled with gold, and held tightly in place a hat of purple; the fringed ends of its woven material extended down to his back.

τὴν μὲν γὰρ ὑπόδεσιν ἦν εἶχεν κατεσκεύαζεν ἐκ πολλοῦ δαπανήματος· ἦν γὰρ κατὰ μὲν τὸ σχῆμα τῆς ἐργασίας σχεδὸν ἐμβάτης πύλημα λαμβάνων τῆς πολυτελεστάτης πορφύρας· τούτῳ δὲ χρυσοῦ πολλὴν ἐνύφαινον ποικιλίαν ὀπίσω καὶ ἔμπροσθεν ἐνιέντες οἱ τεχνῖται. αἱ δὲ χλαμύδες αὐτοῦ ἦσαν ὄρφνιον ἔχουσαι τὸ φέγγος τῆς χροῆς, τὸ δὲ πᾶν [ὁ πόλος] ἐνύφαντο χρυσοῦς ἀστέρας ἔχον καὶ τὰ δώδεκα ζῳδία. μίτρα δὲ χρυσόπαστος ἦν, <ἦ> καυσίαν ἀλουργῆ οὔσαν ἔσφιγγεν, ἐπὶ τὸ νῶτον φέρουσα τὰ τελευταῖα καταβλήματα τῶν ὑφασμάτων.

Such tableaux seem to have loomed large in Hellenistic historiography; their graphic quality is prefigured, for example, in the battle in the Syracusan harbour, but the number of such vignettes in Thucydides is limited. As we have seen, the experiential quality of his narrative rather appeals to the intellect: speeches and introspection, embedded in a by and large chronological account, put the reader into the shoes of the characters, forcing her to conjecture what she would do. While not permitting safe conclusions, the lamentably small relics of the Hellenistic historians suggest that their mimetic efforts concentrated rather on graphic scenes. It nonetheless seems that the Hellenistic historians against whom Polybius ranted continued Thucydides' narrative mimesis, if with a different emphasis in their narrative means.

Let me stress once more though that Polybius does not question narrative vividness per se and has himself some mimetic passages in store. His account of Zama as well as his reflection in 12.25h.2-4 bespeaks how pervasive the ideal of narrative vividness is throughout ancient historiography. That being said, for Polybius mimesis is not a self-sufficient quality of historical narrative: it serves to highlight important events such as the destruction of Carthage. The major goal of Polybius' writing is historical explanation and the instruction of his readers, for which he needs to look beyond the experiences of the historical agents as when he investigates synchronisms. The conflict which Polybius sees between his own didactic history and the mimetic style of Phylarchus throws into relief the special character of Thucydides' narrative. Thucydides' ulterior motive is also didactic,

but in his hands mimesis is, as I have argued, a powerful means for this goal: narrative re-experience permits the readers to familiarize themselves with the workings of history.

While Thucydides illustrates the strong urge to make the past tangible, Polybius draws our attention to the other pole, the power of hindsight. From his superior vantage-point, the historian can see links and construe lines that are beyond the grasp of the historical agents. It bears witness to Polybius' quality as historian that, while fully drawing out the benefits of hindsight, he has not forgotten about the vagaries of time: the unpredictable force of *tyche* permeates his narrative.<sup>664</sup> Making the reader re-experience the openness of the past is not a major concern to Polybius, but he still points it out in more analytical fashion. This confirms the link between teleology in narrative and human temporality for which I have argued in the introduction and the Herodotus chapter.<sup>665</sup> retrospect empowers us to master contingency to which we are subjected in our lives. Even the military history of Polybius does not conceal the fact that historiography is ultimately rooted in the attempt to come to grips with temporality.

---

<sup>664</sup> For a brief survey, see Walbank 2007.

<sup>665</sup> See ch. 1 ??? and ch. 6 ???

## 8. Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*

The large-scale or even universal histories of Herodotus and Polybius have proven fruitful ground for exploring the significance of retrospect in historical writing. A strong telos helps to orchestrate narratives covering an extended period and wide geographical setting. In this chapter, I will turn to another genre, the historical monograph, whose focus may be even more conducive to teleological design: wars, to take the most prominent subject for historical monographs in antiquity, come to a close; rulers, to give another example, die and dynasties end. My test-case, Sallust's *BC* will help elucidate a further point about retrospect: the works of Herodotus and Polybius have amply illustrated the impact of vantage-points on historiography. However, the narrative of past events is shaped not only by the choice of a later point of view, but also by the presentation of events as telos for preceding history. A teleological design shapes the end as well as the middle and the beginning. A simple example may illustrate that this claim is different from the banal notion that later events are causally linked to earlier ones: the exile of Augustus in 476 CE was just another deposition of an emperor in a very unstable period; but, taken as the end of the Roman Empire, as it has been since Marcellinus, or even as the end of antiquity, it becomes a crucial turning point.<sup>666</sup> Viewing events in light of earlier history can endow them with significance.

In an article on Sallust's second historiographic monograph, the *Bellum Iugurthinum*, Chris Kraus states: 'In the *BC*, Sallust anatomizes Roman corruption by reflecting it off a single individual; his hero's story, with its "neat dramatic arc", is bounded by a neat historical narrative with a beginning, middle, and end. The historian's technique in the *BJ* is significantly different. David Levene has argued that Sallust constructed this latter monograph as a "fragment" whose military and political narratives are incomprehensible without continual reference to both previous and subsequent Roman history.'<sup>667</sup> The *BC* does indeed not qualify as fragment in Levene's sense, but Sallust's account derives much of its significance from history that falls outside the scope of the Catilinarian Conspiracy. Some points that seem to adumbrate events from the 40s have prompted scholars to read the *BC* as Sallust's comment on his present.<sup>668</sup> More importantly, in the archaeology (5.9-13) and the digression on Roman politics (36.4-39.5), Sallust sets the conspiracy in a larger view of Roman history. If not exactly an endpoint, Catilina's failed revolution stands out 'because of the extraordinary nature of the crime and of the danger arising from it' (*sceleris atque*

---

<sup>666</sup> See the note on the year 476 CE in Marcellinus' chronicle with Croke 1983. For a survey of different approaches to the end of Rome, see Demandt 1984; on more recent contributions, see Marcone 2008.

<sup>667</sup> Kraus 1999: 218-19.

<sup>668</sup> On this, see below ???

*periculi novitate*, 4.4); it gains meaning from being envisaged as the culmination of a development that starts with the destruction of Carthage.<sup>669</sup>

That Sallust treats the Catilinarian Conspiracy as a symptom of the decline of the Republic may be considered *consensus omnium bonorum*, but it is nonetheless worth taking a closer look at the narrative means with which Sallust cements this teleological view of Rome's history (I). A comparison with other treatments of Catiline in ancient and modern historiography throws into relief Sallust's peculiar depiction of him (II). The *BC* itself, I shall suggest, contains two alternative assessments of the conspiracy that rival the main account. Besides highlighting the impact of teleology on history, Catiline's letter (III) and Caesar's speech (IV) illustrate that the *BC* is less monolithic than is often assumed. While restoring presentness to the past was not one of Sallust's major goals, the *BC*'s narrative is not without mimetic aspects (V).

## I. A TELEOLOGICAL VIEW OF ROME'S HISTORY

In the eight paragraphs of the archaeology (5.9-13), Sallust paints in broad brush strokes the history of Rome from its founding to the Catilinarian Conspiracy as a story of a quick rise carried by virtue that is followed by moral decadence: living together with the Aborigines, the fugitives from Troy quickly form a *civitas* united by *concordia* (6.2). Rome flourishes and manages to defend herself against envious neighbours. When the rule of the kings 'has degenerated into a lawless tyranny' (*in superbiam dominationemque se convortit*, 6.7), it is replaced by the institution of the consulate. *Libertas* gives an enormous boost to the rise of Rome that thrives through *audacia* in war and *aequitas* in peace (9.3). The destruction of Carthage, however, triggers first *avaritia* and *ambitio*. Sulla's regime in particular fosters the moral decline and leads to the deplorable climate in which Catiline could gather 'troops of criminals and reprobates of every kind' (*omnium flagitiorum atque facinorum ... stipatorum*, 14.1). Structurally, the archaeology is closely interwoven with the conspiracy as it is placed between the portrait of Catiline (5.1-8) and the presentation of his associates and activities (14-16). The conspiracy is envisaged as part and peak of Rome's deterioration. I would like to show first how the teleological design even imbues the account of the glorious old days, then how closely the decline diagnosed by Sallust corresponds with his view of Catiline. The imagery of disease reinforces the teleological construction which also seems to be the reason for some problems with chronology and historical veracity.

### *Teleology and archaeology*

---

<sup>669</sup> Büchner 1960: 137 emphasizes the 'symptomatic quality' of the Catilinarian Conspiracy in Sallust's hands.

In his commentary, McGushin notes *ad* 7.5: ‘The manner of living pictured here and in the following passage, in which the driving force is *cupido gloriae*, represents the kind of ideal picture which Romans retained of their past and which is reflected many times in their literature.’ True enough, but the ideal picture is at the same time a palimpsest; under its shiny surface lurks the rather grim image of Rome’s decline (7.4-5).<sup>670</sup>

To begin with, as soon as the young men could endure the hardships of war, they were taught a soldier’s duties in camp under a vigorous discipline, and they took more pleasure in handsome arms and war horses than in harlots and revelry. To such men consequently no labour was unfamiliar, no region too rough or too steep, no armed foeman was terrible; valour was all in all.

*Iam primum iuventus, simul ac belli patiens erat, in castris per laborem usum militiae discebat, magisque in decoris armis et militaribus equis quam in scortis atque conviviis lubidinem habebant. Igitur talibus viris non labor insolitus, non locus ullus asper aut arduos erat, non armatus hostis formidulosus: virtus omnia domuerat.*

The second colon of the *magis ... quam* construction and the terms negated presage the coming decline: Rome’s ancient glory is envisaged through the lens of its later corruption when its men would shun labour. *Scortis atque conviviis* anticipates the restoration of Sulla, under whom the army would become accustomed to ‘indulging in women and drink’ (*amare potare*, 11.6) as well as Catiline’s practice of wooing his victims with prostitutes, dogs and horses (14.6). *Lubido* is slightly zeugmatic: it can signify desire in a neutral sense, but, as McGushin *ad loc.* points out, *scortis* standing next to it cannot fail to activate its derogatory connotation, which is so pervasive in Sallust’s work.<sup>671</sup> Jarring with the virtuous activities typical of the glorious past, this connotation contributes to the implicit prolepsis of the moral decline. In addition, the verb *domare* intimates that sinister forces threatening the practice of virtue lay dormant, here ominously labelled as *omnia*.

Further antithetical expressions have a similar proleptic force: ‘Accordingly, good morals were cultivated at home and in the field; there was the greatest harmony and little or no avarice; justice and probity prevailed among them, thanks not so much to laws as to nature.’ (*Igitur domi militiaeque boni mores colebantur; concordia maxuma, minuma avaritia erat; ius bonumque apud eos non legibus magis quam natura valebat.* 9.1). No matter whether or not

---

<sup>670</sup> See also Levene 2000: 174-80 for the argument that allusions to Cato undermine the ideal image of Rome in the archaeology.

<sup>671</sup> For a survey, see Vretska 1976: *ad* 2.5.

*minuma* is ‘virtually equivalent to *nulla*’,<sup>672</sup> with *avaritia* a central aspect of Rome’s decline as outlined in chapters 10-13 is named.<sup>673</sup> In a similar vein, the third colon nods to a time when justice will not be able to rely on the inclinations of nature anymore. ‘Quarrels, discord, and strife’ (*iurgia discordias simultates*, 9.2) are directed against enemies and explicitly contrasted with the competition in virtue among citizens, but implicitly also anticipate Catiline who is pleased by ‘political dissension’ (*discordia civilis*, 5.2) and excels as ‘capable ... of pretence or concealment’ (*simulator ac dissimulator*, 5.4).

The vantage-point of the later decline is woven into the account of Rome’s early history in a particularly subtle manner in 7.6:

Nay, their hardest struggle for glory was with one another; each man strove to be first to strike down the foe, to scale a wall, to be seen of all while doing such a deed. This they considered riches, this fair fame and high nobility.

*Sed gloriae maximum certamen inter ipsos erat: se quisque hostem ferire, murum ascendere, conspici dum tale facinus faceret properabat; eas divitias, eam bonam famam magnamque nobilitatem putabant.*

The emphatic reference to what the ancestors consider as worthy of their aspirations attests to the later change in attitude. While *bona fama* and *magna nobilitas* are positive value terms that can be applied to a variety of feats, the conventional meaning of *divitiae* is material wealth. In re-defining it (cf. 7.6: *divitias honestas*), Sallust mimics, albeit in contrary direction, the ‘transvaluation’ of vocabulary that Cato denounces as emblematic of the moral deterioration:<sup>674</sup> while ‘squandering the goods of others is called generosity, and recklessness in wrong doing is called courage’ (*bona aliena largiri liberalitas, malarum rerum audacia fortitudo vocatur*, 52.11), Sallust takes a term that conventionally signifies a core value of Rome’s depraved society (e.g., 10.2; 12.1) and assigns it a new, a positive significance. Again, the form in which Sallust reports a feature of the glorious age of Rome implicitly evokes her decline.

### *Teleology and Catiline*

It is obvious that Sallust presents Catiline as the product of the moral deterioration starting with 146 BCE,<sup>675</sup> and a few examples may suffice to

<sup>672</sup> Ramsey 1984: *ad loc.*

<sup>673</sup> Cf. McGushin 1977: *ad loc.*

<sup>674</sup> See also Sallust’s critique in 12.1 which, however, is slightly different: instead of denouncing the use of positive terms for bad feats, he notes that positive concepts such as *paupertas* and *innocentia* started being deemed negative.

<sup>675</sup> Cf. McGushin 1977: *ad* 5.1-8. See also the lists of verbal correspondences in Ledworuski 1994: 130; 133.

illustrate how deeply Sallust roots his hero in the history of Rome: the general notion of *avaritia* and *luxuria* that looms so large in the account of Rome's decline (e.g., 12.2) forms the context of Catiline's agitations (5.8). The discrepancy between outward behaviour and real intention (10.5) is particularly strong in Catiline who, besides being 'capable ... of pretence or concealment' (*simulator ac dissimulator*, 5.4), uses *doli* to corrupt the youth (14.5; cf. 11.2 for *doli*). Sallust does not vouch for the rumour about sexual relations between Catiline and his associates which would take up the reference to homosexuality (*muliebria pati*, 13.3),<sup>676</sup> but directly follows it up with an account of the many adulteries that Catiline committed already as a young man (15.1 ~ 13.3).<sup>677</sup> At the same time, it is important to note that in some regards Catiline does not represent the general trend: Sallust bemoans an inclination to indulge in sleep, food and drink and an incapacity to endure cold and fatigue (13.3); about Catiline, on the other hand, he writes: 'His body could endure hunger, cold and want of sleep to an incredible degree.' (*Corpus patiens inediae algoris vigiliae supra quam quoiquam credibile est*. 5.3; cf. 15.4). Endurance in fact aligns Catiline's with the youth of the glorious days (7.4: *belli patiens erat*) and Caesar (54.4: *laborare, vigilare*).

Besides adding an uncanny note to Catiline's portrayal and highlighting his dangerous character, these differences throw into relief the close association of Catiline's criminal activities with the debasement triggered by Sulla that is flagged prominently in the first paragraph dealing with Catiline: 'A mighty desire of getting control of the government befell the man after the domination of Lucius Sulla ...' (*Hunc post dominationem L. Sullae libido maxuma invaserat rei publicae capiundae ...*, 5.6). A wealth of parallels and verbal echoes sustain the close connection between Catiline's conspiracy and the corruption of Rome through Sulla: '... all men began to rob and pillage. One coveted a house, another lands; the victors showed neither moderation nor restraint, but shamefully and cruelly wronged their fellow citizens.' (... *rapere omnes, trahere, domum alius, alius agros cupere, neque modum neque modestiam victores habere, foeda crudeliaque in civis facinora facere*. 11.4). The description of Sulla's reign parallels the 'civil wars, murder, pillage, and political dissension' (*bella intestina caedes rapinae discordia civilis*) that delight Catiline (5.2), who is further described as 'covetous of others' possessions' (*alieni adpetens*, 5.4): 'His disordered mind ever coveted the immoderate, incredible, gigantic.' (*Vastus animus inmoderata incredibilia nimis alta semper cupiebat*. 5.5). The parallel between Catiline's attempts to endear himself especially to the young and Sulla's

<sup>676</sup> Cf. below ???

<sup>677</sup> The lack of decency among women ('women offered their chastity for sale' – *mulieres pudicitiam in propatulo habere*, 13.3) is illustrated through Sempronia: 'Her desires were so ardent that she sought men more often than she was sought by them.' (*libido sic adensa ut saepius peteret viros quam peteretur*. 25.3). The *sacrilegi* joining Catiline's band (14.3) continue and foster the neglect of the gods that sets in after the threat from Carthage has vanished (10.4).

strategy of pampering his army is underscored by a verbal echo (11.5: ‘in order to secure the loyalty’ – *quo sibi fidum faceret* ~ 14.6: ‘provided he could make them submissive and loyal to himself’ – *dum illos obnoxios fidosque sibi faceret*).

The prominence of Sulla in Sallust’s view of Rome’s history is widely acknowledged,<sup>678</sup> but it is striking how manifold the relations between his restoration and Catiline’s intrigues are in the *BC*: Sulla’s soldiers hope for civil war (16.4; 28.4) and are therefore receptive to Catiline’s propaganda; some of them even join Catiline, who appeals to their memory of the rich booty under Sulla (21.4). Part of the *plebs* in the countryside, especially in Etruria, has lost their land and goods under Sulla and is therefore easy to win over for a revolution (28.4) just as in the *plebs urbana* the children of the victims of the Sullanian proscriptions are eager to better their situation (37.9). Even those not directly affected by the proscriptions are incited by the splendid career and fabulous wealth of some of Sulla’s supporters (37.6). It is hard to tell to what degree Sallust’s view of Catiline is influenced by his view of Rome’s history after the destruction of Carthage or, inversely, to what degree he projects his assessment of the crisis back into the past,<sup>679</sup> but the correspondences are striking and embed Catiline firmly in a teleological history of Rome.

#### *Teleology and imagery of disease*

The teleological view pervading the archaeology and the portrait of Catiline gains force from the imagery of disease which is most striking in two elaborate similes: ‘Finally, when the disease had spread like a deadly plague, the state was changed and a government second to none in equity and excellence became cruel and intolerable.’ (*post ubi contagio quasi pestilentia invasit, civitas inmutata, imperium ex iustissimo atque optumo crudele intolerandumque factum*. 10.6). While here an infectious plague expresses the corruption of the entire *civitas* through *avaritia* and *ambitio*, the notion of poisoning describes the effect of *avaritia* on the individual: ‘Steeped as it were with noxious poisons, it renders the most manly body and soul effeminate; it is ever unbounded and insatiable, nor can either plenty or want make it less.’ (*ea quasi venenis malis inbuta corpus animumque virilem effeminat, semper infinita insatiabilis est, neque copia neque inopia minuitur*. 11.3). The *katachresis* reinforces the momentum of the process of deterioration: *avaritia* not only spreads like a disease, it is also ‘insatiable’<sup>680</sup> and thereby closely linked to Catiline’s excessive character (5.5).

<sup>678</sup> See, e.g., Klingner 1981: 23-4; Schur 1934: 8; Steidle 1958: 3. Sulla seems to have figured prominently at the beginning of the *Historiae*, cf. Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 2.22. Alheit 1919: 33-4 lists the similarities between the portrait of Catiline in *BC* and that of Sulla in *BJ*.

<sup>679</sup> While Alheit 1919: 34 argues that Sallust models his portrait of Catiline on Sulla, Wimmel 1967: 210 notes the projection of features of the crisis onto earlier times.

<sup>680</sup> Skard 1943: 145 notes that the image used by Sallust here is not clear. For further instances of the imagery of disease, see Skard 1943: 145-6.

The imagery of disease is not limited to these two similes, but several more subtle occurrences of it unfold a dense metaphorical net at the beginning of the *BC*. In 2.5, *lubido* and *superbia* are the subjects of *invadere*. While here the following phrase ‘the fortune ... changes with their character’ (*fortuna simul cum moribus inmutatur*) strengthens the medical imagery, it is hard to opt either in favour of a medical or military connotation in 12.2: ‘Therefore as the result of riches, luxury and greed, united with insolence, befell our young manhood.’ (*Igitur ex divitiis iuventutem luxuria atque avaritia cum superbia invasere*).<sup>681</sup> Likewise, in the preceding sentence the expression *hebescere virtus* (‘virtue became dull’, 12.1) seems to oscillate between the image of virtue becoming weak, losing its edge (like a sword) or losing its lustre (harking back to *virtus clara* in 1.4).<sup>682</sup> The metaphor of disease, partly deployed unambiguously, partly blended together with other, notably military, imagery, encapsulates a trajectory that urges the reader to envisage Catiline’s depravity as the further development of the history sketched in the archaeology. It is also taken up in the narrative of the conspiracy where it surfaces very prominently right before the digression on Rome’s society: ‘Such was the potency of the malady which like a plague had infected the minds of many of our countrymen.’ (*tanta vis morbi atque uti tabes plerosque civium animos invaserat*. 36.5).

The metaphor of disease is also applied to Catiline. Great lust had ‘befallen’ (*invaserat*) him to capture the state (5.6). In a subtle discussion, Krebs argues that the meaning of *invadere* here can be limited to the military realm. His argument is based on the phrase of *vastus animus* in the preceding sentence which he, against most commentators, translates with ‘ravaged mind’: ‘His ravaged mind ever coveted the immoderate, incredible, gigantic.’ (*Vastus animus inmoderata incredibilia nimis alta semper cupiebat*. 5.5). Krebs’ discussion helps to appreciate a connotation of *vastus* that opens a fascinating avenue for our interpretation of the passage,<sup>683</sup> but at the same time the notion of desire without boundaries makes it, I think, hard to exclude the meaning ‘vast’ for *vastus* in this context. Even if we fully accept Krebs’ argument about *vastus animus*, it is not necessary to reduce *invadere* in the following sentence to a single image. Given the prominence of disease metaphors in the first chapters, especially the less ambiguous use in 2.5 and 10.6, it is not easy to rule out a medical connotation here. This would only deprive the text of its rich semantics and undercut Sallust’s virtuous play with various layers of imagery.

The ambiguity of *invadere* and *hebescere* in which medical and military metaphors overlap is, I propose, significant. The blending together of the two

<sup>681</sup> Cf. *TLL* for the two connotations: s.v. 1: *vim admovendo incurrere, adoriri*; 2. *de accessu morborum et affectuum animi*.

<sup>682</sup> On this, see Krebs 2008b.

<sup>683</sup> Krebs 2008a: 686 concludes: ‘Just as *lubido* is said to have attacked Rome, so it attacked Catiline.’ *Mutatis mutandis*, Catiline is not only the agent of horrible crime, but, if we follow the metaphor through, also a victim of the disease-like decline that had affected Rome.

semantic realms closely aligns the moral deterioration with the conspiracy: through their military connotation, the terms that present the moral decline as a disease gesture toward the military threat that in the eyes of Sallust the Catilinarian Conspiracy would pose. The military metaphor anticipates the literal invasion. Semantic ambiguity thus buttresses subtly the presentation of the conspiracy as a symptom of moral depravity and ties it closely to Rome's history after the destruction of Carthage.

### *Teleology and chronology*

The desire to see Catiline in the light of the havoc wreaked by Sulla even seems to have prompted Sallust to tinker with the chronology of events and to adopt traditions that are highly disputable. Two examples, the inception of the Catilinarian Conspiracy and the so-called first conspiracy, may illustrate this: Sallust places the assembly that initiates the conspiracy before the elections of 64 BCE (17.1). In an angry speech, Catiline denounces the rule of few which has reduced the others to *volgus* (20.7). His polemic against their lavish lifestyle partly echoes Sallust's diagnosis,<sup>684</sup> but, unlike the historian's stance, is not based on a general rejection of material values. After vaguely mentioning 'splendid spoils of war' (*belli spolia magnifica*) in the speech (20.15), Catiline elaborates his programme in the discussion unfolding after his speech: 'Thereupon Catiline promised abolition of debts, the proscription of the rich, offices, priesthoods, plunder, and all the other spoils that war and the license of victors can offer.' (*Tum Catilina polliceri tabulas novas, proscriptionem locupletium, magistratus sacerdotia rapinas, alia omnia quae bellum atque libido victorum fert.* 21.2).

This account of the conspiracy's inception raises a number of problems that have been much discussed in scholarship; besides doubts concerning the suitability of the speech to its audience, its dating is worrisome.<sup>685</sup> In *Pro Murena* 50, Cicero puts the initial assembly shortly before the *Comitia* in 63 BCE. It

---

<sup>684</sup> See, for example: 20.11: 'Pray, what man with the spirit of a man can endure that our tyrants should abound in riches, to squander in building upon the sea and in levelling mountains ...' (*Etenim quis mortalium quoi virile ingenium est tolerare potest illis divitias superare quas profundant in extruendo mari et montibus coequandis ...?*) ~ 13.1: 'Why, pray, should I speak of things which are incredible except to those who have seen them, that a host of private men have levelled mountains and built upon the seas?' (*Nam quid ea memorem quae nisi iis qui videre nemini credibilia sunt, a privatis compluribus subvorsos montis, maria constrata esse?*); 20.12: 'They amass paintings, statuary and chased vases ...' (*Quom tabulas signa toreumata emunt ...*) ~ 11.6: 'to admire statues, paintings, and chased vases ...' (... *signa tabulas pictas vasa caelata mirari ...*); 20.13: 'But we have destitution at home, debt without ...' (*At nobis est domi inopia, foris aes alienum ...*) ~ 16.4: '... his own debt was enormous in all parts of the world ...' (... *simul quod aes alienum per omnis terras ingens erat ...*).

<sup>685</sup> John's treatment has laid the groundwork for all later works (1876a: 763-77) of which see, e.g., Schwartz 1897: 584; Syme 1964: 75-7; Wimmel 1967: 202-5; Ledworuski 1994: 186-98. While acknowledging that the initial assembly of the conspiracy is antedated in the *BC*, Steidle 1958: 91-3 tries to exculpate Sallust from the reproach of blatant anachronism.

seems highly unlikely that Catiline should have planned a violent coup before his rejection at the elections of 64: ‘Such a speech would be conceivable in a meeting in November 691 [i.e., 63 BCE]... In June or July 690 [64 BCE], however, half a year before the enterprise finally kicks off, it would have been not only superfluous, but simply impossible.’<sup>686</sup> This view is strongly supported by the observation that Sallust has little to report on what happened between the meeting in 64 BCE and the rebellion in 63 BCE. The antedating helps to give the conspiracy more weight. Instead of appearing as the disappointed reaction of an aristocrat who after several failures to gain the consulate finally gives up and tries a *coup d’état*, it can be presented as a thoroughly planned and deeply evil scheme that is emblematic of Rome’s utter depravity.

Catiline’s speech at the first meeting of the conspiracy is separated from the list of the conspirators by a digression in which Sallust reports a previous attempt at revolution (18-19). In 66 BCE, the designated consuls Autronius and Sulla are condemned of bribery and in their place Torquatus and Cotta are elected. Together with Piso and the consul *manqué* Autronius, Catiline plots to kill the new consuls at the *Calendae* of January. When the plot is discovered, a new plan, this time also aiming at the lives of senators, is hatched for the *Nonae* of February. Catiline, however, gives the signal too early and the assault fails. It seems that Sallust is not well informed about the events of 66 BCE, as he confuses details about Catiline’s candidacy for the consulate of 65 BCE.<sup>687</sup> More importantly, the evidence for a participation of Catiline in a conspiracy is scanty and disputable.<sup>688</sup> The reference in Cicero’s *In toga candida* is not more than an insinuation (Asconius 82), and neither should the testimony of the *First Catilinarian* (15), *Pro Murena* (81) and *Pro Sulla* be blindly trusted.<sup>689</sup> In the last mentioned speech, for example, Catiline comes in very handy as Cicero is at pains to exculpate the failed consul Sulla.<sup>690</sup> It is hard to believe that Torquatus would have testified for Catiline in his *repetundae* trial of 65 BCE had Catiline plotted his murder the year before (*Pro Sulla* 81).

In an elegant argument, Syme notes that Suetonius who cites evidence from 59 BCE<sup>691</sup> mentions Caesar, Crassus, Autronius and Sulla as conspirators,

<sup>686</sup> John 1876a: 767: ‘Eine solche Rede wäre in einer Versammlung des Novembers 691 denkbar ... Im Juni oder Juli 690, ein halbes Jahr vor der eventuellen Inangriffnahme des Werks, wäre sie nicht nur überflüssig, sondern einfach unmöglich gewesen.’

<sup>687</sup> Sallust seems to assume that Catiline only tried to apply for the consulate after the designated consuls Autronius and Sulla had been condemned of *ambitus*. For the argument that Catiline already tried to submit an application for the first round and that he became a *reus* only in 65 BCE, see John 1876b. See also Wimmel 1967: 194. Seager 1964: 338 on the other hand, adopts Sallust’s account.

<sup>688</sup> Cf. Seager 1964 who rejects the very idea of a conspiracy, whether with or without Catiline; Syme 1964: 88-96. For bibliography on the first conspiracy, see Freyburger-Galland 1997: 66 n. 12.

<sup>689</sup> For a list of further sources, see Seager 1964: 339-42.

<sup>690</sup> Cf. Syme 1964: 90.

<sup>691</sup> Suetonius, *Divus Iulius* 9.2: edicts of Calpurnius Bibulus and orations of Scribonius Curio.

but not Catiline.<sup>692</sup> The possibility of clearing Caesar would have rendered Cicero's accusations against Catiline particularly appealing to Sallust. It is not necessary though to press this point and revive the Caesarian pamphleteer (and Syme does not do so). The digression on the first conspiracy serves important functions in the economy of Sallust's presentation of the events in 63 BCE. Embedded in the account of the major conspiracy's first meeting, it contributes to the attempt to present Catiline's plotting as a serious threat to the *res publica* that is symptomatic of a depraved society. More specifically, it brings the Catilinarian Conspiracy closer to the time of Sulla. Together with proleptic elements in the archaeology, the imagery of disease and the close correspondences between Catiline's portrait and archaeology, Sallust's tinkering with chronology reinforces his teleological construction that sees the roots of the conspiracy in the moral decline starting with the destruction of Carthage.<sup>693</sup>

## II. ALTERNATIVE VIEWS OF THE CONSPIRACY IN ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Sallust's view of Rome's rise and decline does not have many followers among modern historians. Particularly the emphasis on morals as determining force has gone out of fashion and been replaced by economic, sociological or institutional patterns of explanation.<sup>694</sup> Even within the parameters of a moralist view of history, Sallust's construction is open to challenges. Ancient historians have advanced various other historical events besides the destruction of Carthage as turning points in Rome's (moral) history:<sup>695</sup> Valerius Maximus notes a decline triggered by the end of the Second Punic War and the victory over the Macedonian king Philip (9.13); according to Livy, the booty brought to Rome by Cn. Manlius Vulso in 187 BCE paves the way for the detrimental taste for luxury (39.6.7); in Polybius, 168 BCE appears as the beginning of the corruption of Roman *nobilitas* (6.57.5-9); 154 BCE is the year for *pudicitia subversa* in a fragment from Calpurnius Piso's *Annals* (fr. 38 Peter = Plin. HN 17.); Nicolaus of Damascus seems to have placed the start of the downward spiral as late as 63 BCE with the return of Lucullus from the East (FGrH 90 F 77). Sallust himself has proposed different models: in the *BJ*, the notion of a *metus hostilis* suggests that Rome's early concord and virtue may have been conditioned by an external cause, while a fragment from the *Histories* states that 'there were crimes

---

<sup>692</sup> Syme 1964: 92-4.

<sup>693</sup> Cf. Syme 1964: 77; Bringmann 1972: 102-8.

<sup>694</sup> See, however, von Ungern-Sternberg 1982; 1998 for an attempt to take seriously ancient theories of moral decline and, along different lines, Morstein-Marx and Rosenstein 2006: 634, who try to translate the ancient moral approach into the language of modern sociology.

<sup>695</sup> For a survey, see Bringmann 1977, who also argues that the date 146 BCE as turning point, made so popular by Sallust, does not derive from Posidonius, but is probably to be traced back to C. Fannius (37-41).

committed by those in power and therefore there was a separation of the people from the senators as well as other cases of internal dissent right from the beginning (*'iniuriae validiorum et ob eas discessio plebis a patribus aliaeque dissensiones domi fuere iam inde a principio'*, fr. 11). In this even more sombre verdict on Rome's history, discord was overcome only over short periods due to the threats from Etruria and Carthage.<sup>696</sup>

The argument of this section is concerned less with the obvious faults of Sallust's take on Rome's decline than with the impact that this take has on his presentation of the Catilinarian Conspiracy. The accounts of other ancient writers and modern historians throw into relief the fact that Sallust, through inserting the events of the year 63 BCE into a broader historical canvas, endows them with a significance they would otherwise not have. Many parallels and verbal echoes indicate that Sallust draws heavily on Cicero's speeches as source for his account.<sup>697</sup> At the same time, Sallust's teleological model establishes a perspective that deviates from the view emerging especially in the *Catilinarian speeches*.<sup>698</sup> Like Sallust, Cicero envisages the conspiracy against the backdrop of earlier events. He compares Catiline and his followers with the Gracchi (*Cat.* 1.3-4; 4.4) and evokes earlier civil wars as a foil to the conspiracy (*Cat.* 3.24). Cicero even aligns the conspiracy with Sulla's dictatorship when he mentions the Sullanians among Catiline's associates (*Cat.* 2.20). And yet, his assessment of the conspiracy and the situation of the *res publica* is different from Sallust's. Unlike the historian, he believes that Rome's problems will be solved once Catiline and his men are removed (*Cat.* 1.30). In the *Fourth Catilinarian*, he promises (*Cat.* 4.15):

And if we shall maintain for ever in the state this union consummated in my consulship, I assure you that hereafter no civil and domestic strife will come to any part of the state.

*Quam si coniunctionem in consulatu confirmatam meo perpetuam in re publica tenuerimus, confirmo vobis nullum posthac malum civile ac domesticum ad ullam rei publicae partem esse venturum.*

Cicero's emphasis on Rome's unity strongly jars with the bleak analysis of factionalism in the *BC*.<sup>699</sup> Accordingly, Cicero's claim that Catiline is isolated and only supported by the conspirators (1.13) does not match the broad sympathies

<sup>696</sup> Cf. Klingner 1981: 1-2; Latta 1988; 1989; Heldmann 1993 on Sallust's increasingly pessimistic view of history. See, however, Seel 1930: 77-8 against profound differences between the view advanced in *BC* and *BJ*, and Vretska 1937: 38-43 emphasising the different contexts.

<sup>697</sup> Cf. Banz 1904: 7 n. 3 and Funari 1998, the latter particularly on the Ciceronian echoes in the digression on Rome's parties in *BC* 36.4-39.4.

<sup>698</sup> *Contra* Schmal 2001: 37. For a more balanced view, see Steidle 1958: 14-15.

<sup>699</sup> See especially the panorama of Roman society in 4.14-18.

that the conspiracy first enjoys in the *BC* (37.1).<sup>700</sup> Nor does Cicero trace Rome's deterioration as far back as Sallust. The absence of a threat from an external force, according to Sallust the root of the moral decline leading to Catiline, is welcomed by Cicero as an important condition of the happiness that could be realized when the internal evil is excised in the form of the conspirators (*Cat.* 2.11; cf. 2.29; 3.21-2). Although Cicero's tedious inclination to congratulate himself and exaggerate his merits as consul was scorned already by his ancient readers (e.g., Plut. *Cic.* 24), it seems that Sallust is willing to assign even more importance to Catiline than the *optimus consul*. In the *BC*, his conspiracy appears not only as an existential threat to Rome but as the symptom of a crisis that goes far back in history and cannot be solved through the cosmetics of executing some conspirators.

The later ancient tradition about the Catilinarian Conspiracy is strongly shaped by Sallust's monograph and Cicero's speeches; in the words of Orosius: '... these things sufficiently known to everybody as they were done by Cicero and described by Sallust.' (... *hanc historiam agente Cicerone et describente Sallustio satis omnibus notam.* 6.6.6).<sup>701</sup> Nonetheless, while being obviously indebted to the *BC* and adopting many details from it, our other ancient sources do not necessarily place the event in the same perspective. Cassius Dio, for one, does not view Catiline against the backdrop of a history of decline that has its roots in the second century BCE.<sup>702</sup> It is therefore no surprise that he deems the conspiracy overrated (37.42.1):

Such was the career of Catiline and such his downfall; but he gained a greater name than his deeds deserved, owing to the reputation of Cicero and the speeches he delivered against him. Cicero, on his side, came near being tried then and there for the killing of Lentulus and the other prisoners.

Καταλίνας μὲν ταῦτ' ἐποίησε καὶ οὕτω κατελύθη· καὶ ἐπὶ πλεῖον γε τῆς τῶν πραχθέντων ἀξίας ὄνομα πρὸς τὴν τοῦ Κικέρωνος δόξαν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς λόγους τοὺς κατ' αὐτοῦ λεχθέντας ἔσχε· Κικέρων δὲ ὀλίγου μὲν καὶ παραχρῆμα ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ Λεντούλου τῶν τε ἄλλων τῶν δεθέντων σφαγῇ ἐκρίθη.

<sup>700</sup> Passages like *Cat.* 1.30 and 2.3, however, indicate that Catiline was less isolated than Cicero would have us believe. For a critique of Sallust's claim about the broad support for Catiline, see Waters 1970: 206.

<sup>701</sup> For a very handy compilation of the most important sources, see Drexler 1976.

<sup>702</sup> Hose 1994: 400-5 observes that while Dio mentions the impact on Rome of the booty from Asia and the disappearing of the *metus Punicus*, he does not structure his account along moralist lines. For a detailed comparison of Sallust's and Dio's accounts of the Catilinarian Conspiracy, see Freyburger-Galland 1997.

Plutarch, in his *Life of Cicero*, emphasizes the impoverishment of *nobiles* and looks back to Sulla, albeit in a very different way from Sallust: Catiline was the ‘head’ (‘κορυφαῖος’) of a band of men who for selfish reasons aimed at shattering the constitution established by Sulla (10; cf. 12). Here, the Catilinarian Conspiracy appears not in a continuum with Sulla’s politics, but as a movement against it. Velleius Paterculus touches only perfunctorily on Catiline, focusing on the discussion in the senate about how to proceed with Lentulus, Cethegus and the other captives (2.34.3-35.5). Inserting the Catilinarian Conspiracy into the series of *staseis* starting with the Gracchi, Appian envisages it on a similarly large canvas as Sallust.<sup>703</sup> More specifically, he follows Sallust in linking Catiline to Sulla (‘a friend and zealous partisan’ – ‘φίλος τε καὶ στασιώτης καὶ ζηλωτής’, 2.1.6); and yet, although Appian stresses the danger for the Roman state (2.7), the conspiracy carries far less weight in his account of the crisis of the Roman Republic which culminates in the rivalry between Pompey and Caesar and itself serves as a backdrop to the blessings of monarchy.

It would be very interesting to see what place Catiline had in Livy’s history, but, alas, the account of the conspiracy belongs to the lost books of in *Ab urbe condita*. Still, the *periocha* is worth quoting (102):

After Lucius Catilina had twice suffered defeat in the consular elections, he conspired with Praetor Lentulus, Cethegus, and many others to slaughter the consuls and the senate, set fire to the city, and destroy the commonwealth; an army was also made ready in Etruria. This conspiracy was extirpated by the energy of Marcus Tullius Cicero. Catiline was driven from the city, and the other conspirators were executed.

*L. Catilina bis repulsam in petitione consulatus passus cum Lentulo praetore et Cethego et compluribus aliis coniuravit de caede consulum et senatus, incendiis urbis et obprimenda re publica exercitu quoque in Etruria comparato. Ea coniuratio industria M. Tulli Ciceronis eruta est. Catilina urbe pulso de reliquis coniuratis supplicium sumptum est.*

Needless to say, Livy’s original narrative will have been more detailed. Some of it may be gleaned from the longer epitome of Annius Florus who mentions Catiline’s luxury and squandering of his family’s wealth (‘It was, in the first place, his personal extravagance and then his consequent lack of means ...’ – *luxuria primum, tum hinc conflata egestas rei familiaris*; 2.12.1) as well as the noble origin of his associates (2.1.3). I have nonetheless quoted the text of the *periocha* as it resonates with the reconstruction of modern historians. Hoffmann’s sketch, for example, is strikingly parallel: ‘Catiline, scion of an old aristocratic family, has failed twice in his application for the consulate, the highest public office. He does not accept this personal defeat, but instead tries to achieve his goal

<sup>703</sup> Drummond 1995: 24 claims that Appian clearly depends on Sallust.

with force. His plan falls through though. In time, the consul Cicero takes counter measures, knows how to compromise Catiline and suppresses the uprising right at its beginning.<sup>704</sup>

Waters even doubts that there was much of a conspiracy: ‘If Catiline and his associates had revolutionary and violent plans long in the hatching (which we have seen is at least highly dubious) they were the most inefficient gang of criminals ever associated outside the pages of comic fiction. Repeated and ignominious failures to achieve even a single assassination, a feat commonplace enough in Roman political annals, render the whole affair ludicrous.’<sup>705</sup> The Catilinarian Conspiracy, Waters suggests, is the product of Cicero and his deeply felt need for self-promotion. While Waters may push his case too far, Catiline seems to have been not so much the ultimate threat to the Republic as rather an aristocrat who, after several failures to gain the consulate, tries a *coup d'état*.<sup>706</sup> Its impact on Roman history seems negligible. Alfred Heuß, for example, rates it so low that he does not mention it at all in his Göttingen inaugural lecture published under the title ‘Der Untergang der römischen Republik und das Problem der Revolution’.<sup>707</sup> We have thus come a long way from Sallust’s elaborate portrait of the event. Despite the strong influence of the *BC* on the later tradition, comparison with other accounts reveals how peculiar Sallust’s understanding of Catiline is, especially how much it owes to the integration of the conspiracy into a broader view of Rome’s history. The *BC*’s version of the Catilinarian Conspiracy illustrates the power of teleology to shape our understanding of events not only by viewing them from later vantage-points, but also by making them the telos of earlier events.

### III. ALTERNATIVE VIEWS OF THE CONSPIRACY WITHIN THE *BC* (I): CATILINE’S LETTER

The preceding section has demonstrated that the *BC* lays out a very distinct assessment of the Catilinarian Conspiracy by inscribing it into a larger narrative of Rome’s history. I shall now argue that the *BC* also encapsulates two alternative takes on the conspiracy that rival its main plot-line. Catiline’s letter to Catulus features a view that may have little credibility in the context of Sallust’s narrative,

---

<sup>704</sup> Hoffmann 1959: 461: ‘Catilina, Angehöriger einer alten Adelsfamilie, ist bei der Bewerbung ums Consulat, das höchste Amt im Staat, zweimal gescheitert. Er findet sich mit dieser persönlichen Niederlage nicht ab, sondern sucht nun mit Gewalt sein Ziel zu erreichen. Doch der Plan schlägt fehl. Beizeiten trifft der Consul Cicero die erforderlichen Gegenmaßnahmen, stellt durch seine geschickte Taktik Catilina bloß und erstickt die Bewegung bereits zu Beginn.’

<sup>705</sup> Waters 1970: 202.

<sup>706</sup> Schmal 2001: 51-4. Already John 1876a: 812 suspects that the significance of the *coniuratio Catilinae* has been unduly played up, and Schwartz 1897: 568 sees Catiline’s failure in the election of 63 BCE as trigger of his violent action. Against attempts to put Catiline’s importance into perspective, see most recently Odahl 2010.

<sup>707</sup> Heuß 1956.

but is surprisingly close to other traditions. Caesar in his speech, to be explored in the subsequent section, approaches the history of Rome along lines very different from Sallust and sketches an alternative frame for the Catilinarian Conspiracy. Besides highlighting the impact of teleology on history, these alternative histories reveal the complexity of the *BC* which is far more than a rigid moralist assessment of the crisis of the Republic.

After leaving Rome, Catiline sends a letter to Catulus which Sallust reproduces verbatim.<sup>708</sup> Appealing to the *fides* of Catulus, one of the oligarchic leaders,<sup>709</sup> and asking him to take care of Orestilla, Catiline reports that, together with injustice and public dishonour, the failure of his political aspirations has prompted him to take up the ‘general cause of the unfortunate’ (*publicam miserorum causam*, 35.3) and thereby to defend his *dignitas*. That Catiline taps into a highly plausible argument can be gleaned from a case that in some regards is parallel: Caesar writes about his crossing of the Rubicon (*Bellum Civile* 1.22.5):

It was not to do harm that he had crossed the boundary of his province, but to defend himself from the insults of his enemies, to restore to their proper dignity the tribunes who had been expelled from Rome in the course of this affair, and to assert his own freedom and that of the Roman people, who were oppressed by an oligarchic clique.

*se non maleficii causa ex provincia egressum, sed uti se a contumeliis inimicorum defenderet, ut tribunos plebis in ea re ex civitate expulsos in suam dignitatem restitueret, et se et populum Romanum factione paucorum oppressum in libertatem vindicaret.*<sup>710</sup>

In a recent article, Morstein-Marx has eloquently questioned the clear separation of Caesar’s motives into personal and public ones, challenging the bad press Caesar has received in scholarship.<sup>711</sup> *Dignitas*, ‘perhaps the most central principle of the *res publica*’,<sup>712</sup> provides a strong legitimization for his endeavour. Of course, Caesar has far more to show for his *dignitas* than Catiline, but nonetheless Caesar’s case illustrates that Catiline invokes a concept that is at the core of Rome’s political infrastructure.

However, besides the apologetic tendency, the letter features several claims that do not match the narrative of the *BC*.<sup>713</sup> Catiline denies that his own financial problems figure among his motives (35.3), whereas Sallust has adduced

---

<sup>708</sup> On the question of whether or not this letter is authentic, see below ???

<sup>709</sup> *Fides* figures prominently in the letter, taking up an important motive of Catiline’s speech in 20: besides *egregia tua fides* (35.1), see also *me dius fidius* (35.2); *tuaeque fidei trado* (35.6).

<sup>710</sup> On the parallel, see Hoffmann 1959: 473-4; Christ 1994: 52.

<sup>711</sup> Cf. Morstein-Marx 2009: 122-35, setting his position off against Raaflaub 1974.

<sup>712</sup> Morstein-Marx 2009: 123. On *dignitas* in general, see Hellegourc’h 1963: 397-411; Bleicken 1995: 103-8.

<sup>713</sup> The discrepancy was noted already by Schnorr von Carolsfeld 1888: 26.

them as one of the reasons for the conspiracy (5.7). The ‘new plan’ (*novum consilium*, 35.2) does not square with Sallust’s presentation that traces Catiline’s revolutionary plans back to 66 BCE and places the inception of a civil war in 64 BCE. Interpreters have therefore not hesitated to read Catiline’s letter as fake rhetoric, ‘clear proof of Sallust’s comment on the debasement of the language for selfish political ends’ in the words of Earl.<sup>714</sup> Vretska calls the letter a ‘masterpiece of Catiline the *quouislibet simulator ac dissimulator*’.<sup>715</sup> Earl’s and Vretska’s reading is basically correct, I contend, but it is worth pulling out the complexity of the letter. Two points in particular may make the reader pause and prompt her to consider Catiline’s argument at face value.

Before quoting the letter, Sallust mentions other letters, addressed to numerous senators, in which Catiline asserts his innocence and announces (34.2) that he

... was on his way to exile at Massilia; not that he confessed to the dreadful crime with which he was charged, but in order that his country might be at peace and that no dissension might arise from a struggle on his part.

... *Massiliam in exilium proficisci, non quo sibi tanti sceleris conscius esset, sed uti res publica quieta foret neve ex sua contentione seditio oreretur.*

McGushin believes that Catiline is wavering and sincerely envisaging exile as an option,<sup>716</sup> but this does not accord with Catiline’s clear commands when he leaves Rome (32.2):

However, he instructed Cethegus, Lentulus, and the others whose reckless daring he knew to be ready for anything, to add to the strength of their cabal by whatever means they could, to bring the plots against the consul to a head, to make ready murder, arson, and the other horrors of war; as for himself, he would shortly be at the gates with a large army.

*Sed Cethego atque Lentulo ceterisque quorum cognoverat promptam audaciam mandat, quibus rebus possent, opes factionis confirmant, insidias consuli maturent, caedem incendia aliaque belli facinora parent: sese propediem cum magno exercitu ad urbem adcessurum.*

The exile in Massilia is obviously a ruse of Catiline intended to remove himself from the public eye. The letter to Catulus, on the other hand, does not

---

<sup>714</sup> Earl 1961: 95; cf. Scanlon 1987: 23.

<sup>715</sup> Vretska 1976: *ad* 34.2: ‘Meisterwerk des Catilina als eines *quouislibet simulator ac dissimulator*’.

<sup>716</sup> McGushin 1977: *ad* 34.2; cf. *ad* 36.1.

feature this fabrication; in addition, it is contrasted with the other letters as ‘very different’ (*ab his longe divorsas*, 34.3).<sup>717</sup> The juxtaposition with the obviously hypocritical letters suggests taking the letter to Catulus more seriously.

Moreover, Catiline speaks very openly about his new political engagement.<sup>718</sup> Vretska thinks that Catiline veils his own ambitions under the cloak of the intention to better the lot of the impoverished (‘buttressing of his pretendedly altruistic motives’),<sup>719</sup> but this does not do justice to the text of the letter. Catiline is up-front stating that not the agony of the people, but his own position is his major motive (35.3):

Maddened by wrongs and slights, since I had been robbed of the fruits of my toil and energy and was unable to attain to a position of honour, I followed my usual custom and took up the general cause of the unfortunate; not that I could not pay my personal debts from my own estate (and the liberality of Orestilla sufficed with her own and her daughter’s resources to pay off even the obligations incurred through others), but because I saw the unworthy elevated to honours, and realized that I was an outcast because of baseless suspicion.

*Iniuriis contumeliisque concitatus, quod fructu laboris industriaeque meae privatus statum dignitatis non obtinebam, publicam miserorum causam pro mea consuetudine suscepi, non quin aes alienum meis nominibus ex possessionibus solvere possem – et alienis nominibus liberalitas Orestillae suis filiaeque copiis persolveret – sed quod non dignos homines honore honestatos videbam meque falsa suspicione alienatum esse sentiebam.*

Catiline frames the announcement of his new engagement for the people by references to his own dishonour. The following sentence underlines that he does not intend to give Catulus the impression that bettering the situation of the poor is his primary goal: ‘It is under this name that, in order to preserve what dignity I have left, I have adopted measures which are honourable enough considering my situation. (*Hoc nomine satis honestas pro meo casu spes relicuae dignitatis conservandae sum secutus*. 35.4).<sup>720</sup> His own dignity is what Catiline is really concerned with; the broader political agenda he has adopted is only

---

<sup>717</sup> This juxtaposition is striking given that the letters also have similarities such as the claim to innocence, as Paladini 1961: 30 n. 1 notes.

<sup>718</sup> As one of the anonymous readers points out, it is also significant that Catiline’s complaint that he ‘saw the unworthy elevated to honours’ (35.3) chimes in well with Sallust’s comments on office-holders in his own time.

<sup>719</sup> Vretska 1976: *ad* 35.3: ‘Untermauerung der angeblich altruistischen Ziele’.

<sup>720</sup> *Hoc nomine* is translated variously: while McGushin 1977: *ad loc.* does not decide between ‘cause’ and ‘pretext’, Ramsay 1984: *ad loc.* opts for ‘on this account’ and Vretska 1976: *ad loc.* for ‘unter diesem Rechtstitel der *causa miserorum*’. Lexically, both are possible, but the echo in 38.4 supports Vretska’s reading.

nomenclature. Revealingly, Sallust echoes Catiline's phrasing not much later, in the digression on the political situation in Rome (38.3):

For, to tell the truth in a few words, all who after that time assailed the government used specious pretexts, some maintaining that they were defending the rights of the commons, others that they were upholding the prestige of the senate; but under pretence of the public welfare each in reality was working for his own advancement.

*Namque, uti paucis verum absolvam, post illa tempora quicumque rem publicam agitavere honestis nominibus, alii sicuti populi iura defenderent, pars quo senatus auctoritas maxuma foret, bonum publicum simulantes pro sua quisque potentia certabant.*

For labelling his stand for the poor, Catiline uses the very word *nomen* with which Sallust unmasks the agendas of Roman politicians as mere pretensions. Catiline's honesty about his political program reinforces the appeal of the letter to be read as an open expression of his view.

It is therefore not surprising to find opposition to the thesis that the claims of the letter are fake. Noting several un-Sallustian words and constructions, Schnorr von Carolsfeld argued in his prize-winning dissertation of 1888 that Sallust quotes an actual letter more or less verbatim. Instead of highlighting Catiline's duplicitous character, the discrepancy between his claims in the letter and the narrative of the *BC* is due to the undigested integration of an original document into the narrative.<sup>721</sup> This argument has been rehearsed more recently by Ledworuski,<sup>722</sup> but it carries little favour in current scholarship, that has moved away from analytical premises towards an appreciation of narrative artfulness. Should Sallust in his polished narrative have overlooked the tension between letter and narrative? It is indeed far more plausible to argue that the gap between Catiline's and Sallust's claims unveils the former's clever self-stylization.<sup>723</sup>

The dissembling character of the letter may be encapsulated in the very sentence that, as we have just seen, at first sight instils confidence in Catiline's presentation: while Catiline tries to gain credibility by juxtaposing his 'honest' hopes with his 'nominal' agenda, Sallust joins *nomen* and *honestum* together in *honestis nominibus* by which all Roman politicians veil their selfish purposes (38.3). The juncture of both terms by Sallust intimates that Catiline's claim to honesty may itself be mere verbal ornament. Moreover, Catiline's repeated use of

---

<sup>721</sup> Schnorr von Carolsfeld 1888: 26-9.

<sup>722</sup> Ledworuski 1994: 250. The observation of un-Sallustian forms and the idea that the letter may be authentic, on the other hand, has found more approval: cf. Vretska 1976: *ad* 34.3; Syme 1964: 72.

<sup>723</sup> Catiline's skills at deception have been on show in his last visit to the senate: 31.5: *dissimulandi causa* ('in order to conceal his designs'); 31.7: *ut erat paratus ad dissimulanda omnia* ('prepared as he was to deny everything').

*nomen* in different meanings linguistically mimics the shifting borderline between pretended and real motives. Just before Catiline labels his engagement for the public welfare as *nomen*, he claims in the passage quoted above that he would be able to pay the debt *meis nominibus* just as generous Orestilla would be willing to cover the debt *alienis nominibus* (35.3). Not only may the polysemy of *nomen* destabilize Catiline's notion of a clear-cut boundary between nominal and real motives, but Catiline's debts under various names make *nomina* look exchangeable and mirror his rhetorical charade.

The interpretation of Schnorr von Carolsfeld and Ledworuski illustrates the force of Catiline's craft – extending beyond the world of the text, Catiline's deception has put readers under its spell. However, the real motive that Catiline, in an intimate letter to a fellow aristocrat, opposes to his official political agenda is only yet another mask: according to the *BC*, it is not Catiline's *repulsa* that induces the conspiracy; its roots are much deeper. Catiline has been scheming for years to overthrow the Republic. It is nonetheless striking that we find embedded in the *BC* an alternative account of the conspiracy that is highly reminiscent of the *periocha*'s version and the constructions of some modern historians: a far cry from an evil plan that has been long in the hatching and that is the climax of a long history of moral corruption of Rome, the conspiracy appears as the last resort of an ambitious aristocrat after the failure to secure the consulate. Having Catiline voice this version is on the one hand a clever way of discrediting it. Catiline's self-stylization clashes so strongly with his portrait in the *BC* and ties in so well with his treacherous tendencies that it carries only small conviction. On the other hand, its comparison with the more obvious ruse of exile and Catiline's juxtaposition of it with his social agenda may make the reader pause and ponder the alternative version.

While jarring with the portrayal of Catiline at the beginning, the *BC*'s ending may, if not confirm, then at least make Catiline's letter appear in new light.<sup>724</sup> Catiline's battle speech (58) brims with topoi, but Sallust also has him echo the anthropology with which he has introduced his own work (58.21: 'do not be captured and slaughtered like cattle' – *neu capti potius sicuti pecora trucidemini* ~ 1.1: 'not to pass through life unheralded like cattle' – *ne vitam silentio transeant, veluti pecora*).<sup>725</sup> The claim to fight *pro patria* is reminiscent of the distortion of terms in earlier speeches; in other regards, however, the speech and reality match: the troops fight with great bravery, 'recalling their old-time prowess' (*pristinæ virtutis memores*, 60.3) in accordance with Catiline's appeal 'recalling their old-time prowess' – *memores pristinae virtutis*, 58.12). The

<sup>724</sup> On the heroic death of Catiline, see, for example, Scanlon 1987: 34-5; Gunderson 2000: 114-15. Wilkins 1994: 29-70 argues for a shift of Catiline's presentation in the *BC* from the bleak portrait known from Cicero's speeches to a more balanced view that recognizes Catiline's seriousness. See also Gunderson 2000: 114 and Krebs 2008a: 683 for similarities between Sallust and Catiline.

<sup>725</sup> Cf. Scanlon 1987: 34.

performance of Catiline himself is outstanding and impressively verifies the claim of his first speech that he will serve his men as general and soldier (20.16). After the battle, Catiline's corpse is found far away from his own men, deep in the ranks of the enemies (61.4). In the words of Annius Florus, Catiline died 'a death which would have been glorious if he had thus fallen fighting for his country' (*pulcherrima morte, si pro patria sic concidisset*, 2.12). Sallust strikingly concedes to Catiline the very point that he has pressed in his letter, namely *dignitas*: '... mindful of his birth and former rank he plunged into the thickest of the enemy and there fell fighting, his body pierced through and through.' (... *memor generis atque pristinae suae dignitatis in confertissimos hostis incurrit ibique pugnans confoditur*. 60.7). There is a subtle difference: the *dignitas* that Catiline claims to conserve (*dignitatis conservandae*) has already been lost in the eyes of Sallust (*pristinae suae dignitatis*), and yet the prominent mention of Catiline's *dignitas* in the closure of the *BC* may prompt readers to revisit the view of the conspiracy presented in Catiline's letter.

To sum up: Sallust integrates into his narrative what seems to be at least close to an actual letter; he subverts an assessment of the conspiracy as the last step of a Roman aristocrat by presenting this view as merely another one of Catiline's masks. Catiline's letter, however, may harbour itself some subversive energy in its new context. Reinforced by other accounts such as Livy's *periocha*, it is capable of challenging Sallust's pervasive teleology and suggesting a very different image of the conspiracy. Instead of being the embodiment and culmination of Rome's moral decline, Catiline can also be seen as an aristocrat whose concern with his *dignitas* drives him to challenge the Republic, not unlike Caesar fourteen years later when he crossed the Rubicon.

#### IV. ALTERNATIVE VIEWS OF THE CONSPIRACY WITHIN THE *BC* (II): CAESAR'S SPEECH

Another alternative take on the Catilinarian Conspiracy as well as on Rome's history can be found in the senatorial debate on the punishment of the Catilinarians to which Sallust has given much space in the *BC* (50.4-53.1). After mentioning the motion of the designated consul Iunius Silanus to execute the conspirators, he reports the arguments of Caesar and Cato in direct speech. Caesar convinces the majority of the senators to incarcerate, but not to kill the captives, before Cato manages to turn the tables with a fervent plea in favour of execution. The pair of speeches, followed by the *synkrisis*, has lent itself to a long and controversial debate in scholarship.<sup>726</sup> Whose perspective does Sallust favour, what in particular does Caesar's speech contribute to his portrayal in the *BC*? Attempts to give preference to one of the speeches have turned out to be

---

<sup>726</sup> Scholarship on the two speeches is abundant: see, e.g., Syme 1964: 103-20; Pöschl 1981; Drummond 1995; Sklenář 1998; Feldherr 2012. On the *synkrisis*, see especially Batstone 1988.

problematic – the speeches rather seem to be complementary. Both arguments feature points that have been advanced by Sallust just as both speakers are praised in the *synkrisis*.<sup>727</sup> At the same time, the fragmentation of virtues that Cato Censorius still combined<sup>728</sup> as well as the fact that these virtues are showcased in an internal struggle bespeaks the crisis of the Republic.

In Cato's speech, the past does not figure prominently; he rather concentrates on the present threat. The one historical exemplum that Cato gives is even problematic: he unfavourably compares the senators' hesitation to execute the conspirators with the decision of Manlius Torquatus to kill his own son who was 'of excessive valour' (*inmoderatae fortitudinis*, 52.30-1). While resonating with Sallust's claim that in the good old days soldiers had to be punished more often for excessive action than for cowardice (9.4), the behaviour of Manlius was also considered an exemplum of cruelty to be avoided.<sup>729</sup> That being said, the marked juxtaposition of a glorious past with a deficient present closely aligns Cato with Sallust.<sup>730</sup> *Luxuria*, *avaritia* and *ambitio* decried by Cato (52.22) are crucial aspects in Sallust's analysis of Rome's decline. The phrase *animus ... neque delicto neque libidini obnoxius* ('a spirit ... free from guilt or passion', 52.21) not only reworks central terms of Sallust's diagnosis, but also follows his archaeology in defining the past in contrast to the present, linguistically expressed through the negation.<sup>731</sup>

#### *An alternative view of Rome's history*

Caesar's speech, on the other hand, envisions the past along different lines and, as we will see in a second step, also encapsulates an alternative frame for the Catilinarian Conspiracy (51.4):

I might bring to remembrance many occasions, Fathers of the Senate, when kings and peoples under the influence of wrath or pity have made errors of judgment; but I prefer to remind you of times when our forefathers, resisting the dictates of passion, have acted justly and in order.

<sup>727</sup> See, e.g., Pöschl 1981: 376-7.

<sup>728</sup> Cf. Levene 2000: 181-2, who also notes the absence of virtues prominent in the archaeology such as *aequitas* and *iustitia*.

<sup>729</sup> For a comparison of Sallust's and Cato's take on the story, see Sklenář 1998: 217-18. On the general perception of Manlius' cruelty, see Skutsch 1985: 317. In Liv. 8.7, the episode is ambivalent, see Feldherr 1998: 105-11.

<sup>730</sup> Cf. Pöschl 1940: 19; Earl 1961: 97; Vretska 1976 ad 52.11; Sklenář 1998: 211-14.

<sup>731</sup> Cato's romanticizing view of the past is subverted though as Feldherr points out: he appeals to the senators not to change the laws established by the ancestors, who, as he has just mentioned, changed yet earlier laws (51.37-42). Feldherr also reads the Manlius exemplum in the light of Cato's reflections on the transformation of the language of values illustrated by the very virtue of *fortitudo* that seems to have been an issue in the case of Manlius' son ('too great valour' – *inmoderata fortitudo*).

*Magna mihi copia est memorandi, patres conscripti, quae reges atque populi ira aut misericordia impulsu male consuluerint; sed ea malo dicere quae maiores nostri contra lubidinem animi sui recte atque ordine fecere.*

A parallel passage from the archaeology invites a comparison (7.7):

I might bring to remembrance the battlefields on which the Romans with a mere handful of men routed great armies of their adversaries, and the cities fortified by nature which they took by assault, were it not that such a theme would carry me too far from my subject.

*Memorare possum quibus in locis maxumas hostium copias populus Romanus parva manu fuderit, quas urbis natura munitas pugnando ceperit, ni ea res longius nos ab incepto traheret.*

The passages are not exactly symmetrical: Sallust stays within Roman history, Caesar juxtaposes foreign kings and people with Rome. The bravery touched upon by Sallust is also slightly different from the resistance against *lubido* that interests Caesar. These qualifications notwithstanding, it is significant that Caesar elaborates on the kind of positive deeds that are set aside in the archaeology.<sup>732</sup>

Another, perhaps even more salient difference between Caesar on the one hand and Sallust and Cato on the other is revealed by the different modes of referring to the past. Cato and Sallust link past and present through the notion of development; to be more exact, they emphasize the rupture that separates them. Caesar, in contrast, evokes the past through exempla. Cato, as we have seen, also deploys an exemplum, Manlius Torquatus, but whereas he uses it descriptively to drive home the gap between past and present, Caesar uses his exempla normatively in order to derive guidance for the present: just as the ancestors did not punish the Rhodians and did not requite the treacheries of Carthage, the senators should now refrain from executing the conspirators (51.5-7). While Caesar here evokes two events as positive exempla, the regime of the 30s in Athens and Sulla's reign serve him as paradigms to be avoided: they are intended to illustrate that executions which are fully justified can be abused as cases of precedence for unjust terror (51.27-36). Whether negative or positive, exempla rest on the assumption of a continuum; otherwise it would not make sense to draw conclusions from the past to the present. Thus, where Cato and Sallust emphasize a hiatus, Caesar sees continuity.<sup>733</sup> Accordingly, the latter's view of Rome's present situation is far more positive. Of course, he acknowledges the horrors of the conspiracy, but he does not find it fruitful to rehearse them (51.9-10) and

---

<sup>732</sup> At the same time, Caesar does not gloss over negative aspects of Rome's history such as Sulla (51.32-4).

<sup>733</sup> For Caesar's emphasis on continuity, see also Feldherr 2012: 100-101.

continues by counting current Romans among those ‘who stand out holding great power’ (*qui magno imperio praediti in excelso aetatem agunt*, 51.12). While Cato appeals to the senators’ material interests and *voluptates* (52.5), Caesar projects a far more positive view of his peers, addressing himself to the *animus* that ought to be free from the constraints of *lubido* (51.2-4).<sup>734</sup>

It is worth taking a closer look at the exempla adduced by Caesar. Two of them touch upon events that figure prominently in Sallust’s take on Rome’s history, another can easily be inserted into this trajectory. For Sallust the destruction of Carthage marks the turning point, Sulla’s dictatorship a crucial step in Rome’s deterioration. Caesar’s third Roman exemplum, the treatment of the Rhodians who, the Romans felt, had betrayed their alliance in the Perses War,<sup>735</sup> is not mentioned in the archaeology, but seems to have figured in discussions of a relation between Rome’s military dominion and moral deterioration. Commentators have noted the special significance of this exemplum in Caesar’s speech:<sup>736</sup> in his arguably most famous speech, Cato the Censor argued against punishing Rhodes. The preserved fragments and other texts indicate that Cato was worried about the dangers of too great a prosperity for Rome.<sup>737</sup> With Rome’s clemency towards Rhodes, Caesar adduces a case in which Cato the Censor had taken the opposite view to what his grandson is going to argue in the present: Cato’s forceful support of execution is implicitly presented as inconsistent with the more lenient attitude of his famous ancestor.

Levene pushes this interpretation further and argues that Cato Censorius also endows the reference to Carthage with special significance: Carthage, he claims, is an ambiguous exemplum of Roman mercy because the Romans finally erased the capital of their arch-enemy. The major advocate of Carthage’s destruction was the Elder Cato who, it is purported, used to close his speeches with the formula *ceterum censeo Carthaginem esse delendam*: ‘Sallust alludes in rapid succession to the Censor’s two most famous interventions in foreign affairs: the Rhodians, where he successfully argued for mercy; and Carthage, where he successfully argued for destruction – and Roman morality fell in its wake. The Younger Cato, in arguing for the execution of the conspirators, will be acting in the manner of the Censor – but it was through that aspect of the Censor that the morality he espoused was destroyed.’<sup>738</sup>

Levene brilliantly pulls out the numerous implications of Caesar’s exempla and their intricate interaction with Sallust’s narrative of Roman history.

---

<sup>734</sup> Sklenář 1998 argues that whereas Caesar takes up the rationalistic aspect of Sallust’s proem, Cato adopts its moralist component.

<sup>735</sup> Commentators note that Rhodes lost some of her holdings and suffered from the new *emporium* at Delos; e.g., Vretska 1976: *ad* 51.5; McGushin 1977: *ad* 51.5, but this would not have undermined the plausibility of the exemplum in the eyes of ancient readers.

<sup>736</sup> Cf. Vretska 1976: *ad* 51.5; McGushin 1977: *ad* 51.5.

<sup>737</sup> See Cato, *orationes* fr. 163, 164 and Appian, *Punica* 65 with the discussion by Levene 2000: 186-7.

<sup>738</sup> Levene 2000: 188.

At a far simpler level, it is worth noting that Caesar gives the events that are cornerstones of Sallust's emplotment of Rome's past utterly different significance: the Punic Wars and Sulla's reign are not closely tied together as in the archaeology; the former is evoked as a positive, the latter as a negative exemplum. Caesar does not focus on the destruction of Carthage as trigger of Rome's deterioration, but calls upon Rome's clemency towards Carthage as a model for the present. Whilst Sallust is at pains to demonstrate that the Catilinarian Conspiracy grows directly out of Sulla's reign, Caesar presents Sulla as a closed chapter to be contrasted with the present: '... and the massacre did not end until Sulla glutted all his followers with riches. For my own part, I fear nothing of that kind for Marcus Tullius or for our times ...' (... *neque prius finis iugulandi fuit quam Sulla omnis suos divitiis explevit. Atque ego haec non in M. Tullio neque his temporibus vereor ...*, 51.34-5).

Caesar's deployment of events crucial to Sallust's Roman history not only enriches his argument, as Levene demonstrates, but also hammers home that we are being offered an alternative history of Rome. The speech of Caesar, whose virtue is extolled in the *synkrisis*, shows the reader that Sallust's emplotment is only one of many possible narratives for Rome's past. Caesar does not offer a linear account, but his exempla add up to a cohesive panorama of Roman history that is far less sombre than the *BC*'s main story-line. Instead of a hiatus, there is continuity; mercifulness and generosity have replaced moral depravity as focus.

#### *An alternative assessment of Catiline*

Caesar's alternative take on Rome's history comes with an assessment of the Catilinarian Conspiracy that significantly deviates from its presentation by Sallust. It has been noted by commentators that the beginning of Caesar's speech rehashes ideas and phrases from the *BC*'s proem.<sup>739</sup> For my argument, the occurrence of historiographic topoi is noteworthy (51.1-4):

Fathers of the Senate, all men who deliberate upon difficult questions ought to be free from hatred and friendship, anger and pity. When these feelings stand in the way the mind cannot easily discern the truth, and no mortal man has ever served at the same time his passions and his best interests. When you apply your intellect, it prevails; if passion possesses you, it holds sway, and the mind is impotent. I might bring to remembrance many occasions ...

*Omnis homines, patres conscripti, qui de rebus dubiis consultant, ab odio amicitia, ira atque misericordia vacuos esse decet. Haud facile animus verum providet ubi illa officiunt, neque quisquam omnium lubidini simul et*

---

<sup>739</sup> See especially Sklenář 1998: 206-7.

*usui paruit. Ubi intenderis ingenium, valet; si libido possidet, ea dominatur, animus nihil valet. Magna mihi copia est memorandi ...*

The claim to impartiality and truth just as the distinction between pleasure and utility are firmly established topoi not only of oratory, but also of historiographic memory.<sup>740</sup> Caesar's appropriation of historiographic phraseology juxtaposes him with Sallust and invites a comparison of character with author.

Caesar not only resembles a historian in turning to the past for his exempla; I suggest that he also assumes a historian-like stance with respect to the present. The central point of his argument is to anticipate how an execution will be judged by later generations. Caesar appeals to the senators to be concerned less with their anger than with their 'reputation' (*fama*, 51.7) just as their ancestors let the Rhodians go unpunished 'for fear that someone might say that the wealth of the Rhodians, rather than resentment for the wrong they had done, had led to the declaration of war' (*ne quis divitiarum magis quam iniuriae causa bellum inceptum diceret*, 51.5). He elaborates this appeal by pointing out the elevated position of the Romans that attracts a particularly severe judgment of their behaviour (51.12-14):

But the actions of those who hold great power, and pass their lives in a lofty station, are known to all the world. So it comes to pass that in the highest position there is the least freedom of action. There neither partiality nor dislike is in place, and anger least of all; for what in others is called wrath, this in a ruler is termed arrogance and cruelty.

*Qui magno imperio praediti in excelso aetatem agunt, eorum facta cuncti mortales novere. Ita in maxuma fortuna minuma licentia est: neque studere neque odisse, sed minume irasci decet; quae apud alios iracundia dicitur, ea in imperio superbia atque crudelitas appellatur.*

The ideal attitude of the historian, namely the absence of *ira et studium* towards the past, has become the maxim for assessing the present in Caesar's speech. In proclaiming the future verdict as yardstick for present action, Caesar envisages the present as if it were a past.

In some regards, the historian-like approach to the present aligns Caesar with the Herodotean Darius and Xerxes, who, as we have seen, strive to record their own deeds.<sup>741</sup> Caesar resembles the Eastern potentates in the attempt to detach himself from the present and consider events still in flux with the distance of retrospect. His speech is therefore open to Cato's critique that the imminent threat does not permit such reasoning (52.4):

---

<sup>740</sup> See also Feldherr 2012: 98-102, who argues that other parts of Caesar's speech also evoke the idea of a historian.

<sup>741</sup> Cf. ch. 6???

For in the case of other offences you may proceed against them after they have been committed; with this, unless you take measures to forestall it, in vain will you appeal to the laws when once it has been consummated. Once a city has been taken nothing is left to the vanquished.

*Nam cetera maleficia tum persequare ubi facta sunt; hoc nisi provideris ne adcidat, ubi evenit, frustra iudicia inploras: capta urbe nihil fit relicui victis.*

The senate's judgment is an executive decision in a situation of imminent danger, not an evaluation to be mused on in the lofty court of history. At the same time, Caesar's attitude is markedly different from that of the Persian Kings. His anticipated retrospect serves an appeal to *dignitas*, a value firmly established in Rome,<sup>742</sup> whereas Darius' and Xerxes' historicizing of the present is rooted in hybris and accompanied by a detrimental neglect of the human condition.

Moreover, in the *BC*, unlike in Suetonius' *vita*,<sup>743</sup> Caesar's historian-like vantage-point is not only concerned with reputation, but also takes into account the political consequences (51.27):

All bad precedents have originated in cases which were good; but when the control of the government falls into the hands of men who are incompetent or bad, your new precedent is transferred from those who well deserve and merit such punishment to the undeserving and blameless.

*Omnia mala exempla ex rebus bonis orta sunt. Sed ubi imperium ad ignaros eius aut minus bonos pervenit, novom illud exemplum ab dignis et idoneis ad indignos et non idoneos transfertur.*

After illustrating this point through the exempla of the Athenian Thirty and Sulla, Caesar explicitly voices his worries that an execution of the conspirators could open the door for unjust action (51.35-6):

For my own part, I fear nothing of that kind for Marcus Tullius or for our times, but in a great commonwealth there are many different natures. It is possible that at another time, when someone else is consul and is likewise in command of an army, some falsehood may be believed to be true. When the consul, with this precedent before him, shall draw the sword in obedience to the senate's decree, who shall limit or restrain him?

*Atque ego haec non in M. Tullio neque his temporibus vereor, sed in magna civitate multa et varia ingenia sunt. Potest alio tempore, alio*

---

<sup>742</sup> Cf. above ???

<sup>743</sup> In Suetonius, *Divus Iulius* 14, Caesar only evokes the *invidia* the senators are going to suffer *in posterum*.

*consule, quoi item exercitus in manu sit, falsum aliquid pro vero credi. Ubi hoc exemplo per senatus decretum consul gladium eduxerit, quis illi finem statuet aut quis moderabitur?*

Caesar thus views the execution in anticipated retrospect to demonstrate that it may be abused as precedent. Commentators have found here an allusion to actual later events. Besides Antonius, particularly Octavian with the proscriptions in 42 BCE has been discussed as the target of Sallust's veiled critique, but it has also been noted that the latter case does not exactly match the prediction.<sup>744</sup> While it is hard to find a single event that makes Caesar's concern a prediction, it cannot fail to adumbrate in general the extreme violence and abuse of power under the triumvirate and already the preceding years.

Cato's response hammers home that Caesar and his historian-like attitude do not do justice to the actual threat, but simultaneously Caesar's speech opens up a vantage-point that permits a radically different take on the conspiracy. His prophetic warning suggests envisioning the conspiracy in light of the power struggles of the 40s that progressively stretched and transgressed the frame of the Republican constitution, from the first triumvirate through Caesar's murder to the second triumvirate. This perspective fundamentally rearranges the place of the events of 63 BCE in the larger horizon of Rome's history. In the *BC*'s major plot-line, Catiline's revolutionary plans are seen as outgrowth of Sulla's depravation of Rome's society that starts with the destruction of Carthage. For Caesar, on the other hand, a senatorial decision that fails to continue the clemency practiced in the Punic Wars would ultimately lead to the excesses of violence against citizens in the 40s. In this trajectory, not Catiline, but Cicero appears as heir of Sulla.<sup>745</sup>

Such a view of Cicero's consulate was not unheard of in ancient Rome. Cicero's second *Philippic* lets us at least glimpse some of the charges which Antony levelled against Cicero's consulate in his speech of September 19 (11-20). Dio Cassius has Fufius Calenus in his defence of Antonius in 43 BCE attack Cicero in the following way (46.20):

But as for you, Cicero, what did you accomplish in your consulship, I will not say that was wise and good, but that was not deserving of the greatest punishment? Did you not throw our city into confusion and party strife when it was quiet and harmonious, and fill the Forum and the Capitol with slaves, among others, whom you had summoned to help you? Did you not basely destroy Catiline, who had merely canvassed for office but had

---

<sup>744</sup> For a critique of Antonius, see Havas 1990: 220-1; of Octavian, see Syme 1964: 121-3; Vretska 1976: 552; Pöschl 1981: 385; of both, Perl 1969: 204. Against critique of a specific person, see Drummond 1995: 33-6, who suggests a reference to the 'violent atmosphere of 44-3' (35), and Levene 2000: 189-90, who persuasively lists transgressions from the 40s before the triumvirate that resonate with Caesar's warning.

<sup>745</sup> Cicero, on the other hand, aligns Caesar with Sulla in *Off.* 1.43; 2.27.

otherwise done nothing dreadful? Did you not pitilessly slay Lentulus and his followers, who were not only guilty of no wrong, but had neither been tried nor convicted, and that, too, though you are always and everywhere prating much about the laws and about the courts?

σὺ δ', ὦ Κικέρων, τί ἐν τῇ ὑπατείᾳ σου οὐχ ὅτι σοφὸν ἢ ἀγαθόν, ἀλλ' οὐ καὶ τιμωρίας τῆς μεγίστης ἄξιον ἔπραξας; οὐχ ἡσυχάζουσιν μὲν καὶ ὁμονοοῦσιν τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν καὶ ἐξετάραξας καὶ ἐστασίασας, τὴν ἀγορὰν καὶ τὸ Καπιτώλιον ἄλλων τέ τινων καὶ δούλων παρακλήτων πληρώσας; οὐ τὸν Κατιλίαν σπουδαρχήσαντα μόνον, ἄλλο δὲ μηδὲν δεινὸν ποιήσαντα κακῶς ἀπώλεσας; οὐ τὸν Λέντουλον καὶ τοὺς μετ' αὐτοῦ μήτ' ἀδικήσαντάς τι μήτε κριθέντας μήτε ἐλεγχθέντας οἰκτρῶς διέφθειρας καίτοι πολλὰ μὲν περὶ τῶν νόμων, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν δικαστηρίων ἀεὶ καὶ πανταχοῦ θρυλῶν;<sup>746</sup>

The (Pseudo-)Sallustian invective against Cicero blames the consul for proscriptions (5) and explicitly draws the comparison with Sulla (6):

'Let arms yield to the toga, the laurel to the tongue?' Just as if it were in the toga and not in arms that you did what you boast of, and as if there were any difference between you and a dictator like Sulla except the mere title of your office.

*'Cedant arma togae, concedat laurea linguae.'* *Quasi vero togatus et non armatus ea quae gloriaris confeceris, atque inter te Sullamque dictatorem praeter nomen imperii quicquam interfuerit.*

The tricky question of authorship left aside,<sup>747</sup> the invective, together with Fufius Calenus' speech in Dio Cassius, illustrates that the analysis intimated by Sallust's Caesar circulated in the political debate and in rhetorical schools.

Different as the *BC*'s main story-line and the alternative view sketched in Caesar's speech are, they do not necessarily exclude each other. While the former focuses on the conspiracy, the latter concentrates on the execution of the conspirators. One can simultaneously envisage the conspiracy as offshoot of Sulla's restoration and see the execution of conspirators in a line with the proscriptions of Sulla and the violence waged by the triumvirs. Nonetheless, the different trajectories these views yield for a history of Rome alert us to what degree our understanding of events is shaped by the choice of a vantage-point. In the preceding chapter, we have seen that Polybius extends his coverage from 168 to 145 BCE, as Rome's ascent to universal dominion can only be assessed in light

---

<sup>746</sup> Cf. Gowing 1992: 147-8, who argues that 'while Calenus' attack may not agree in each detail with Dio's view of Cicero, in a broad sense the opinion expressed here does'.

<sup>747</sup> For a survey, see Novokhatko 2009: 111-29.

of the following period. Similarly, Caesar's speech illustrates that the Catilinarian Conspiracy may look very different from the vantage-point of the 40s.

Caesar's speech also highlights that the *BC* is less monolithic than is often assumed. Recent scholarship has detected fissures especially in the use of central terms that challenge the traditional reading of the *BC* as a straightforward moralist account of Rome's decline.<sup>748</sup> In this section, I have argued that beyond this the *BC* offers the reader various angles from which to view Rome's history. Catiline's letter and Caesar's speech feature alternative takes that throw into relief and even rival Sallust's main plot-line.

#### IV. MIMESIS IN THE *BC*

##### *Sallust's un-Thucydidean and un-Tacitean voice*

In the prologue of the *BC*, Sallust emphasizes the difficulty of the historian's task. He mentions as first point that 'the style and diction must be equal to the deeds recorded' (*quod facta dictis exaequanda sunt*, 3.2). At first sight, especially if we replace *exaequanda* with the variant *exequenda* transmitted in some manuscripts,<sup>749</sup> Sallust seems to refer to the mimetic dimension of historiography. His reflection would be characterized by the high esteem for narrative vividness that we have found, for example, in Plutarch's appraisal of Thucydides and Xenophon.<sup>750</sup> Sallust's second point, however, suggests that he is not so much concerned with mimesis as with evaluation:<sup>751</sup> criticism, he complains, is often attributed to *malevolentia et invidia*; praise, on the other hand, is only believed as long as the reader feels herself capable of the deeds praised. The focus on evaluation makes it likely that the challenge mentioned before draws on the topos of doing justice to events. We find this topos, for example, in a passage from Thucydides to which Sallust may allude:<sup>752</sup> at the beginning of the funeral speech, Pericles, before musing about the reservations an account of the past can encounter, states (2.35.2): 'To speak in due proportion is difficult ...' (ἡλεπόν γὰρ τὸ μετρίως εἰπεῖν ...', 2.35.2).<sup>753</sup>

That Sallust is concerned with appropriate evaluation and his reader's reactions to it is corroborated by four passages in the following chapters: Catiline's endurance of hunger, pain and lack of sleep is beyond the credible (*supra quam quouquam credibile est*, 5.3). Other positive feats that may not meet

---

<sup>748</sup> Cf. Batstone 1988; Gunderson 2000; Levene 2000.

<sup>749</sup> Recent editors and commentators prefer *exaequanda*: Vretska 1976; McGushin 1977; Ramsey 1984; Reynolds 1991: *ad loc.*

<sup>750</sup> Cf. ch. 2 and 3 ???

<sup>751</sup> Cf. Kraus and Woodman 1997: 14. See also Marincola 1997: 152.

<sup>752</sup> Cf. Vretska 1976: *ad* 3.2.

<sup>753</sup> See also Isocr. 4.13: '... that it is difficult to find ...' ('... ὡς ἡλεπόν ἐστίν ... ἔξευρεῖν') and Oakley 1997: *ad* Liv. 6.20.8 for further parallels.

with belief are the ease with which the Trojans and Aborigines formed a state governed by *concordia* (6.2) and the speed with which the state grew after freedom had been established (7.3). The boldness of private construction projects after Sulla's reign, on the other hand, attests to the depravity which Sallust decries and is therefore liable, we can conjecture, to be attributed to *malevolentia et invidia*: 'Why, pray, should I speak of things which are incredible except to those who have seen them, that a host of private men have levelled mountains and built upon the seas?' (*Nam quid ea memorem quae nisi iis qui videre nemini credibilia sunt, a privatis compluribus subvorsos montis, maria constrata esse?* 13.1). These comments on credibility bulk at the beginning of the *BC*, but a faint echo may be heard at the end in the battle of Pistoia: 'When Petreius saw that Catiline was making so much stronger a fight than he had expected ...' (*Petreius ubi videt Catilinam, contra ac ratus erat, magna vi tendere ...*, 60.5). Catiline's stellar performance astounds a character in the narrative, but this may prefigure (and discharge) a strain of credibility in the eyes of the reader.

Mimesis is not only absent from Sallust's extensive reflections on his historiography, it does not loom large in his narrative either. The *brevitas Sallustiana* noted by Quintilian (*Inst.* 4.2.45; 10.1.32) is not conducive to an experiential account. In addition, Sallust's narratorial persona, while not as conspicuous as Polybius', is still very prominent. References to his narratorial activity as well as cross-references pierce the narrative and go against its experiential appeal.<sup>754</sup> At the macro-level, digressions interrupt the mimesis of the narrative. One passage from the excursus on politics and factions clearly illustrates that Sallust does not strive to restore presentness to the past (39.4):

If Catiline had been victor in the first battle, or had merely held his own, beyond a doubt great bloodshed and disaster would have fallen upon the state; nor would the victors have been allowed for long to enjoy their success, but when they had been worn out and exhausted, a more powerful adversary would have wrested from them the supreme power and with it their freedom.

*Quod si primo proelio Catilina superior aut aequa manu discessisset, profecto magna clades atque calamitas rem publicam oppressisset, neque illis qui victoriam adepti forent diutius ea uti licuisset quin defessis et exsanguibus qui plus posset imperium atque libertatem extorqueret.*

---

<sup>754</sup> See, for example, *BC* 18.1: 'Now, even before that time a few men had conspired against the government, and among them was Catiline; of that affair I shall give as true an account as I am able' (*Sed antea item coniuravere pauci contra rem publicam, in quis Catilina fuit; de qua quam verissime potero dicam.*) and such cross-references as 'as I have described' (*ut supra diximus*, 16.1). On Sallust's prominent narratorial persona, see Grethlein 2006c.

We have seen in the preceding chapters that counterfactuals can serve as a powerful device against the retrospective fallacy.<sup>755</sup> Here, however, Sallust uses a counterfactual to anticipate the failure of the conspiracy right before it reaches its peak with the attempt to involve Gauls in it (40-1). The prolepsis undercuts the capacity of the counterfactual to recreate the temporal horizon of the past.

The general scholarly take on Sallust is put succinctly by Syme: ‘Sallust falls into place in a recognizable tradition of historiography, linking Thucydides and Tacitus.’<sup>756</sup> Syme is surely correct to envision Sallust in ‘the company of searching and subversive writers, preoccupied with power and the play of chance in human affairs, finding their delectation in disillusionment’.<sup>757</sup> Concerning the issue of futures past, however, Sallust deviates from his most prominent model and his most radical follower as the distribution of the chapters on these authors in this book shows.<sup>758</sup> Neither Thucydides nor Tacitus fully evades the retrospect of historiography, but both are at pains, albeit in different ways, to restore presentness to the past. Sallust, on the other hand, strongly capitalizes on hindsight, as we have seen.<sup>759</sup> This being said, in the remainder of this chapter I would like to demonstrate that experiential aspects are not entirely absent from the *BC*. For this, I will look at the ending and the deployment of authorial uncertainty throughout the narrative.

### *The closure of the BC*

The battle at Pistoia brings the action of the *BC* to a halt while at the same time denying it closure,<sup>760</sup> a tension that renders the ending of the *BC* experiential. Catiline and all his men are dead, but the deep fissure rending the Republic is flagged in the last sentences of the work (61.8-9):

Many, too, who had gone from the camp to visit the field or to pillage, on turning over the bodies of the rebels found now a friend, now a guest or kinsman; some also recognized their personal enemies. Thus the whole army was variously affected with sorrow and grief, rejoicing and lamentation.

*Multi autem, qui e castris visundi aut spoliandi gratia processerant, volentes hostilia cadavera amicum alii, pars hospitem aut cognatum*

---

<sup>755</sup> Cf. ???

<sup>756</sup> Syme 1964: 256.

<sup>757</sup> Syme 1964: 256.

<sup>758</sup> See also Grethlein 2006c for the argument that Sallust’s narratorial persona has rather un-Thucydidean traits.

<sup>759</sup> The mere numbers of statistics ought to be used with caution, but it is striking that the density of authorial first person references in the *BC* is more than double that in Tacitus’ *Annals*, cf. Évrard 1997: 14. On the prominence of the first person in the *BC*, see also Pagán 2005: 32.

<sup>760</sup> On the open ending of the *BC*, see Vretska 1976: *ad* 61.9. In 1955: 152-3, he compares it with the ending of the *BJ*, both on battlefields.

*reperiebant; fuere item qui inimicos suos cognoscerent. Ita varie per omnem exercitum laetitia maeror, luctus atque gaudia agitabantur.*

Besides subverting the simple declaration of the Catilinarians as *hostes* in 61.4,<sup>761</sup> here repeated through the adjective *hostilia*, the identification of the corpses as friends, guest-friends, relatives and personal enemies drives home the profound disruption of the *res publica*. Together with the contradictory emotions felt by the soldiers, it lets the *BC* end on a cacophonous note. The use of tenses reinforces this tension: while the durative aspect of the imperfect form describing the response of the soldiers to the battlefield (*reperiebant; agitabantur*) keeps the action open, the plu-perfect forms referring to the battle convey the sense of closure.<sup>762</sup> Both tenses help to pull the reader into the action: the imperfect presents the scene as unclosed and puts the reader right on the spot of the action. The plu-perfect aligns the reader with the troops standing on the battlefield as both look back to the battle as an event of the past. The embedding of an internal audience further reduces the gap between reader and the world of the action.

The first sentence of the paragraph underscores the parallel between readers and viewers: ‘When the battle was ended you would have seen what boldness and resolution had pervaded Catiline’s army.’ (*Sed confecto proelio, tum vero cerneretis quanta audacia quantaque animi vis fuisset in exercitu Catilinae.* 61.1). Besides immersing the reader in the action, the metaleptic apostrophe of *cerneretis*<sup>763</sup> spells out that the troops’ act of viewing (*visundi ... gratia*) prefigures the reader’s reception.<sup>764</sup> The reference to the reader’s seeing highlights the graphic quality that the description of the battlefield and the internal spectators bestow on the scene. Its picture-like character buttresses the tension between closure and openness of the ending: the freezing of the action into a picture, namely the view of the battlefield, underlines that it has come to an end. At the same time, the picture keeps the past present and makes it spill into the time of

---

<sup>761</sup> The Catilinarians as *hostes* are juxtaposed with Petreius’ troops as ‘army of the Roman people’ (*exercitus populi Romani*, 61.7).

<sup>762</sup> 61.1-7: ‘... what boldness and resolution had pervaded Catiline’s army. For almost every man [covered] ... the position which he had taken when alive at the beginning ... A few, indeed, in the centre, whom the praetorian cohort had scattered, lay a little apart from the rest, but the wounds even of these were in front ... all had valued their own lives no more highly than those of their enemies. But the army of the Roman people gained no joyful nor bloodless victory, for all the most valiant had either fallen in the fight or come away with severe wounds.’ (... *quanta audacia quantaque animi vis fuisset in exercitu Catilinae. Nam fere quem quisque vivos pugnando locum ceperat ... Pauci autem, quos medios cohors praetoria disiecerat, paulo divorsius, sed omnes tamen advorsis vulneribus conciderant ... ita cuncti suae hostiumque vitae iuxta pepercerant. Neque tamen exercitus populi Romani laetam aut incruentam victoriam adeptus erat; nam strenuissimus quisque aut occiderat in proelio aut graviter vulneratus discesserat.*)

<sup>763</sup> Vretska 1976 : *ad* 61.1 claims: ‘Das Verb betont gegenüber *videre* das geistige Sehen’, but *cernere* can also signify the sense perception. In Sallust, see *BJ* 60.4: ‘... acting as if their countrymen could see or hear them ...’ (... *sicuti audiri a suis aut cerni possent* ...). For evidence from other authors, see *TLL* s.v. III A *sensibus percipere*.

<sup>764</sup> The motive of booty (*spoliandi gratia*), on the other hand, sets the troops off from the readers.

Sallust's readers. It is, metaphorically speaking, a *tableau vivant* whose grim reality has not ceased to exist.

The hero of the *BC* throws this tension into relief: Catiline's corpse will not do much harm anymore, but when he is found on the battlefield, he is 'still breathing slightly, and showing in his face the indomitable spirit which had animated him when alive' (*paululum etiam spirans ferociamque animi quam habuerat vivos in voltu retinens*, 61.4). *Ferocia animi* harks back to the beginning of the narrative: 'His savage spirit was goaded more and more every day by poverty and a sense of guilt ...' (*Agitabatur magis magisque in dies animus ferox inopia rei familiaris et conscientia scelerum ...*, 5.7). Catiline may be dead, but his wild heart is still beating in Sallust's narrative, and also beyond: the agitation that has moved him has infected the Romans (61.9: *agitabantur*). Put prominently at the very end of the narrative, the agitation denies it closure and, as the prophecy of Caesar intimates, continues to trouble Rome's history. The tension between closure and openness sustained through the use of tenses and the graphic description binds the reader into the world of the narrative; a strong experiential appeal lends much weight to the *BC*'s ending.

### *Ambiguity*

The qualification of the label *hostes* for the Catilinarians is emblematic for the implicit deconstruction of central concepts in Sallust's works. Scholars such as Batstone and Gunderson have read this subversive tendency as formally mirroring the confusion to which Rome's society is subjected; in the words of the latter: 'Sallust offers ... a rhetorical history whose narrative ambiguities reproduce the hermeneutic ambiguity of the confused Roman civic life in which the historian finds himself.'<sup>765</sup> I would like to consider another device that makes the narrative of the *BC* experiential. Authorial uncertainty in general interrupts the mimesis of the narrative and alerts the reader to the mediating instance of the historian.<sup>766</sup> My chapter on Tacitus' *Annals*, on the other hand, has shown that ambiguity can be used to mirror confusion in the action and thereby contribute to the experiential character of an account. Sallust's writing is less mimetic than Tacitus', but he uses ambiguity to a similar effect.

Sallust withholds, for example, his confirmation of details that must have appeared especially gruesome to his readers. After elaborating on Catiline's

---

<sup>765</sup> Gunderson 2000: 118. See also Batstone 1986; 1988; 1990. Otherwise, mimetic aspects of Sallust's narrative have especially been discussed in the context of the impact of tragic historiography on his works. Cf. the balanced discussions of Vretska 1955: 146-58; La Penna 1968: 350-5. However, not only is the idea of a school of tragic historiography highly questionable, but the features ascribed to it overlap only partly with the experiential aspects this book explores. See also Pagán 2005: 37-41 on suspense in the *BC*.

<sup>766</sup> For a more extensive exploration of authorial uncertainty in the *BC* and *BJ*, see Grethlein 2006c. On its mimetic appeal, see also Batstone 1990: 113-19.

efforts to entice young men by various means, he adds a rumour for which he is unwilling to vouch (14.7):

I am aware that some have believed that the young men who frequented Catiline's house set but little store by their chastity; but that report became current rather for other reasons than because anyone had evidence of its truth.

*Scio fuisse nonnullos qui ita existumarent, iuventutem quae domum Catilinae frequentabat parum honeste pudicitiam habuisse; sed ex aliis rebus magis quam quod quoiquam id conpertum foret haec fama valebat.*

Sallust contrasts his own account with the stories of homosexual relations between Catiline and his associates to which he alludes obliquely: the juxtaposition of *scio* with *existumare* is taken up and exacerbated by the discrepancy separating *conpertum* from *fama*.<sup>767</sup> Sallust thereby stylizes himself as a reliable historian who is not prone to accept every tradition that he encounters ... and can still report a rumour that won't fail to stimulate his reader's fantasies.

In a similar vein, Sallust mentions that Catiline had the conspirators drink human blood mixed with wine to corroborate their alliance (22.3):

Others thought that these and many other details were invented by men who believed that the hostility which afterwards arose against Cicero would be moderated by exaggerating the guilt of the conspirators whom he had put to death. For my own part I have too little evidence for pronouncing upon a matter of such weight.

*Nonnulli ficta et haec et multa praeterea existumabant ab iis qui Ciceronis invidiam, quae postea orta est, leniri credebant atrocitate sceleris eorum qui poenas dederant. Nobis ea res pro magnitudine parum conperta est.*

Again, the admission of authorial uncertainty permits Sallust to introduce a detail that reinforces the uncanny character of the conspiracy while in the same breath underscoring his credentials as critical historian. Here and also in the reference to sexual perversion, the withholding of authorial confirmation also throws into relief the reliability of other details: the oath may only be legendary, but the meeting took place as reported by Sallust; while Catiline's sexual intercourse with young boys is impossible to ascertain, he did without doubt seduce a Vesta priestess, perform 'other affairs equally unlawful and impious' (*alia huiusce modi contra ius fasque*, 15.1) and kill his son to make place for Orestilla (*pro certo creditur*, 15.2).

These and other cases of authorial uncertainty, I propose, serve not only to establish credibility, but also enhance the narrative's mimetic quality. Sallust

---

<sup>767</sup> For a different take on the passage, see Pagán 2005: 34.

elaborates on the anxiety of the population, especially the women, after the *senatus consultum ultimum* has been issued (31.1-3). Even before, numerous rumours about Catiline and his agitations circulate (29.1). In reporting, but not vouching for details, Sallust recreates for the reader some sense of the insecurity to which Romans were exposed during the conspiracy. The discourse comes to mirror the story as the destabilization of the Republic creeps from the conspiracy into its representation.

The most salient case of ambiguity in the *BC* is the role of Crassus. At the end of the list of conspirators, we read (17.7):

There were also at that time some who believed that Marcus Licinius Crassus was not wholly ignorant of the plot; that because his enemy Gaius Pompeius was in command of a large army, he was willing to see anyone's influence grow in opposition to the power of his rival, fully believing meanwhile that if the conspirators should be successful, he would easily be the leading man among them.

*Fuere item ea tempestate qui crederent M. Licinium Crassum non ignarum eius consili fuisse: quia Cn. Pompeius, invisus ipsi, magnum exercitum ductabat, quousvis opes voluisse contra illius potentiam crescere, simul confisum, si coniuratio valuisset, facile apud illos principem se fore.*

Unlike in the case of the rumours about Catiline's *impudicitia* and the blood-oath, Sallust does not explicitly state that certainty is impossible to reach, but simply attributes the point to anonymous voices without commenting on it *sua voce*. The rumour about Crassus' complicity gains some weight from the addition of two explanations for why he had an interest in the conspiracy. Not much later Sallust writes that Piso, one of the heads of the first conspiracy, received the praetorship of Hispania Citerior 'through the efforts of Crassus' (*adnitente Crasso*, 19.1). Crassus is not named as a participant in the first conspiracy, but the reference to him as supporter of Piso puts him into its social environment and thereby inscribes him into the prehistory of the main conspiracy.<sup>768</sup>

The major passage about Crassus comes when the conspiracy has already been dismantled. Caught on his way to Catiline, L. Tarquinius affirms the account that Volturcius has given of Catiline's plans (48.4-9):

He added that he had been sent by Marcus Crassus to advise Catiline not to be alarmed by the arrest of Lentulus, Cethegus, and the other conspirators, but to make the greater haste to come to the city, in order that he might

---

<sup>768</sup> The death of Piso in Spain is another case of authorial uncertainty (19.4-6): Sallust does not decide whether Piso was killed by Spaniards or Pompeius' henchmen. Sallust may actually not have been sure about it (cf. Grethlein 2006c: 314); at the same time, the obscurity of the exact circumstances has a mimetic dimension, as Piso was killed far away from Rome.

thereby revive the spirits of the rest, and that they might the more easily be saved from their danger. As soon, however, as Tarquinius named Crassus, a noble of great wealth and of the highest rank, (1) some thought the charge incredible; (2) others believed it to be true, (2a) but thought that in such a crisis so powerful a man ought to be propitiated rather than exasperated. (2b) There were many, too, who were under obligation to Crassus through private business relations. All these loudly insisted that the accusation was false and demanded that the matter be laid before the senate. Accordingly, on the motion of Cicero, the senate in full session voted that the testimony of Tarquinius appeared to be false; that he should be kept under guard and given no further hearing until he revealed the name of the man at whose instigation he had lied about a matter of such moment. (1a) At the time some believed that this charge had been trumped up by Publius Autronius, in order that by naming Crassus and involving him in the danger he might shield the rest behind his influence. (1b) Others declared that Tarquinius had been instructed by Cicero, to prevent Crassus from taking up the cause of the wicked, after his custom, and embroiling the state. (1c) I heard Crassus himself assert afterwards that this grave insult was put upon him by Cicero.

*praeterea se missum a M. Crasso qui Catilinae nuntiaret ne eum Lentulus et Cethegus aliique ex coniuratione deprehensi terrerent, eoque magis properaret ad urbem adcedere, quo et ceterorum animos reficeret et illi facilius e periculo eriperentur. Sed ubi Tarquinius Crassum nominavit, hominem nobilem, maxumis divitiis, summa potentia, (1) alii rem incredibilem rati, (2) pars tametsi verum existimabant, (2a) tamen quia in tali tempore tanta vis hominis magis leniunda quam exagitanda videbatur, (2b) plerique Crasso ex negotiis privatis obnoxii, conclamant indicem falsum esse, deque ea re postulant uti referatur. Itaque consulente Cicerone frequens senatus decernit Tarquini indicium falsum videri eumque in vinculis retinendum neque amplius potestatem faciendam, nisi de eo indicaret quous consilio tantam rem esset mentitus. (1a) Erant eo tempore qui existimarent indicium illud a P. Autronio machinatum quo facilius, appellato Crasso, per societatem periculi relicuos illius potentia tegeret; (1b) alii Tarquinium a Cicerone inmissum aiebant, ne Crassus more suo suscepto malorum patrocinio rem publicam conturbaret. (1c) Ipsum Crassum ego postea praedicantem audivi tantam illam contumeliam sibi a Cicerone inpositam.*

Sallust here gives ample space to different accounts about Crassus, focusing especially on their motives:<sup>769</sup> those who considered Tarquinius?

---

<sup>769</sup> For an in-depth analysis of this passage, see Batstone 1986: 108-14 with the qualification of Grethlein 2006c: 321 n. 45.

testimony a lie (1) are juxtaposed with others who believed it, but for various reasons opposed an incarceration of Tarquinius (2a-b). Finally, the first group's explanations for why Tarquinius had lied are unfolded (1a-c). Sallust does not verify or reject any of these opinions. The fact that most of Tarquinius' report matches Volturcius' confession may be taken to support its reliability. That being said, Sallust extensively reviews explanations for Tarquinius' lie (1a-c) and closes the paragraph with the statement that he himself (*ego!*) has heard from Crassus. And yet, the following paragraph on Caesar (49) demonstrates what a clear-cut exculpation looks like and throws into relief the ambiguity of the case of Crassus. The authorial uncertainty does not interrupt so much the mimesis of the narrative as it plunges the reader into the murky chaos of Rome during the conspiracy. The intricate networks of power make it hard for contemporaries to get at the truth beneath a dense net of lies and pretences. In confronting the reader with this insecurity, Sallust restores presentness to his account.

This interpretation needs some qualification though. Authorial uncertainty, it must be stressed, is limited in the *BC* and exposes the reader to the insecurity of the situation only through occasional spotlights. Sallust uses internal focalization, but he frequently shifts the vantage-point and provides plenty of non-focalized information. The reader is in general fully in the know about what is going on. In 29.1, for example, Sallust reports Cicero's insecurity about the situation:

When these events were reported to Cicero, he was greatly disturbed by the twofold peril, since he could no longer by his unaided efforts protect the city against these plots, nor gain any exact information as to the size and purpose of Manlius' army; he therefore formally called the attention of the senate to the matter, which had already been the subject of popular gossip.

*Ea cum Ciceroni nuntiarentur, ancipiti malo permotus, quod neque urbem ab insidiis privato consilio longius tueri poterat neque exercitus Manli quantus aut quo consilio foret satis conpertum habebat, rem ad senatum refert, iam antea volgi rumoribus exagitata.*

We, on the other hand, have been filled in on the plans and preparations of Catilina in great detail, including that Manlius has been sent to Fiesole (26-27.1). Here as in many other passages, Sallust does not try to make the anxiety of the contemporaries tangible for his readers.

Nonetheless, a comparison with the *BJ* throws into relief the significance of authorial uncertainty in the *BC*: in his later monograph, Sallust also employs ambiguity and thereby reproduces the disorder created by Jugurtha.<sup>770</sup> At the end, for example, the narratorial voice is repeatedly uncertain of Bocchus' motivation (*BJ* 88.5-6; 103.2; 113.1). As I have argued elsewhere, this uncertainty mirrors

---

<sup>770</sup> On 'Jugurthine disorder', see Kraus 1999.

Bocchus' wavering whether or not to betray Jugurtha: 'As the permanent unpredictability of Bocchus' actions is creeping into the representation, the narratorial voice loses the ability to give a straight account. The form of the presentation becomes an expression of the content.'<sup>771</sup> It is, however, worth noting that here and elsewhere in the *BJ* authorial uncertainty concentrates on motivation.<sup>772</sup> It is in the *BC* that Sallust tends to leave facts and events open, e.g. whether or not Catiline had sex with his associates or whether Crassus was involved in the conspiracy. At first sight, this may be paradoxical as the *BC* deals with more recent history that took place in Italy, but it is not difficult to relate the extent of authorial uncertainty in the *BC* to its topic: secrecy is a hallmark of conspiracies. Whether or not the marked gaps in Sallust's account are caused by actual difficulties of getting by information, they do render experiential the account of a stormy time. This ties in nicely with my exploration of Tacitus who, as we have seen, deploys ambiguity to great effect in the account of the Pisonian Conspiracy. The use of ambiguity for mimetic purposes seems particularly appropriate to conspiracy narratives, in which uncertainty figures prominently: '... conspiracy resides in the space between concealment and revelation, between silence and speech.'<sup>773</sup>

## Summary of Part II

We have now reached the end of the second part of this study that complements the discussion of experience with an investigation of teleology in ancient historiography. Retrospect permits us to cope with contingency: while the future we face is open, history offers a closed realm in which events have come to an end. The past offers us the security for which we yearn in our lives. The significance of teleological narratives as a mode of coping with the vagaries of time comes to the fore in Herodotus and Polybius. Both authors combine an idea of history in which human fragility looms large with a strongly teleological design of their narratives. In the *Histories*, the maxim 'to look to the conclusion of every matter, and see how it shall end' is even embedded in a reflection on human fragility.

The texts discussed reveal that hindsight is crucial for historiography: the *Histories* hammer home the message that only retrospect makes it possible to evaluate persons and incidents. Polybius' account illustrates that historical explanation is closely interwoven with teleology; we need to keep in mind the end in order to understand the course of events. Hindsight lets us trace larger lines, which contemporaries cannot make out yet. The *Bellum Catilinae* shows that teleology is an important means of bestowing significance on events. Inserting an

---

<sup>771</sup> Grethlein 2006c: 307.

<sup>772</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2006c: 322.

<sup>773</sup> Pagán 2005: 11.

event into a development, especially making it a telos to which earlier history leads, helps render it important.

Teleology sits variously in the genres of historiography. The subject of universal historiography is messy and tends to evade teleological design, but Polybius's work suggests that teleological design comes in handy as a structure that marshals various strands and theatres of history. The form of monograph, on the other hand, seems highly conducive to teleologically orchestrated accounts; wars and lives have beginnings and endings. At the same time, Thucydides' monograph of the Peloponnesian War downplays hindsight and the *Anabasis* furnishes an example that virtually dissolves the notion of a telos. The affinity of genres with teleology varies, but genre does not dictate the degree to which a historian capitalizes on hindsight.

Pervasive as teleology is in my samples, they also reveal its intricacies and fissures. A historian opts for a vantage-point, but other takes are also possible. Every period offers various perspectives and, unlike historiographic works, history does not stop; it goes on and continuously produces new vistas unveiling formerly unseen facets of the past. At the end of the sixth century BCE the story of Periander warns against installing tyrants in Athens; in the second half of the fifth century BCE, it also sheds light on Athens' tyranny over Greece. Sallust aligns Catiline with Sulla, but also signals that, envisaged from the 40s, the execution of the conspirators may seem to continue Sulla's assaults on the Republic. What is implicit in Herodotus and Sallust, is spelt out by Polybius who defers the ending of his narrative from 169 to 145 BCE. Only the period following upon Rome's ascent, he observes, will permit its evaluation. Consequently thought through, this point opens a *regressus ad infinitum* which ultimately erodes the idea of a telos ...

Teleology is not only more ambiguous than it may first seem, but also has its downside. It removes history from its experience, and can even taint it significantly. The dichotomy between Rome and Carthage which Polybius diagnoses for the year 264 BCE is far from doing justice to the complex situation of the Mediterranean world at that time. Polybius does not so much draw out the larger lines still hidden to the historical agents as he illegitimately projects back later constellations. The significance which Sallust accords Catiline has been challenged by ancient as well as modern historians. Envisioning his conspiracy as culmination of a long process of decline lets Sallust not only overrate the threat that Catiline posed to the Republic, but also seems to have prompted him to tinker with chronology.

While all the teleological narratives explored in this part of the book also feature experiential aspects, the more strongly experiential works of the first part do not entirely forego the pull of retrospect. Historians may lean either towards experience or towards teleology, the two poles between which narratives of the past oscillate, but it would be hard to find works that entirely exclude the other. It

is now time to turn to the third part of *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography: Augustine's Confessions* not only broadens the scope of this study through its date and genre, but also, I shall argue, strives to transcend both experience and teleology.

### III. Beyond experience and teleology

#### 9. Augustine, *Confessions*

The two main parts of this book have discussed works of ancient historiography in a wide sense, exploring how such authors as Xenophon, Sallust and Plutarch narrate the past in the tension between experience and teleology. As noted in the introduction, this tension is not limited to historiography, but applies to narrative in general. In this third part, I will move beyond the frame of the preceding chapters in order to deepen my investigation of futures past: Augustine's *Confessions* are significantly later than the works interpreted so far and the only Christian text to be discussed in *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography*. The text is definitely not historiography and evades an easy classification. The label of autobiography that is traditionally attached to the *Confessions* is controversial.<sup>774</sup> Even if we leave aside the thorny question of the origin of the genre, in particular the significance of the modern notion of the self for it,<sup>775</sup> the content of the *Confessions* raises problems: Augustine devotes only the first nine books to an account of his life up to his conversion; he then turns to his present self and elaborates on memory in book 10, engages with the intricacies of time in book 11 and meditates on the creation story of *Genesis* in the final two books. The last books being longer than the others, nearly one half of the text takes as its primary concern not the story of Augustine's life. Moreover, the autobiographic account of the first half is interspersed with a dense net of reflections that pierces and breaks the flux of its narrative. Looking at earlier works that similarly combine a conversion story with discursive reflection or textual exegesis, some scholars have suggested that the label *protrepticus* may be more appropriate to the *Confessions*.<sup>776</sup>

And yet, it is the autobiographic frame that renders the *Confessions* interesting for my study. Autobiography is a special case of narrating the past; to quote an exemplary definition, 'a retrospective narrative in prose given by a real person about his own life, if it concentrates on his individual life, particularly the history of his personality'.<sup>777</sup> The identity of the author with the narrator and the protagonist<sup>778</sup> exacerbates the tension of futures past. The focus on a single person that autobiography shares with biography is conducive to an experiential take: while being socio-culturally mediated, experiences are ultimately felt by the individual. Moreover, unlike in biography, the author of an autobiography has

---

<sup>774</sup> See the literature listed by Stock 1996: 23 n. 1. On various attempts to classify the *Confessions*, see Troxel 1994: 164-6.

<sup>775</sup> See, e.g., Olney 1980: 5-6.

<sup>776</sup> Cf. Feldmann 1986-94: 1166-80; Mayer 1998; Kotzé 2004: 45-85; 117-96. For a critique of the classification of the *Confessions* as *protrepticus*, see Brachtendorf 2005: 293-4.

<sup>777</sup> Lejeune 1975: 14: 'récit rétrospectif en prose qu'une personne réelle fait de sa propre existence, lorsqu'elle met l'accent sur sa vie individuelle, en particulier sur l'histoire de sa personnalité'.

<sup>778</sup> On the importance of this identity for autobiography, see Lejeune 1975: 13-19.

privileged access to the protagonist's world, at least according to the traditional theory of autobiography: 'No one can know better than I what I have thought, what I have wished.'<sup>779</sup> Seen from this perspective, the form of autobiography appears to lend itself to an experiential approach to the past.

On the other hand, it can be argued that teleologies are of particular relevance to autobiographical narratives.<sup>780</sup> This may seem perplexing at first: unlike biographies, autobiographies do not have the protagonist's death as their natural telos. If the autobiographical account reaches into the present, it lacks per se the possibility of a stable telos, as the process of writing forms part of the very life that is being narrated.<sup>781</sup> And yet the significance of life-stories to our identities, an issue much-discussed by psychologists,<sup>782</sup> seems, if not to require, at least to support a strong retrospective shaping. While experimental texts such as Sartre's *Les mots* or *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* try to abandon retrospect altogether, the majority of self-authored life-stories reveal a strong teleological tendency.<sup>783</sup> The 'aerial view' granted by retrospect is of particular value for the look at one's own life: 'There is now a greater consciousness of one's previous experience and a greater capacity to see the way in which all of the different parts of one's life have become orchestrated into a whole pattern, episodes in a still-evolving narrative.'<sup>784</sup> Autobiography sharpens the tension between experience and teleology through locating both in the same subject: the tension unfolds in the temporal gap that separates the narrating subject from her prior experiencing self.<sup>785</sup>

In addition to the autobiographic frame, the very elements that go beyond the genre of autobiography render the *Confessions* a particularly interesting test-case for this study. I will propose that, in striving towards the timeless sphere of God, Augustine aspires to transcend experience and teleology. The *Confessions* are thus a text that puts the theoretical agenda of this book to the test and throws into relief my interpretation of historiographic works.

In a first step, I will assess the experiential quality of the *Confessions*. Their mimesis is not very strong, but the account of Augustine's conversion in book 8 illustrates experiential features (I). Conversion stories tend to have a strong teleology that in the case of the *Confessions* is even inscribed into the

---

<sup>779</sup> Gusdorf 1980: 35. Cf. Genette 1980 [1972]: 198-9. This view has of course been challenged by postmodern theorists who question the notion of reference as well as the idea of a subject. See, for example, de Man 1979; Ashley 1994.

<sup>780</sup> Cf. Gusdorf 1980: 40-2; Brockmeier 2001: 251-3, who speaks of a 'teleological linearization of contingency' in autobiography.

<sup>781</sup> Gusdorf 1980: 47: 'Autobiography is also a work or an event of the life, and yet it turns back on the life and affects it by a kind of boomerang.' Cf. Downing 1977: 213.

<sup>782</sup> See, e.g., Bruner 1986; 1990; Sarbin 1986.

<sup>783</sup> Cf. Gusdorf 1980: 40-1; Eakin 1985: 152-75; 1988.

<sup>784</sup> Freeman 1993: 108-9. Cf. Gusdorf 1980: 38.

<sup>785</sup> The gap between experiencing and narrating subject is often neglected in scholarship. In order to avoid the ensuing confusion, I will use 'Augustine', where the context may be unclear, only with respect to the experiencing subject.

frame of the narrative (II). At the same time, the *Confessions*' treatment of time goes beyond experience and teleology, as a reading of the first nine books in the light of the reflections on time in the last books will reveal (III). Finally, I will draw out some of the conclusions of this interpretation by envisaging it against the background of Ricoeur's *Temps et récit*. The Christian perspective leads to a peculiar take on futures past that finds a powerful expression in the narrative form of the *Confessions* (IV).<sup>786</sup>

## I. CONVERSION AND EXPERIENCE

One of the most experiential passages in the *Confessions* is the conversion of Augustine (8.6.14-12.30): Ponticianus visits Augustine and Alypius and tells them about the recent conversion of two *agentes* in Trier brought about by a reading of the *Life of Antonius*. This story evokes an inner turmoil in Augustine who is distressed about his own long and so far unsuccessful search for God. He is so agitated that he goes into the garden where he first sits down on a bench with Alypius and then, when his feverishness increases, lies down under a fig-tree. There Augustine hears a child's voice say *tolle lege* ('take and read'), opens the books of the apostles and reads *Rom. 13.13-14*: 'For in that instant, with the very ending of the sentence, it was as though a light of utter confidence shone in all my heart, and all the darkness of uncertainty vanished away.' (*statim quippe cum fine huiusce sententiae quasi luce securitatis infusa cordi meo omnes dubitationis tenebrae diffugerunt. 8.12.29*). Various devices render the account particularly vivid and make the conversion stand out in the *Confessions*. After discussing some of these devices, I will turn to features that go against the account's mimesis and are emblematic of the *Confessions*' character as a narrative that does not primarily strive to make the past present, but follows a different take on the past.

### *Mimesis*

The beginning of the conversion scene brims with details that give the narrative a strong realistic touch (8.6.14):

As it happened he noticed a book on a gaming table by which we were sitting. He picked it up, opened it, and found that it was the Apostle Paul, which surprised him because he had expected that it would be one of the books I wore myself out teaching.

---

<sup>786</sup> The narrative form of the *Confessions* is beside their historical reliability arguably the most-discussed issue by Augustinian scholars. For a survey of scholarship on the *Confessions*, see Feldmann 1986-94. For approaches to its literary form, see Kotzé 2004: 13-43.

*et forte supra mensam lusoriam, quae ante nos erat, adtendit codicem: tulit, aperuit, invenit apostolum Paulum, inopinate sane; putaverat enim aliquid de libris, quorum professio me conterebat.*

The very trigger for Ponticianus to tell the story of the Trier *agentes* which initiates Augustine's conversion, is introduced as accidental: only by chance does he catch sight of the codex of Paulus (*forte*).<sup>787</sup> The mention of the gambling table on which the codex lies not only evokes a pastime that strongly contrasts with the imminent conversion, but, together with the spatial deixis *ante nos*, invites the reader to visualize the scenery. The threefold *tulit, aperuit, invenit* zooms in on the scene just as Ponticianus' thoughts make us see it from the point of view of the characters.

Ponticianus' story is first rendered in the infinitive construction of indirect speech, but then slides into direct speech. Thereby a level of mediation is dismissed and the story is brought closer to the reader.<sup>788</sup> The merging of the voice of Ponticianus with the voice of the *Confessions*' narrator comes to the fore in the apostrophes to God that feature in Ponticianus' account, but belong to the narrator's voice: 'So the two of them, now Your servants, built a spiritual tower at the only cost that is adequate, the cost of leaving all things and following You.' (*et ambo iam tui aedificabant turrem sumptu idoneo relinquendi omnia sua et sequendi te*. 8.6.15).<sup>789</sup> The vividness of the conversion story is heightened by two direct speeches given by one of the *agentes*. A string of questions draws the

---

<sup>787</sup> Stock 1996: 97 argues that 'the reader's awareness of a divinely inspired design is created by the actor Augustine's perception that the events come about by chance'.

<sup>788</sup> 8.6.15: 'But as those other two strolled on they came into a certain house, the dwelling of some servants of Yours, poor in spirit, of whom is the kingdom of God. There they found a small book in which was written the life of Antony. One of them began to read it ...' (*sed illos vagabundos intruisse in quandam casam, ubi habitabant quidam servi tui spiritu pauperes, qualium est regnum caelorum, et invenisse ibi codicem, in quo scripta erat vita Antonii. quam legere coepit unus eorum ...*). It is surprising that this is not noted in a paper on 'hypodiegetic narratives' that promises to explore 'shifts of narrative level in Saint Augustine's *Confessions*'. Instead, we find the following mistaken assertion about the stories of Firminus and Ponticianus (Archambault 1986: 111): 'It is true that neither of these narratives is related in direct discourse; however, neither gives the impression of being incorporated into the fabric of Augustine's own narrative ... As the main narrator, Augustine makes his own role clear: he is not appropriating the sub-narrative into his own so much as acting as narratee who is being told a story and taught a lesson in spite of what he himself terms his own "resolute resistance".'

<sup>789</sup> See also: 'He read on and was changed inwardly. where you alone could see ...' (*et legebat et mutabatur intus, ubi tu videbas ...*); '[He] ... saw the better way and chose it for his own. Being now Your servant, he said to his friend ... (... *discrevit decrevitque meliora iamque tuus ait amico suo*. 8.6.15). The following phrase is tricky: '... the dwelling of some servants of Yours, poor in spirit, of whom is the kingdom of God. (... *ubi habitabant quidam servi tui spiritu pauperes, qualium est regnum caelorum ...*). The allusion to Mt. 5.3 ('Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' – *beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum*) could be voiced by the character, but the second person address suggests attributing it to the narrator's voice.

reader into his reasoning, with the first person plural lending them a strong immersive quality (8.6.15):

Tell me, please, what is the goal of our ambition in all these labours of ours? What are we aiming at? What is our motive in being in the public service? Have we any higher hope at court than to be friends of the Emperor?

*dic, quaeso te, omnibus istis laboribus nostris quo ambimus pervenire? quid quaerimus? cuius rei causa militamus? maiorne esse poterit spes nostra in palatio, quam ut amici imperatoris simus?*

The effect of Ponticianus' story on Augustine is described in detail. The focalisation gains depth through a retrospect in which Augustine remorsefully compares his long search for *sapientia* with the quick conversion of the *agentes* (8.7.17). The description becomes particularly incisive when Augustine's reflections are presented as direct speech uttered by his consciousness (8.7.18):

Where is my voice? Surely you are the man who used to say that you could not cast off vanity's baggage for an uncertain truth. Very well: now the truth is certain, yet you are still carrying the load. Here are men who have been given wings to free their shoulders from the load, though they did not wear themselves out in searching nor spend ten years or more thinking about it.

*ubi est lingua? nempe tu dicebas propter incertum verum nolle te abicere sarcinam vanitatis. ecce iam certum est, et illa te adhuc premit umerisque liberioribus pinnas recipiunt, qui neque ita in quaerendo adtriti sunt nec decennio et amplius ista meditati.*

Not unlike the representation of Xenophon's thoughts after the killing of the generals in the *Anabasis*,<sup>790</sup> the direct speech gives us unmediated access to Augustine's inner world and conveys the sense of directly witnessing his distress.

After pausing for this extended view of Augustine's consciousness, the narrator continues with the action (8.8.19):

In the midst of that great tumult of my inner dwelling place, the tumult I had stirred up against my own soul in the chamber of my heart, I turn upon Alypius, wild in look and troubled in mind, and cry out ...

*Tum in illa grandi rixa interioris domus meae, quam fortiter excitaveram cum anima mea in cubiculo nostro, corde meo, tam vultu quam mente turbatus invado Alypium, exclamo ...*

---

<sup>790</sup> Cf. ch. 3 ???

The rare historical present bestows presentness to the action<sup>791</sup> while the asyndetic style formally expresses Augustine's agitation that is vented in his address to Alypius (8.8.19):

What is wrong with us? What is this that you heard? The unlearned arise and take heaven by force, and here are we with all our learning, stuck fast in flesh and blood! Is there any shame in following because they have gone before us, would it not be a worse shame not to follow at once?  
*quid patimur? quid est hoc, quod audisti? surgunt indocti et caelum rapiunt, et nos cum doctrinis nostris sine corde ecce ubi volutamur in carne et sanguine! an quia praecesserunt, pudet sequi et non pudet nec saltem sequi?*

The narrator deepens his description of Augustine's perturbation by reporting the physical symptoms: 'My brow, cheeks, eyes, flush, the pitch of my voice, spoke my mind more powerfully than the words I uttered.' (*plus loquebantur animum meum frons, genae, oculi, color, modus vocis quam verba, quae promebam.* 8.8.19). Augustine's agitation increases and finally leads to uncontrolled movements (8.8.20).<sup>792</sup>

At the same time, the narrator continues to report the thoughts and feelings harboured by Augustine. He describes his wavering, using heavily metaphorical speech that paves the way for allegories of those considerations that tear Augustine apart: medical imagery (*aegrotabam*, 8.11.25; *sanabit*, 8.11.27) and legal imagery, especially of punishment (*excruciabar*; *accusans*; *vinculo*; *flagella*, 8.11.25), drive home his emotional upheaval. While underscoring the violent aspect, a rich network of images of physical movement and activity also indicates that Augustine is about to break free: the fact that he is still held back, although only by a small force (*tenebar, bis*) gives way to his attempt to hold (*tenebam, bis*), not successful yet, but signifying a transition from passivity to activity (8.11.25):

... turning in my chains in the hope that they might be utterly broken, for I was held by so small a thing! But I was still held. ... And I tried again and I was almost there, and now I could all but touch it and hold it: yet I was not quite there, I could not touch it or hold it.

... *versans me in vinculo meo, donec abrumperetur totum, quo iam exiguo tenebar. sed tenebar tamen. ... et item conabar et paulo minus ibi eram et paulo minus, iam iamque adtingebam et tenebam: et non ibi eram nec adtingebam nec tenebam...*

---

<sup>791</sup> On the effect of immediacy, see ch. 2 ??? on the historical present in Thucydides.

<sup>792</sup> Miles 1982: 356 observes that Augustine's movements are reminiscent of a regression to infancy, pointing out the parallel in 1.6.8.

A similar shift can be noted in the compounds of *quater*: the moment of transformation instils horror in Augustine ('it struck me with horror' – *incutiebat horrorem*), but does not drive him back (*non recutiebat retro*, 8.11.25). While the allegories of *nugae et vanitates* first shake him from below (*succutiebant*), Augustine then hesitates to free himself from them (*excutere ab eis*, 8.11.26), but nonetheless takes the step from being an object to becoming an agent.

Through the rich imagery, the narrator makes Augustine's inner conflict graphic; allegories of Augustine's thoughts and feelings help him to visualize it further.<sup>793</sup> Augustine has turned his back on *nugae* and *vanitates* and faces toward *continentia* who holds out her hands and encourages him to make the leap. The voices of *nugae* and *vanitates* become weaker and weaker (8.11.26):

And now I began to hear them not half so loud; they no longer stood against me face to face, but were softly muttering behind my back and, as I tried to depart, nagging stealthily at me ...

*et audiebam eas iam longe minus quam dimidius, non tamquam libere contradicentes eundo in obviam, sed velut a dorso mussitantes et discedentem quasi furtim vellicantes ...*

O'Donnell notes in his commentary that the words *mussitare* and *vellicare* have a 'touch of colloquialism'. I wonder whether they do not have a more specific ring: especially *mussitare* is frequently used in comedy<sup>794</sup> and, in evoking this genre, would add to the theatricality of the allegorical staging of Augustine's inner strife. The theatrical appeal of the scene, aptly called 'un tableau dramatique' by Bouissou,<sup>795</sup> is further deepened by Alypius who serves as an audience: 'And Alypius stayed by my side and awaited in silence the issue of such agitation as he had never seen in me.' (*at Alypius affixus lateri meo inusitati motus mei exitum tacitus opperiebatur*. 8.11.27).<sup>796</sup> In prefiguring the reception, Alypius draws the readers into the action that is rendered particularly vivid through its dramatization. The readers are even closer to Augustine than Alypius: while he can only witness the physical symptoms of Augustine's strife, we are given insights into the thoughts and feelings that torture him.

As Schmidt-Dengler has noticed in his analysis of the rhetorical shaping of book 8, the style of the narrative changes subsequently: 'Slowly, the syntax that is

<sup>793</sup> On possible literary models for the allegories, see Courcelle 1963: 127-36.

<sup>794</sup> See, e.g., Plaut. *Mil.* 714; *Cas.* 665; *Ter. Ad.* 207. *Vellicare* also occurs in Plautus: *Merc.* 408; *Mostell.* 834.

<sup>795</sup> Bouissou in Solignac 1962: 543. However, Bouissou views all of 8.11.25-7 as a drama in three scenes, whereas I would see a drama only in his second and third scenes, in which Augustine is addressed by the allegories. Herzog 1984: 230 sees in the allegories part of the translation of action into speech that is fundamental for Augustine's conversion.

<sup>796</sup> On the importance of Alypius as a witness of Augustine's conversion, see Stock 1996: 104.

first tight becomes more loose, parataxis replaces hypotaxis and there are colloquial features.’<sup>797</sup> The less ornate presentation from 8.12.28 onward that stands out against the abundant rhetoric of the preceding narrative sets a realist tone for the scene under the fig-tree. Relating the form to the content, one could say that the bare and simple narrative artfully throws into relief the miraculous conversion of Augustine. The effort to ‘re-present’ Augustine’s experience becomes literal in another one of the rare occurrences of the historical present (8.12.29):<sup>798</sup>

And suddenly I hear a voice from some nearby house, a boy’s voice or a girl’s voice, I do not know: but it was a sort of sing-song, repeated again and again, ‘Take and read, take and read’.  
*et ecce audio vocem de vicina domo cum cantu dicentis et crebro repentis quasi pueri an puellae, nescio: ‘tolle lege, tolle lege’.*

We have seen various devices that bestow an intense experiential grip on the account of Augustine’s conversion. A wealth of details,<sup>799</sup> intense internal focalization, direct speech, various stylistic registers and dramatization give the episode a form that makes it in the eyes of many critics the ‘grand climax of the entire autobiography of the work’.<sup>800</sup> On the whole, however, the account of Augustine’s life in the *Confessions* is not very experiential, but carried by a different kind of narrative temporality. Before I turn in the next section to the work’s strong teleological character, I will touch upon some anti-mimetic aspects present in the conversion scene.

### *Mimesis undermined*

His agitation prompts Augustine to get up and go to a fig-tree (8.12.28):

I flung myself down somehow under a certain fig tree and no longer tried to check my tears, which poured forth from my eyes in a flood, *an*

---

<sup>797</sup> Schmidt-Dengler 1969: 203: ‘Allmählich wird der zunächst straffe Satzbau lockerer; die Parataxe ersetzt die Hypotaxe, umgangssprachliche Züge greifen durch.’ I do not agree, however, with Schmidt-Dengler’s argument that the less ornate presentation of the scene under the fig-tree attests to its historicity. Against this, see also Ferrari 1980: 7-8; 1992: 103.

<sup>798</sup> Schmidt-Dengler 1969: 204 is wrong to claim that *audio* is the first historical present in book 8. See 8.8.19 discussed above: ... *invado Alypium, exclamo* ... (‘... I turn upon Alypius ... and cry out ...’).

<sup>799</sup> Cf. Sturrock 1993: 42: ‘Augustine tells the episode with a far keener regard for the trivial circumstances of the occasion than one finds elsewhere in the *Confessions* ... The evoking of mundane details serves to anchor the episode in time and place and to heighten its drama, as a moment when the divine order of things supervenes on the human order, portrayed at its most ordinary.’

<sup>800</sup> Ferrari 1984: 56.

*acceptable sacrifice to Thee.* And much I said not in these words but to this effect ...

*ego sub quadam fici arbore stravi me nescio quomodo et dimisi habenas lacrimis, et proruperunt flumina oculorum meorum, acceptabile sacrificium tuum, et non quidem his verbis, sed in hac sententia multa dixi tibi ...*

The narrator points out explicitly that his text does not reproduce the very words spoken by Augustine.<sup>801</sup> He thereby undermines the claim to mimesis. A gap between narrative and events is also implied in the *nescio quomodo*.<sup>802</sup> The conversion episode abounds in similar acknowledgments of the narrator's insecurity concerning details of the story. The narrator flashes his uncertainty, for example, prominently at the very beginning of the episode (8.6.14):

On a certain day – Nebridius was away for some reason I cannot recall – there came to me and Alypius at our house one Ponticianus, a fellow countryman of ours, being from Africa, holder of an important post in the Emperor's court. There was something or other he wanted of us ...

Quodam igitur die – non recolo causam, qua erat absens Nebridius – cum ecce ad nos domum venit ad me et Alypium Ponticianus quidam, civis noster, in quantum Afer, praeclare in palatio militans: nescio quid a nobis volebat.<sup>803</sup>

Of course, neither the exact date nor the reason for Ponticianus' visit matter greatly for the conversion of Augustine, but such details add to the realism of a narrative. The narrator of the *Confessions* not only refuses to capitalize on such an *effet de réel*,<sup>804</sup> but actively undermines the mimesis by pointing out his uncertainty. While destroying the mimetic illusion, the admission of uncertainty as well as of a gap between narrative and events also serves a strategy of

---

<sup>801</sup> O'Donnell 1992: *ad loc.* lists 7.9.13 and 9.20.25 as parallels, but the comparison with the first needs qualification: it introduces the string of biblical quotations which show both the similarities and differences between the Neoplatonism adopted by Augustine at this stage of his life and his later Christian belief. Thus, the deviation from the actual words read by Augustine in Neoplatonic authors is not so much due to the gap between present and past as it is to its special significance, on which see below.

<sup>802</sup> O'Meara 1992: 91 points out that the many indefinite forms under which he also subsumes expressions such as *nescio quodam* 'heighten the supra-rational, the marvellous, the providential in the scene'.

<sup>803</sup> See also 8.6.15: *nescio quando*; 8.8.19: *nescio talia*; 8.11.26: *a momento isto non tibi licebit hoc et illud ultra in aeternum* ('From this moment shall we not be with you, now or forever?'); 8.12.28: *nescio quid*; 8.12.30: *Tum interiecto aut digito aut nescio quo alio signo ...* ('Then leaving my finger in the place or marking it by some other sign'). In some cases, the narrator's admission of his uncertainty goes beyond the brief *nescio*-phrases, for example, when he muses about the reasons for Ambrose's silent reading (6.3.3).

<sup>804</sup> Cf. Barthes 2002 [1968]. See ch. 3 and ???

narratorial legitimisation. It flags the claim to truthfulness: what the narrator acknowledges not to know vouches for the reliability of what he professes to know.

The mimesis is also undercut by reflective passages that interrupt the flow of the narrative. In the most extended of these, the narrator is prompted by Augustine's wavering to spend four long paragraphs musing on the nature of the human will. As O'Donnell *ad loc.* points out, the reflection on the *monstrum* of will in 8.9.21 is 'binocular' as 'the words of the text are both those that A. might have uttered at the time (in his interior monologue) and those that A. at the time of *conf.* utters in perplexity'. While the staccato of brief, paratactic sentences seems to echo formally the agitation in Augustine's soul, the following long polemic against Manichaean beliefs about the will clearly belongs to the narrator and breaks up the mimesis of the narrative (8.10.22-4).

The frequent second-person addresses to God further disturb the immersive appeal of the narrative. They violently draw the reader's attention to the presence of the narrator and thereby impede the feeling of directly witnessing the events. I have already cited the apostrophe that the narrator has inserted into Ponticianus' story. Let me give another example in which the apostrophe is accompanied by a prolepsis (8.8.19):

To this [garden] the storm in my breast somehow brought me, for there no one could intervene in the fierce suit I had brought against myself, until it should reach its issue: though what the issue was to be, You knew, not I: but there I was, going mad on my way to sanity, dying on my way to life, aware how evil I was, unaware that I was to grow better in a little while.

*illuc me abstulerat tumultus pectoris, ubi nemo impediret ardentem litem, quam mecum aggressus eram, donec exiret, qua tu sciebas, ego autem non: sed tantum insaniebam salubriter et moriebar vitaliter, gnarus, quid mali essem, et ignarus, quid boni post paululum futurus essem.*

The combination of oxymoron, antithesis, parallelism and chiasmus forcefully underlines the gap between Augustine the character and Augustine the narrator. In sections II and III, I will explore the importance of prolepses and their relation to the narrator's addresses to God; here it may suffice to note that both undermine the experiential appeal of the narrative.

#### *Life narrated and life lived*

A last aspect remains to be discussed that seems to weaken the mimetic force of the conversion narrative: the role of literary models. Paul provides not only the verses that relieve Augustine from his inner struggle, but also offers a

conversion story on which the conversion in the *Confessions* seems to be modelled. In particular the role of a mysterious voice aligns both narratives.<sup>805</sup> The *Confessions* have been called a theology in the form of a personal history<sup>806</sup> – Augustine the narrator expresses his indebtedness to Paul, especially for the doctrine of grace, at the level of form as well as of content.<sup>807</sup> Courcelle has argued for a wealth of further literary models that underlie the conversion narrative in the *Confessions*.<sup>808</sup> Among the literary debts that he discusses are satires of Persius that may have inspired the notion of a delayed conversion, the prologue of Cyprianus' *Ad Donatum* as a model for the circumstances of the conversion and the prominence of grace in it, and, as parallel for the allegory of *continentia*, *De animae suae calamitatibus* by Gregory of Nazianzus. Courcelle also traces back the prehistory of the phrase *tolle lege* as well as the role of a child's admonition in both pagan and Judaeo-Christian traditions that may have inspired the child's voice in the *Confessions*.

Courcelle's work has stirred up a fierce controversy between 'fictionalists' who emphasize the use of literary models and 'historicists' who deny them to defend the historicity of the *Confessions*.<sup>809</sup> Part of the debate is misguided and based on a conflation of literariness with fictionality: historicity and literary framing are not mutually exclusive; life is enmeshed with narratives, in the words of Schapp, we are 'verstrickt in Geschichten'.<sup>810</sup> It is nonetheless easy to argue that the density of references to other texts and the use of narrative frames reduce the mimetic appeal of the conversion episode. They alert the reader to the constructedness of the narrative and undermine its claim to an unmediated presentation. If the narrative casts its events, for example, in the mould of Paul's conversion, it may be doubted whether it does justice to the individual experience of Augustine at all. Such a strategy of encoding is extensively used in postmodern literature, particularly in works labelled historiographic metafiction: 'Its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (historiographic metafiction) is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking

---

<sup>805</sup> Cf. *Act.* 22.6-7; 26.13-14. See Courcelle 1963: 119 and Ferrari 1982: 153-4; 1984: 66 for further similarities. On the significance and theological implications of Paul's conversion for Augustine's conversion in the *Confessions*, see Fredriksen 1986.

<sup>806</sup> Cf. Fuhrer 2009: 390.

<sup>807</sup> Cf. Fredriksen 1986: 24-5, who also demonstrates that the historical Augustine in 386 CE had a very different view of Paul from the narrator of the *Confessions*. While in the Cassiacum dialogues the letters of Paul serve as philosophical inspiration, the *Confessions* draw on them for the ideas of continence and grace, a shift that according to Fredriksen is due to Augustine's contests against Donatists and Manichaeans. Ferrari 1980 surveys Augustine's references to Paul in his earlier writing and concludes that *Rom.* 13.13-14 cannot have played the decisive role in Augustine's conversion that the *Confessions* claim.

<sup>808</sup> Cf. Courcelle 1950: 188-202; 1963: 91-197.

<sup>809</sup> For a critique of Courcelle, see Cayré 1951; Bolgiani 1956; Marrou 1958. For a survey of the debate, see Ferrari 1989. For an assessment of the fictional character of the *Confessions* beyond the Courcelle controversy, see O'Meara 1992.

<sup>810</sup> Schapp <sup>2</sup>1976. See, e.g., Tavard 1988: 54.

of the form and contents of the past.<sup>811</sup> Novels such as Littell's *Les Bienveillantes* narrate past events, but, through a high degree of intertextuality and other devices, signal an awareness of the gulf that separates them from the events themselves.<sup>812</sup>

The *Confessions* seem to be conducive to poststructuralist readings,<sup>813</sup> but it is doubtful that Augustine would have subscribed to the strong juxtaposition of experience with narrative. The conversion story itself indicates that experience and narrative are not separated by clear lines of demarcation, but rather are closely interwoven, stories encroaching into life and life feeding into stories. The turmoil that leads Augustine to his conversion is triggered by the story of the officials at Trier which he hears from Ponticianus.<sup>814</sup> Augustine somehow re-enacts the story:<sup>815</sup> he is miraculously converted through the reading of a text, Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, just as the reading of the *Life of Antony* turns around the life of one of the officials. While the official is followed by his companion in the decision to renounce any worldly ambitions,<sup>816</sup> Augustine is joined by Alypius (*coniunctus est*, 8.12.30) who takes up his exemplum and opens the codex of Paul himself. The officials then talk to their friends and later their betrothed; Augustine and Alypius break the news to Monica. In addition to a wealth of verbal echoes,<sup>817</sup> the close correspondence of the conversions, one narrated, the other experienced, is highlighted by a subtle narrative intertwinement: the circumstances of Antony's conversion about which the official reads<sup>818</sup> are not spelt out in the Ponticianus narrative, but later supplied immediately before the conversion of Augustine (8.12.29):

---

<sup>811</sup> Hutcheon 1988: 5.

<sup>812</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2009a, 2011c and ch. 10 ???.

<sup>813</sup> See, e.g., Caputo and Scanlon 2005.

<sup>814</sup> Before the visit of Ponticianus, Augustine hears yet another conversation story when Simplicianus tells him about the rhetor Victorinus. On these conversion stories and their relation with Augustine's conversion, see, e.g., Courcelle 1950: 197-202; Mandouze 1968: 472-3 (??); Stock 1996: 89-111; Kotzé 2004: 173-81.

<sup>815</sup> Cf. Courcelle 1950: 197-8.

<sup>816</sup> Courcelle 1950: 183-6 identifies the two officials as Jerome and Bonosus. O'Donnell 1992: *ad* 8.6.15 is sceptical.

<sup>817</sup> E.g., 8.6.15: *nescio quando* ~ 8.6.14: *quodam igitur die*; 8.6.15: *in hortos* ~ 6.8.19: *hortulus*; 8.6.15: *quid quaerimus* ~ 8.8.19: *quid patimur*; 8.6.15: *abrupi* ~ 8.11.25: *abrumperetur*; 8.6.15: *ex hac hora* ~ 8.12.28: *hac hora*; 8.6.15: ... *narrato placito et proposito suo, quoque modo in eis talis voluntas orta esset atque firmata* ... ('they told their decision and their purpose, and how that will had arisen in them and was now settled in them') ~ 8.12.30: ... *tali admonitione firmatus est placitoque ac proposito bono* ... ('he was confirmed by this message, and with no troubled wavering gave himself to God's good will and purpose'). It is also tempting to see in the Circus games which the Emperor watches (8.6.15) a mirror for the gambling table on which Ponticianus spots the Gospel of St. Paul (8.6.14). In both cases, games, albeit of a very different kind, evoke a pastime that clashes with Christian belief as advocated in the *Confessions*.

<sup>818</sup> This is not explicitly stated in the Ponticianus narrative, but is a fair guess given the reaction of the official to his reading: his conversion will be inspired by the conversion of Antony. The phrase *relinquendi omnia sua et sequendi te*, however, may be read as an allusion not only to *Luc.* 5.11; 28 and *Mt.* 19.27, but it also echoes *Mt.* 19.21 and thereby evokes the crucial verses in the conversion of Antony. Tavard 1988: 53 even assumes that Augustine knows the story from Ponticianus.

For it was part of what I had been told about Antony, that from the Gospel which he had happened upon he felt that he was being admonished, as though what was being read was being spoken directly to himself: *Go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me*. By this oracle he had been in that instant converted to You.

*audieram enim de Antonio, quod ex evangelica lectione, cui forte supervenerat, admonitus fuerit, tamquam sibi diceretur quod legebatur: vade, vende omnia, quae habes, da pauperibus et habebis thesaurum in caelis; et veni, sequere me, et tali oraculo confestim ad te esse conversum.*

Conversely, in describing his own conversion Augustine the narrator ‘does not provide an account of how the reading affected his thinking, having already done so in the story of the first convert at Trier’.<sup>819</sup> The mutual supplementation of gaps in each account welds together the two conversions and erases the boundary between Life narrated and life lived.

The use of the verb *arripere* is only a minor point, but nonetheless nicely illustrates the interlacing of narrative and experience through the impact of Ponticianus’ narrative in Augustine’s life: ‘I took it up, opened it and in silence read the passage upon which my eyes first fell ...’ (*arripui, aperui et legi in silentio capitulum, quo primum coniecti sunt oculi mei*. 8.12.29). *Arripere* also occurs in the narrative on which Augustine’s conversion is modelled, at exactly the same point, namely when the official starts reading (8.6.15):

One of them began to read it, marvelled at it, was inflamed by it. While he was actually reading he had begun to think how he might take up such a life, and give up his worldly employment to serve You alone.

*quam [i.e. codicem, in quo scripta erat vita Antonii] legere coepit unus eorum et mirari et accendi et inter legendum meditari arripere talem vitam et relicta militia saeculari servire tibi.*

The official’s ‘taking up’ of a new life echoes in Augustine’s ‘taking up’ of the book; this, besides linking the two conversions to each other, blends together the acts of reading and living and makes the boundary between experience and narrative more porous.

The idea of transforming a story into life through its imitation is already encapsulated in the very story on which Augustine models his own conversion: the official embraces the exemplum offered in the *Vita Antonii*. Antony’s conversion itself is inspired by yet another story: the appeal to change one’s life is Jesus’ rejoinder to a young man who has asked how to lead a good life. A long

---

<sup>819</sup> Stock 1996: 110.

chain of conversions unfolds, each of them triggered by the narrative of a previous conversion. Through the chain, the Gospel is brought close to the time of Augustine: the officials whose conversion is recent news lead to Antony who himself refers to the model of Jesus Christ. Ironically, the biblical story that has triggered the chain seems to be a conversion *manqué*: the young man is overwhelmed by the request and leaves Jesus (*Mt.* 19.21).

The chain of conversions through *imitatio* does not end with Augustine. The imitation of Augustine by Alypius continues the *catena imitationis* and may be read as prefiguring the kind of reception the *Confessions* are aiming at.<sup>820</sup> While being rooted in a biblical story, the grafting of conversion stories one upon another does not come to an end with Augustine, but invites a continuation for which the *Confessions* serve as the model. With some qualification, Petrarca's letter about his ascent to Mount Ventoux offers such a response to the *Confessions*. On top of the mountain, Petrarca is mesmerized by the view, but when he decides to open Augustine's *Confessions*, his eyes fall on *Conf.* 10.8.15:

Here are men going afar to marvel at the heights of mountains, the mighty waves of the sea, the long courses of great rivers, the vastness of the ocean, the movements of the stars, yet leaving themselves unnoticed ...  
*et eunt homines mirari alta montium et ingentes fluctus maris et latissimos lapsus fluminum et Oceani ambitum et gyros siderum, et relinquunt se ipsos ...*

Petrarca's account, whether fictive or not, is often quoted as an important testimony to a new attitude towards perception and nature.<sup>821</sup> For my purpose, it is striking that Petrarca, in opening a page at random, somehow repeats what Augustine does in the garden of Milan. Petrarca's reading does not bring about a conversion, but still prompts him to a new view of himself and the world, thus continuing the dynamic between narrative and life.

The manifold mutual penetration of story and history, of narrative and experience, of Life and life indicates that the heavy use of narrative frames in the conversion story does not go against the claim to represent experience. On the contrary, we will see in section III that the framing endows the narrative with a particular authority to represent reality. In taking into account God's perspective, the frame establishes a level of significance beyond experience.

Nonetheless, it is striking that, despite many vivid passages, the mimesis of the conversion narrative is frequently compromised. The narrator's admission of uncertainty and even of deviation from the truth as well as the showing of his presence in reflective passages and apostrophes to God signal an unbridgeable gap between the narrative and the past that it portrays. It is therefore no surprise that

---

<sup>820</sup> Kotzé 2004: 173-81 argues for a proreptic function of the conversion stories.

<sup>821</sup> See, e.g. Blumenberg 1973: 142-4.

the *Confessions* fare poorly in the comparison with Apuleius' *Golden Ass* that we find in Winkler's *Auctor & Actor*: 'Both narratives might be described (with serious foreshortening, of course) as sequences of spicy and dramatic episodes.'<sup>822</sup> Yet, while the suppression of Lucius' narratorial persona renders his narrative highly experiential and juicy, Augustine the narrator, to Winkler's dismay, is reticent with details of his love-life and 'refuses to relive those events except in the burning spotlight of his present consciousness of his god'.<sup>823</sup>

The narrator of the *Confessions* himself reflects on the gulf that separates the past from the present in the act of memory (11.18.23):

When we relate the past truly, it is not the things themselves that are brought forth from our memory – for these have passed away: but words conceived from the images of the things: for the things stamped their prints upon the mind as they passed through it by way of the senses. Thus for example my boyhood, which no longer exists, is in time past, which no longer exists; but the image of my boyhood, when I recall it and talk of it, I look upon in time present, because it is still present in my memory.

*quamquam praeterita cum vera narrantur, ex memoria proferuntur non res ipsae, quae praeterierunt, sed verba concepta ex imaginibus earum, quae in animo velut vestigia per sensus praetereundo fixerunt. pueritia quippe mea, quae iam non est, in tempore praeterito est, quod iam non est; imaginem vero eius, cum eam recolo et narro, in praesenti tempore intueor, quia est adhuc in memoria mea.*

Accordingly, the dramatic qualities that scholars have found in the *Confessions* tend to refer to the present of the narrator. McMahon, for example, writes: 'Our reading recreates Augustine's prayer in our own times and places. Willy-nilly every reader of the *Confessions* perforce impersonates – takes on the persona of – Augustine.'<sup>824</sup> And yet, my reading of Augustine's conversion has demonstrated that the account of his life also has experiential appeal. It is not without irony that experiential features are concentrated in this episode – in the next section, I shall show that the conversion imbues the *Confessions* with a very strong teleological design.

## II. CONVERSION AND TELEOLOGY

In the elaborate first paragraph of the fourth book, the narrator implores God (4.1.1): 'Grant me, I beseech Thee, to go over now in present memory the

---

<sup>822</sup> Winkler 1985: 141.

<sup>823</sup> Winkler 1985: 141.

<sup>824</sup> McMahon 1989: 8. See also Douglass 1996: 43-6 and Ferrari 1992: 102, who emphasizes that the *Confessions* were meant to be read aloud.

past ways of my error and to *offer Thee a sacrifice of rejoicing.*' (*sine me, obsecro, et da mihi circuire praesenti memoria praeteritos circuitus erroris mei et immolare tibi hostiam iubilationis*. 4.1.1). Reinforced through the parallelism of *praesenti memoria* and *praeteritos circuitus*, the echo of *circuire* in *circuitus* aligns present memory with past events and, given that *circuitus* can also signify the period of speech, insinuates that narrative mimics life.<sup>825</sup> At the same time, the qualification of *circuitus* through *erroris* brings into play retrospect. Just as with the request *immolare tibi hostiam iubilationis*, the negative judgment does not voice the view of the character undergoing the experiences, but is indebted to the superior perspective of the narrator. This is emblematic of the *Confessions*' character as a narrative that fully draws upon the advantage of hindsight.

The point from which Augustine's life is told is his conversion. As Fredriksen points out succinctly, conversions tend to graft strong teleologies upon narratives: 'The conversion account, never disinterested, is a condensed, or disguised, description of the convert's present, which he legitimates through his retrospective creation of a past and a self.'<sup>826</sup> The *Confessions* nicely illustrate this power of spiritual enlightenment to marshal retrospective narratives. Augustine's conversion defines the account of the preceding events: it influences the selection of material and shapes its place in the economy of the narrative. In some sense, the conversion works simultaneously as effect and as cause – providing the point to which the life lived leads, it also generates and shapes the Life narrated.<sup>827</sup>

The *Confessions* do not end with the conversion, but subsequent books reinforce its central position as telos. The account of Monica's death in book 9 furnishes a natural closure that allows the narrative to slow down and come to a stop.<sup>828</sup> Augustine's way of dealing with the loss contrasts with his excessive grief at the death of a friend described in book 4, driving home the change he has undergone in the garden of Milan. Finally in the last four books the narrative drive yields completely to a meditative mode, and the reflections on memory, time and the beginning of *Genesis* spell out the faith that Augustine has won in the conversion.

### *Story and teleology*

Let us take a closer look at the teleological organisation of the narrative. In some passages teleology comes to the fore at the level of the action: Augustine not

---

<sup>825</sup> Cf. Olney 1998: 10-11. The infinitive construction expressing the object of desire is artfully framed by words alluding to *Ps.* 26.6: *circuivi et immolavi in tabernaculo eius hostiam iubilationis* ('Therefore I have gone around and have offered in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy ...'). The juxtaposition of present memory with past events anticipates the reflections on memory and time in book 10 and 11.

<sup>826</sup> Fredriksen 1986: 33. On conversion stories in antiquity, see also Rutherford 1989: 103-7.

<sup>827</sup> On the tendency in autobiography to make the telos of a life also the origin of its narrative, see Freeman 1993: 108; Bruner 2002: 28.

<sup>828</sup> On the prominence of death in book 9, see McMahon 1989: 109-13.

only desires illumination, but strongly expects it. In 6.10.17, for example, we read about him and his two close friends, Alypius and Nebridius:

Thus there were together the mouths of three needy souls, bitterly confessing to one another their spiritual poverty and waiting upon You that You *might give them their food in due season*. And amidst the bitter disappointments which through Your mercy followed all our worldly affairs, darkness clouded our souls as we tried to see the goal for which we suffered these things. And we turned away in deepest gloom saying, ‘How long shall these things be?’ This question was ever on our lips, but for all that we did not give up our worldly ways, because we still saw no certitude which it was worth changing our way of life to grasp.

*et erant ora trium egentium et inopiam suam sibimet invicem anhelantium et ad te expectantium, ut dares eis escam in tempore oportuno. et in omni amaritudine, quae nostros saeculares actus de misericordia tua sequebatur, intuentibus nobis finem, cur ea pateremur, occurrebant tenebrae, et aversabamur gementes et dicebamus: ‘quamdiu haec?’ et hoc crebro dicebamus et dicentes non relinquebamus ea, quia non elucebat certum aliquid, quod illis relictis adprehenderemus.*

The following interior dialogue reveals that Augustine has harboured the expectation of a sudden overcoming of all uncertainties since his reading of Cicero’s *Hortensius* when he was 19 (6.11.18):

Tomorrow I shall find it: see, it will be all quite clear and I shall grasp it. See, Faustus will come and explain everything. And those mighty Academics! ... For now the things in the Scriptures of the church which used to seem absurd are no longer absurd, but can be quite properly understood in another sense. I shall set my foot upon that step on which my parents placed me as child, until I clearly find the truth. But where shall I search? When shall I search? Ambrose is busy. I am myself busy to read.

*cras inveniam; ecce manifestum apparebit, et tenebo; ecce Faustus veniet et exponet omnia. o magni viri Academici! ... ecce iam non sunt absurda in libris ecclesiasticis, quae absurda videbantur, et possunt aliter atque honeste intellegi. figam pedes in eo gradu, in quo puer a parentibus positus eram, donec inveniatur perspicua veritas. sed ubi quaeretur? quando quaeretur? non vacat Ambrosio, non vacat legere.*

It is the expectation of an imminent (*cras inveniam*) illumination in which the various stages of Augustine's search are blended together:<sup>829</sup> the Manichaean phase,<sup>830</sup> the enthusiasm for Academic scepticism<sup>831</sup> and the growing interest in Catholicism.<sup>832</sup> Echoes of this passage in the conversion scene highlight that Augustine continues to live in the tension of expecting a sudden change: he meditates again on how much time he has spent searching for *sapientia* since his reading of the *Hortensius* (6.11.18 ~ 8.7.17) and the reverberation of *cras inveniam* (6.11.18) indicates that expectation has grown to anxiety: 'How long, how long shall I go on saying tomorrow and again tomorrow? Why not now, why not have an end to my uncleanness this very hour?' (*quamdiu, quamdiu, 'cras et cras'? quare non modo? quare non hac hora finis turpitudinis meae?* 8.12.28).<sup>833</sup> I would not dare to judge whether the historical Augustine in fact was continuously on his toes awaiting a sudden enlightenment or whether the retrospect has slid from the narrator's view into the world of the character, but in any case Augustine's expectation of a change establishes a teleological line at the level of the action.

#### *Discourse and teleology*

That being said, the discourse is more important for the teleology of the *Confessions* than the story. In his intrusions, the narrator frequently anticipates the telos and contrasts it with Augustine's motives. The discrepancy thereby created between Augustine's experiences and the reader's view may be illustrated by the two moves narrated in book 5. Augustine is frustrated about the undisciplined behaviour of his students at Carthage and, when he hears that there is more sense of *decorum* in Rome, decides to continue his teaching there (5.8.14):

But You, *O my Hope and my Portion in the land of the living*, forced me to change countries for my soul's salvation: You pricked me with such goads at Carthage as drove me out of it, and You set before me certain attractions by which I might be drawn to Rome – in either case using men who loved this life of death, one set doing lunatic things, the other promising vain things: and to reform my ways You secretly used their perversity and my own.

---

<sup>829</sup> Cf. O'Donnell 1992: *ad loc.*, who refutes Courcelle's interpretation that sees in the monologue an expression of Augustine's wavering between the options of Manichaeism, skepticism and Christian orthodoxy in 385 CE (1963: 17-26).

<sup>830</sup> For Augustine's encounter with Faustus, see 5.6.10.

<sup>831</sup> For the sway of Academic scepticism over Augustine, see 5.10.9.

<sup>832</sup> For Augustine's failure to keep in closer contact with Ambrose, see 6.3.3.

<sup>833</sup> Courcelle sees an allusion to Persius' comments on procrastination in 5.66-9, but I share O'Donnell's reservation that the topos is widespread.

*verum autem tu, spes mea et portio mea in terra viventium, ad mutandum terrarum locum pro salute animae meae et Carthagini stimulos, quibus inde avellerer, admovebas et Romae inlecebras, quibus adtraherer, proponebas mihi per homines, qui diligunt vitam mortuam, hinc insana facientes, inde vana pollicentes, et ad corrigendos gressus meos utebaris occulte et illorum et mea perversitate.*

Here as in countless other passages, the telos is presented as God's will unknown to Augustine. The narrator emphasizes the gap between this telos and Augustine's goal by characterizing those who initiated the move as godless. It is a sign of divine providence that the human intentions, misguided as they are, ultimately work towards the telos set by God. The latency of the telos at the level of the action is thrown into relief by the reaction of Augustine's mother: despite her piety, she takes pains to dissuade Augustine from doing what in retrospect turns out to be God's plan (5.8.15). Not even the *famula dei* is privy to the divine telos.

Human intention and divine will are juxtaposed in a similar way in the narrative of Augustine's next move, this time from Rome to Milan. Augustine quickly learns that the educational system in Rome is marred by other deficiencies than in Carthage: the students gang up, decide to change the instructor and leave without paying the tuition fee. He is therefore happy to accept the chair in rhetoric at Milan (5.13.23):

... I applied for the post with support from men far gone in the follies of the Manichees – the purpose of my journey being to be quit of them, though neither they nor I realised it. The prefect Symmachus approved of a public oration I delivered for the occasion, and sent me.

*... ego ipse ambivi per eos ipsos manichaeis vanitatibus ebrios – quibus ut carerem ibam, sed utrique nesciebamus – ut dictione proposita me probatum praefectus tunc Symmachus mitteret.*

The dissonance between the character of the people responsible for the move and its ultimate goal is exacerbated by a prolepsis: at Milan, Augustine would dissociate himself altogether from the Manichaeans. His lack of understanding is pointed out again and this time also contrasted with the understanding he will finally achieve through his encounter with Ambrose: 'All unknowing I was brought by you to him, that knowing I should be brought by him to you.' (*ad eum autem ducebar abs te nesciens, ut per eum ad te sciens ducerer.* 5.13.23). The narrator goes on to indicate the next direction of Augustine's intellectual development (5.13.23-14.24): he would listen to Ambrose, bishop of Milan, first attracted by his rhetorical skills, but more and more touched by the content of his sermons. Particularly the technique of figural interpretation

preached by Ambrose would be crucial for his growing involvement with Christian doctrine.

The *Confessions* abound in narratorial prolepses that explicitly contrast Augustine's state of mind, his feelings and intentions, with the telos of his spiritual journey, the conversion. Instead of adducing more examples of something that is familiar to every reader of the *Confessions*, I would like to explore more subtle ways in which the retrospect has inscribed itself into the narrative. After narrating how Augustine came under the sway of the Manichaeans and after touching upon some of their doctrines (3.6.10-7.11), the narrator adduces three topics that made him adopt Manichaeism: the origin of evil, the physical form of God and the vices of Old Testament patriarchs. He elaborates on the problems these questions raise for Augustine by listing what he did not know (3.7.12-13):

... I did not know that evil has no being of its own but is only an absence of good, so that it simply is not. ... I did not know that God is a spirit, having no parts extended in length and breadth, to whose being bulk does not belong ... Nor did I know that true and inward righteousness which judges not according to custom but according to the most righteous law of Almighty God...

... *non noveram malum non esse nisi privationem boni usque ad quod omnino non est. ... non noveram deum esse spiritum, non cui membra essent per longum et latum nec cui esse moles esset ... Et non noveram iustitiam veram interiorem non ex consuetudine iudicantem, sed ex lege lectissima dei omnipotentis ...*

There is no explicit prolepsis, but the points that Augustine did not know anticipate insights he would later gain on his way to conversion, in the reverse order of their listing here: he learns from Ambrose the figurative mode of reading scripture that helps him to cope with all its tensions and contradictions (5.14.24; 6.4.6). Neoplatonic philosophy enables him to think of God as immaterial (7.1.1-2.3). It also helps him to conceptualize evil in a way that does not contradict God's omnipotence (7.12.18). While not being voiced explicitly, the narrator's hindsight is encapsulated in the description of Augustine's state of mind – the future is inscribed into the negations that thereby come to serve as carriers of a teleological view.

The teleological casting of Augustine's life is similarly subtle in the account of the impression that Neoplatonic philosophy made on him (7.9.13-15). In addition to elaborating on the spiritual insights he gained, particularly about the nature of God and his word, the narrator mentions what he did not find in Neoplatonic treatises: the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. Again, the mention of what Augustine did not know calls to mind what he is still to learn and speaks

to the retrospect of the narrator. This time, the teleological shaping has a further twist: the insights that Augustine derived from the Neoplatonists as well as their deficiencies are phrased in biblical quotations, the majority coming from the prologue of John. To quote from the beginning (7.9.13):

... in them (i.e. the *libri Platonici*) I found, though not in the very words, yet the thing itself and proved by all sorts of reasons: that *in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God: the same was in the beginning with God; all things were made by Him and without Him was made nothing that was made; ...* But I did not read in those books that *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not, but to as many as received Him He gave power to be made the sons of God, to them that believed in His name.*

... *et ibi legi non quidem his verbis, sed hoc idem omnino multis et multiplicibus suaderi rationibus, quod in principio erat verbum et verbum erat apud deum et deus erat verbum: hoc erat in principio apud deum; omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil. ... quia vero in sua propria venit et sui eum non receperunt, quotquot autem receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios dei fieri credentibus in nomine eius, non ibi legi.*

This chapter dealing with the Neoplatonic influence on Augustine has triggered a long debate about what books Augustine actually read,<sup>834</sup> but, as O'Donnell *ad loc.* observes, the device of quoting 'the *ipsissima verba* of Christian scripture as though they offered a fair summary of contents of a non-Christian philosophical work ... has gone comparatively unattended'. He sees in it yet another point that should caution us against overestimating the role of Neoplatonism for Augustine's intellectual development.<sup>835</sup> From the angle of my reading, it is striking that the narrator does not present the Neoplatonic doctrine as Augustine encountered it, but that he vests it in the *parole* of the faith he would ultimately gain through his conversion. Thus, not only the mention of what he did not believe, but also the phrasing of what he later came to believe implicitly carries a teleological view. The 'content of the form' effects, if not a reversal of, at least a play with causality: while the Neoplatonists were an important step for Augustine on the way to his immersion in the Bible, in the retrospective narrative they are introduced via biblical quotations.

#### *Narrative frame and teleology*

---

<sup>834</sup> For a survey of the debate see O'Donnell 1992: *ad* 7.9.13; Madec 1992: 27-33 (???). For further titles, see Stock 1996: 65 n. 185.

<sup>835</sup> I find O'Donnell's other points, especially the sparsity of Augustine's discussions of Neoplatonists in his earlier writings, more convincing. The presentation in the *Confessions* may be owed to the retrospective desire to downplay the influence.

Let me, in a final step, argue that teleology is conveyed in the form of the narrative at a larger scale. In a most stimulating paper, Reinhart Herzog reads the *Confessions* as the gradual constitution of a dialogue between Augustine and God.<sup>836</sup> Taking his cue from the proem in which Augustine raises the question of how to praise and address God, Herzog rejects the common reading of the autobiographic part as *confessio laudis*. Instead he argues that the first nine books serve to establish the dialogue that then takes place in the final, non-narrative books. At first Augustine does not listen to God who, likewise, does not speak to him personally. Only when God directly addresses Augustine with *tolle lege* and Augustine is able to respond in the words of the Bible, has the ground for a genuine conversation been laid.<sup>837</sup>

Besides teasing out the intricacy of the *Confessions*' hermeneutics, Herzog's article brings an interesting shift in focus: while the bulk of scholarly work has concentrated on the autobiographic part of the *Confessions*, Herzog takes them as merely preparatory. From this perspective, the vexing question of the text's unity loses its sting. Admirable as Herzog's argument is, it downplays a crucial aspect: the discrepancy between character and narrator.<sup>838</sup> In his interpretation of chapters 7.9.13ff., for example, Herzog does not distinguish between Augustine's reading of the Neoplatonic texts and its narratorial presentation through biblical quotations, but attributes both to the same persona.<sup>839</sup> This lack of differentiation taints his hermeneutical interpretation: the *Confessions* may describe Augustine's life as the gradual creation of a communication with God, but the narrator is in dialogue with God right from the start: he frequently addresses God in the second person. God is also present in the web of biblical quotations that are woven into the narrative. Georg Nicolaus Knauer, for example, has elucidated the significance of quotations from the psalms for the narrative architecture of the *Confessions*.<sup>840</sup> For my argument, it is important that the biblical soundings signal the post-conversion stance of the narrator right from the beginning of the text. From time to time, the insecurity of

---

<sup>836</sup> Herzog 1984. See also Zimmermann 2005, who suggests that God takes the role of the Muse (243).

<sup>837</sup> Herzog 1984: 228.

<sup>838</sup> The gap between character and narrator is well put by Jauß 1982: 235: 'Far from identifying retrospectively an unchangeable self in the stream of experiences, let alone the formation of an individual character, the style of the *Confessions* continuously opens up the gap between former experience and present insight.' ('Weit davon entfernt, im Wandel der Erfahrungen des Lebens rückschauend ein unwandelbares Selbst, geschweige denn eine sich bildende Individualität zu erkennen, reißt die Schreibweise der *Confessiones* vielmehr ständig die Kluft zwischen einstiger Erfahrung und jetziger Einsicht wieder auf.')

<sup>839</sup> Herzog 1984: 226-7. Of course, Herzog is aware of the gap that separates the narrating subject from the experiencing subject (cf. 234), but in his concentration on the development of Augustine's conversation with God, he loses sight of the narrator's stance.

<sup>840</sup> Knauer 1955.

Augustine infiltrates the stance of the narrator, but on the whole he turns to God with ease and generously grants him voice throughout the narrative.

In addition to the teleological drive of the story in the form of Augustine's desire for immediate illumination and the retrospective shaping of the discourse through prolepses explicit and implicit, the telos is firmly embedded in the form of the narrative through countless narratorial apostrophes to God and biblical quotations that are indebted to and bespeak the later conversion. Through them, the telos of the narrative is permanently invoked as a horizon against which the reader is to envisage Augustine's path to enlightenment. To modify Herzog's approach, the account of how the conversation with God comes about is framed by this very conversation, pitting Augustine's view against the narrator's until the two merge at the point of conversion and narrative yields to meditation.

### III. BEYOND EXPERIENCE AND TELEOLOGY

The *Confessions* are an extraordinary narrative as the controversy on its genre and the countless attempts to explain its unity attest. In this section, I would like to take a second look at its temporal organisation and argue that it goes beyond teleological design as well as the restoration of presence to the past. The key for my reading will be the reflection on time in book 11. Especially in the wake of Heidegger, scholars have made time the basis of their interpretations of the *Confessions*.<sup>841</sup> My reading is distinct from previous treatments in that it focuses on narrative form and brings together the reflection on time with the orchestration of narrative time. Viewing the form of the autobiographic account in the light of the meditation on time, as I suggest doing, also bridges the gap between narrative and reflection in the *Confessions* and opens a new perspective on the notorious issue of their unity.

#### *Human time vs. God's eternity*

In his reflection on the first verse of *Genesis*, Augustine tries to define God's eternity by contrasting it with human temporality.<sup>842</sup> While man is torn between the memory of the past, the contemplation of the present and the expectation of the future, God, unaffected by any kind of change, rests in the eternity of himself.<sup>843</sup> The juxtaposition is put succinctly in a passage presenting Augustine's hope that he will finally come to share in God's independence of time (11.29.39):

---

<sup>841</sup> For a survey, cf. Schmidt 1985: 11-17.

<sup>842</sup> von Herrmann 1992: 23-47 emphasizes that eternity is approached 'auf dem Wege des remotiven Abstoßes' (20).

<sup>843</sup> Schmidt 1985: 11-47 emphasizes the aspect of eternity and objects to Heideggerian readings of the *Confessions* that unduly privilege the future.

... that ... I ... may be set free from what I once was, following your Oneness: *forgetting the things that are behind* and not poured out upon things to come and things transient, but *stretching forth to those that are before* (not by dispersal but by concentration of energy) *I press towards the prize of the supernal vocation*, where *I may hear the voice of Thy praise* and contemplate Thy delight which neither comes nor passes away. But now my years are wasted in sighs, and Thou are my only solace, O Lord, my father who is eternal; but I am divided up in time, whose order I do not know, and my thoughts ... are torn with every kind of tumult ...

... *ut ... a veteribus diebus colligar sequens unum, praeterita oblitus, non in ea quae futura et transitura sunt, sed in ea quae ante sunt non distentus, sed extentus, non secundum distentionem, sed secundum intentionem sequor ad palmam supernae vocationis, ubi audiam vocem laudis et contempler delectationem tuam nec venientem nec praetereuntem. nunc vero anni mei in gemitibus, et tu solacium meum, domine, pater meus aeternus es; at ego in tempora dissilui, quorum ordinem nescio, et tumultuosis varietatibus dilaniantur cogitationes meae ...*<sup>844</sup>

The *distentio* defining human life also underlies speech and narrative.<sup>845</sup> The narrator illustrates the attempt to measure time by human speech (11.27.35), uses Augustine's childhood, part of his account, as an example for something that is only present as an image (11.18.23) and explicitly remarks that his narrative unfolds in time (11.25.32). What is more, he draws an analogy between life and narrative when he elaborates on the sequence of songs in order to outline the threefold *distentio* of the human soul. The singer of a song focuses on the present while remembering the words already sung and expecting those yet to come (11.28.38):

And what is true of the whole psalm, is true for each part of the whole, and for each syllable: and likewise for any longer action, of which the canticle may be only a part: indeed it is the same for the whole life of man ... and likewise for the whole history of the human race, of which all the lives of all men are parts.

---

<sup>844</sup> The passage quotes *Phil.* 3.13-14: *fratres, ego me non arbitror apprehendisse unum autem: quae retro sunt ante extentus, secundum intentionem sequor ad palmam supernae vocationis die in Christo Iesu.* ('Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'). On the numerous echoes of these verses in the *Confessions*, see O'Donnell 1992: *ad* 9.10.23. Heidegger 1930: 10 interprets the *extensio* as the 'existenziale Zeitlichkeit im Modus der Eigentlichkeit'.

<sup>845</sup> On the close link between time and word in the *Confessions*, see Fontaine 1988: 64-8. The analogy between narrative and life figures prominently in the readings of Burke 1961, Freccero 1982 and McMahon 1989: 117-41.

*et quod in toto cantico, hoc in singulis particulis eius fit atque in singulis syllabis eius, hoc in actione longiore, cuius forte particula est illud canticum, hoc in tota vita hominis ... hoc in toto saeculo filiorum hominum, cuius partes sunt omnes vitae hominum.*

What the narrator says about song also applies to the *Confessions* that quote hymns and use the same sign system, namely language:<sup>846</sup> life and narrative are aligned with each other by sequentiality.<sup>847</sup>

God's word, on the other hand, is not sequential, but eternal.<sup>848</sup> When the narrator ponders God's command to create the world, he contrasts it with words spoken in time (11.6.8):

It is other, far other. These words are far less than I, indeed they are not at all, for they pass away and are no more: but the Word of God is above me and endures forever.

*aliud est longe, longe aliud est. haec longe infra me sunt nec sunt, quia fugiunt et praetereunt: verbum autem dei mei supra me manet in aeternum.*<sup>849</sup>

Let me suggest that the narrator plays with the discrepancy between temporal and eternal words in his reflection on how we can measure time even though it is constantly unfolding. The narrator turns to speech as example, quoting the beginning of Ambrose's first hymn and analyzing the length of its syllables: *deus creator omnium* (11.27.35).<sup>850</sup> Signifier and signified throw each other into relief: the fleetingness of the syllables contrasts with the timelessness of God and his command to create the world that is spelt out in another passage possibly alluding to the same verse (11.30.40):

... and let them realise that before all times You are the Eternal Creator of all times, and that no times are co-eternal with You, nor is any creature, even if there were a creature above time.

---

<sup>846</sup> Cf. Freccero 1982: 63.

<sup>847</sup> The significance of sequentiality for human temporality is emphasized by Ross 1991. In his attempt to balance the subjective take on time in the second half of book 11 with its objective existence as pointed out in the creation story in the first half of book 11, Ross observes that sequentiality is the mode in which humans experience time, whereas for God it is a dimension without sequentiality. For a very different take that neglects the different significances of time for humans and God, see Scheuer 2004: 162-3, who interprets time as 'dramatisches, dynamisches und offenes Beziehungsgeschehen'.

<sup>848</sup> In addition, 11.3.5 indicates that God's word is not articulated in any language.

<sup>849</sup> The comparison between temporal and eternal speech is rendered in direct speech and attributed to an anonymous listener who hears with his outer ear words spoken in time and with his inner ear God's eternal word.

<sup>850</sup> Augustine uses the same verse for the sake of illustration in *De musica* 6.2.2: 9.23.

*... et intellegant te ante omnia tempora aeternum creatorem omnium temporum neque ulla tempora tibi esse coaeterna nec ullam creaturam, etiamsi est aliqua supra tempora.*

A similar play with the beginning of Ambrosius' first hymn can be found in 4.10.15, where the transience of God's creation is illustrated by the fleetingness of words:

Our own speech, which we utter by making sounds signifying meanings, follows the same principles. For there never could be a whole sentence unless one word ceased to be when its syllables had sounded and another took its place. In all such things let my soul praise You, O God, Creator of all things ...

*ecce sic peragitur et sermo noster per signa sonantia. non enim erit totus sermo, si unum verbum non decedat, cum sonuerit partes suas, ut succedat aliud. laudet te ex illis anima mea, deus, creator omnium ...*

The sequentiality of words that mirrors the sequentiality of human life is thrown into relief by the eternity of God which Augustine invokes by alluding to Ambrosius.

*The Confessions as transcendence of human temporality: spatial form*

I would like to advance the thesis that the *Confessions*, while being a narrative and belonging to the world of human temporality, also attempt to transcend it, albeit partially. Besides illustrating the tension between experience and teleology, the *Confessions* also venture beyond the frame of the futures past. The reference to those who fail to understand God's creation and eternity in 11.11.13 furnishes a good starting point for this interpretation:

Who shall lay hold upon their mind and hold it still, that it may stand a little while, and for a little while glimpse the splendour of eternity which stands for ever: and compare it with time whose moments never stand still, and see that it is not comparable? Then indeed it would see that a long time is long only from the multitude of movements that pass away in succession, because they cannot co-exist ... Who shall lay hold upon the mind of man, that it may stand still and see that time with its past and future must be determined by eternity, which stands still and does not pass, which has in itself no past or future. Could my hand have the strength [so to lay hold upon the mind of man] or could my mouth by its speaking accomplish so great a thing?

*quis tenebit illud et figit illud [i.e. cor eorum], ut paululum stet et paululum rapiat splendorem semper stantis aeternitatis et conparet cum temporibus numquam stantibus et videat esse incomparabilem et videat longum tempus nisi ex multis praetereuntibus motibus, qui simul extendi non possunt, longum non fieri; ... quis tenebit cor hominis, ut stet et videat, quomodo stans dictet futura et praeterita tempora nec futura nec praeterita aeternitas? numquid manus mea valet hoc aut manus oris mei per loquellas agit tam grandem rem?*

In the form of a question, Augustine cautiously expresses the hope that his work will help readers to understand the difference between their temporality and God's eternity. To gain a glimpse of the latter, they must adopt for a moment the tranquillity (*ut paululum stet*) that defines God's nature (*semper stantis aeternitatis*).<sup>851</sup> In addition to reflecting on the difference between human and divine temporalities, the *Confessions* strive to establish this partial and temporally limited transcendence of human time. It is tempting to assume that retrospect gives the narrator divine power,<sup>852</sup> but in the last chapter of book 11, Augustine hammers home the point that God does not know human life as an author knows his poem. God's knowledge is non-temporal and non-sequential (11.31.41).<sup>853</sup> Thus, the aspiration towards God's temporality is not to be sought in the retrospect that is so prominent in the *Confessions*. Instead, the *Confessions* offer a glimpse of God's eternity by surpassing the sequentiality that defines narrative as well as human life.

I will outline three features that 'spatialize' the narrative of the *Confessions* which thereby aspire to divine timelessness. This is not to say that God's view is literally 'spatial' for space is just another human category. I rather use space as a metaphor for the non-sequential aspects of God's view as well as of narrative. For the latter, I can draw on the notion of 'spatial form' advanced by Joseph Frank. Frank observed that such novels as *Ulysses* and *Nightwood* generate meaning not so much through a sequential plot as synchronically, labelling this 'spatial form'. He did not mould his observations into a coherent concept of narrative, but nonetheless spatial features have been detected in other works than that of modernist authors.<sup>854</sup> A case in point tackled in this study is the biographies of Plutarch: as we saw in chapter 4, the *Alexander* and other *Lives* do not have a tightly knit plot and downplay temporal sequence. This, I argued, is

---

<sup>851</sup> Meijering 1979: 45 observes that Augustine draws on vocabulary he has used for the ecstasy described in 7.17.23.

<sup>852</sup> Sturrock 1993: 'Augustine himself stands in for God in the narrative part of the *Confessions*; he recounts his story from God's perspective ... As an autobiographer, he is in the peculiarly godlike position of knowing the future, and knowing it for certain, because the future has now happened.'

<sup>853</sup> As Meijering 1979: 109 points out, this implies that the difference between God and humans is not merely quantitative, but qualitative.

<sup>854</sup> On 'spatial form' in literature, see the collection of Frank's essays on this subject (1991) and Smitten and Daghistan 1981.

ultimately owed to Plutarch's interest in moral values that are transtemporal. In the *Confessions*, 'spatial form' has special significance: the efforts to forego sequentiality serve to bring the narrative close to God's perspective that is defined as non-sequential. The three 'spatializing' features which I am now going to discuss are the meditation of the last books, the net of biblical quotations and typology.

To start with, scholars reading the *Confessions* as autobiography tend to ignore or are confounded by the last books that do not continue the report of Augustine's life after the death of his mother and instead discuss various points including memory, time and the creation story in *Genesis*. Jauß elucidates the significance of the shift: 'Thus the autobiography that became the norm of the Christian era has its telos in its own negation: Augustine's reader is supposed to learn that a Christian can find his true self only when the memory of what he was and has become is transcended to the beginning of all creatures, when the focus on himself finally cedes to "God's own grammar" in order to praise the creation of all things as God's own poiesis.'<sup>855</sup> Seen from the angle just outlined, this rupture is highly significant: when narrative yields to reflection, the sequentiality of the account is abandoned and 'the speaking voice and that of which it speaks become now unequivocally present'.<sup>856</sup> Of course, like narrative, reflection is presented through signs that unfold sequentially – word after word, syllable following syllable – but the object of the words is no longer defined by sequentiality. The signifier of the *Confessions* remains sequential, but the signified becomes non-sequential through the shift from the narration of Augustine's life to meditation. The concentration on God's word thus entails the very aspect that defines divine eternity against human temporality.

Divine eternity also flashes up through a device firmly embedded in the autobiographic narrative: biblical quotation. In the preceding section, I intermittently interpreted the numerous biblical quotations in the *Confessions* as part of its teleological shape. The interweaving of psalms and other parts of scripture into the narrative bespeaks the narrator's viewpoint and anticipates Augustine's conversion. In addition to rendering the autobiographic account teleological, the biblical quotations push it beyond teleology. They consistently interrupt the sequentiality of the narrative, bring in God's word and envisage Augustine's life in light of it. What Augustine says about Paul, specifically that he speaks *iam non in voce sua; in tua enim, qui misisti spiritum tuum de excelsis per eum* ('it is no longer the voice of the Apostle that speaks thus, it is Thine, who sent Thy Holy Spirit from above upon him', 13.13.14), also applies in part to his

---

<sup>855</sup> Jauß 1982: 234: "'So hat die normbildende Autobiographie der christlichen Ära ihr Telos in ihrer Selbstaufhebung: der Leser Augustins soll erkennen, daß der Christ sein wahres Selbst erst dann finden kann, wenn die Erinnerung an das, was er war und geworden ist, überstiegen wird zum Anfang aller Geschöpfe, wenn das Sprechen von sich selbst am Ende "Gottes eigener Grammatik" Raum gibt, um die Schöpfung aller Dinge als Gottes eigene Poiesis zu rühmen.'

<sup>856</sup> O'Donnell 1992: III: 251.

own text. The very paragraph in which this pronouncement occurs ‘is almost completely made up of scriptural citations’<sup>857</sup> and thereby illustrates how the *Confessions* sound God’s words.<sup>858</sup> Unlike in other works of Augustine, nearly all biblical quotations are unmarked and fully incorporated into the flow of the narrative.<sup>859</sup> This subtle merging of Augustine’s voice with God’s constitutes the ‘Urteilsgemeinschaft mit Gott’ and ‘Seinsgemeinschaft der Gnade’ that Ratzinger sees as the product of the *Confessions*.<sup>860</sup> The integration of scriptural elements into the narratorial voice weaves threads of divine eternity into an account that narrates how a human life unfolds in time.

This reading must be qualified again by the observation that the biblical quotations, as much as they break the narrative flow, themselves unfold as the sequence of signs: ‘Scripture is partly temporal, since it consists of words written on parchment, and partly eternal, since it represents divine speech.’<sup>861</sup> Furthermore, Augustine emphasizes that the Bible does not enable its readers to face God directly.<sup>862</sup> The mediated access to God granted by the Bible is illustrated by two passages: In his allegorical reading of *Genesis*, Augustine envisages the firmament as representing scripture due to its similarity with a book: ‘For the heavens shall be folded together like a book and is now stretched out like a skin over us.’ (*caelum enim plicabitur ut liber et nunc sicut pellis extenditur super nos.* 13.15.16). Augustine’s interpretation of *Gen.* 1.6 is complex, particularly the further comparison of the scriptures with *pellis* creates a grand trajectory to the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden.<sup>863</sup> Crucial for my argument is the employment of spatial imagery. Both firmament and *pellis* are metaphors that view the Bible in spatial rather than in temporal terms.<sup>864</sup> Moreover, *extendere* is the very word that Augustine uses for man leaving behind his temporality and approaching God’s eternity (11.29.39). While the imagery and vocabulary of this passage point toward the Bible’s capacity to transcend human temporality, its limits are subsequently driven home *e negativo* when Augustine speaks about the angels’ closeness to God: ‘For they forever see Your face, and in Your face they read without syllables spoken in time what is willed by Your eternal will.’ (*vident enim faciem tuam semper et ibi legunt sine syllabis temporum, quid velit aeterna voluntas tua.* 13.15.18). The timeless and

---

<sup>857</sup> O’Donnell 1992: ad 13.13.14.

<sup>858</sup> Cf. Knauer 1955: 28, perhaps a bit too starkly: ‘When he quotes, he signals: here it is not me, but God who is speaking.’ (‘Wenn er also ein Zitat benutzt, so heisst das: an dieser Stelle spreche nicht ich, sondern Gott selbst.’).

<sup>859</sup> Cf. Mohrmann 1959: 363. Sieben 1977: 484 even speaks of a ‘biographisch-amplifiziertes Psalterium’.

<sup>860</sup> Ratzinger 1957: 386.

<sup>861</sup> Stock 1996: 11. See also Sturrock 1993: 48.

<sup>862</sup> On the value and limits of the Bible as God’s word in Augustine’s theology, see Wieland 1978: 101-6.

<sup>863</sup> See, e.g., Kotzé 2004: 190.

<sup>864</sup> On the spatial notion of the Bible in the *Confessions*, see also Freccero 1982: 66.

unmediated access to God enjoyed by the angels throws into relief the medium of speech and its sequentiality which limits human interaction with God. While the spatial metaphors express the Bible's potential to carry its readers beyond their temporality, the reference to its status as a medium of communication made up of syllables drives home its place in the human world.

The temporal ambiguity of the Bible also comes to the fore in the narrator's reflection on the mention of days in the creation process. He wonders how this ties in with his insight into God's transcendence of time and lets God provide the following answer (13.29.44):

O human, what My Scripture says, I say. But it says things in terms of time, whereas time does not affect My Word, because it abides with Me equal in eternity. Thus the things you see by My Spirit, I see, just as what you say by My Spirit, I say. But while you see those things in time, I do not see them in time, just as you say those things in time, but I do not say them in time.

*o homo, nempe quod scriptura mea dicit, ego dico. et tamen illa temporaliter dicit, verbo autem meo tempus non accedit, quia aequali mecum aeternitate consistit. Sic ea, quae vos per spiritum meum videtis, ego video, sicut ea, quae vos per spiritum meum dicitis, ego dico. atque ita cum vos temporaliter ea videatis, non ego temporaliter video, quemadmodum, cum vos temporaliter ea dicatis, non ego temporaliter dico.*

Here it is not the sequentiality of the Bible's signifier, but the temporality of the signified, namely the measuring of the creation in days, that is at stake. That difference notwithstanding, time appears again as the dark glass through which humans can glean God's eternity when they read the scriptures. The answer, far from relieving the tension between the human form of speech and the access granted by it to divine eternity, exacerbates it: Augustine has God himself answer, but in a voice that is subject to the rules of human temporality. Just like the writing of the Bible, his words consist of syllables and proceed temporally. The very comment that is meant to elucidate the status of the Bible only reproduces its ambiguity, taking it to yet another level.

Besides the shift to meditation and the punctuation of the narrative with biblical citations, a third feature contributes to the attempt to reach beyond the sequentiality characteristic of human life. In section I, I have already touched upon the multiple frames of the narrative. As we have seen, Augustine's conversion is modelled on the conversion of Paul. Another striking model for Augustine's life is the two prominent trees, the pear-tree in book 2 and the fig-tree in book 8. The anecdote of the pear-theft has received much scorn from its

readers:<sup>865</sup> at first sight, it is indeed irritating that such a prank of young Augustine is narrated at great length and prompts an in-depth reflection on human sin. It is the merit of Ferrari to have drawn out fully the interpretative weight of the biblical model behind this episode:<sup>866</sup> the pear-theft re-enacts the theft of the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in *Genesis* and thereby casts Augustine's aberrations in the light of what *Genesis* says about sin.

Ferrari develops his interpretation further by making a case for a similar symbolic significance of the fig-tree under which Augustine hears the words *tolle lege*. This tree, he argues, evokes the Tree of Life that is 'represented at the redeeming death of Christ by the tree of the Cross'.<sup>867</sup> Augustine's conversion is thus projected against the background of man's salvation through Jesus Christ. According to this reading, the two trees in the *Confessions* are the cornerstones of a wide narrative arch which aligns Augustine's life with the story of mankind, from the Fall of Adam to the redemption through Jesus Christ.

Even one who remains sceptical about such a grand narrative architecture based on 'arboreal polarization' will acknowledge the semantic richness of the fig-tree:<sup>868</sup> it is under a fig-tree that Jesus sees Nathanael whom he makes one of his first disciples in *Jn.* 1.47-8. Augustine thus envisages his own conversion not only against the foil of Paul, but also of Nathanael. Elsewhere, Augustine links the Nathanael story with other occurrences of the fig-tree in the Bible: with *Mt.* 21.19: *invenimus arborem fici maledictam, quia sola folia habuit et fructum non habuit* ('we found the cursed fig-tree for it has only leaves but no fruit') (*Io. Ev. Tr.* 7.21-2) and with *Gen.* 3.7, where Adam and Eve use the leaves of a fig-tree to cover their nakedness (*sermo*, 69.3-4). These links highlight the wide intertextual echo that the fig-tree triggers in the *Confessions*.

The casting of Augustine's life into the mould of narrative patterns from the Bible is indebted to the idea of typology.<sup>869</sup> While traditional typological approaches generally juxtapose an event from the Old Testament with one from the New Testament and see the latter as the fulfilment of the former, the *Confessions* extend this approach, envisaging Augustine's life as a small-scale re-enactment of the Bible's history of salvation, 'an instance of the continual

---

<sup>865</sup> E.g., Russell 1948: 345; Nietzsche 1916: 292.

<sup>866</sup> Ferrari 1970; 1979. However, Ferrari was not the first to notice the echo of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, see, e.g., Kusch 1953: 150. Cf. also Burke 1961: 94.

<sup>867</sup> Ferrari 1970: 238.

<sup>868</sup> On the semantics of the fig-tree in book 8, see Courcelle 1950: 193; 1963: 191-2; Buchheit 1968, who emphasizes its sexual connotations; McGowan 1996.

<sup>869</sup> Auerbach 1953 [1946]: 73 claims that 'this type of interpretation obviously introduces an entirely new and alien element into the antique conception of history'. This seems exaggerated: the exemplary mode of memory, i.e. direct juxtaposition of different events, was very common in antiquity as the frequent comparison of the Persian Wars with the Trojan War illustrates. Nonetheless, typology is different from this tradition in that it insinuates a deeper connection between the two events that goes beyond similarity. See also Auerbach's classical treatment of 'Figura' (1968) and, for a survey of approaches to typology, Young 1997: 192-201.

unfolding of God's Word after the Resurrection'.<sup>870</sup> This gives the choice of narrative models in the *Confessions* special significance. The close entangling of narrative with experience has already prompted me to argue that the strong narrative encoding does not undermine the authenticity of the account (sec. I). We can now see that it endows the events narrated with a deeper meaning, a truth that is more profound as it does not produce mere data, but takes into account God's acting in history.<sup>871</sup>

The application of typology also concerns the temporal orchestration of the *Confessions* into which it inserts an element of God's perspective: needless to repeat, the narrative consists of signs that unfold temporally and tell the sequence of Augustine's experiences, but the blending together of recent with biblical episodes implies a perspective that is spatial rather than temporal. Augustine's life is envisaged in a mirror-cabinet of other stories. The mirror-cabinet opens up a view that downplays the temporal links between the stories and takes them in simultaneously. Thus, typology complements the sequential narrative of the past through a view that is spatial and thereby aligned with God's timeless perspective.

This spatial view of history also underlies the exegesis of book 13. In an allegorical reading, the story of the creation of the world comes to express the working of the Spirit in the Christian world. Later history is thus superimposed on the very beginnings just as the story of the creation of the world is made to coincide with the story of the formation of the church. Not temporal sequence, but a deeper truth shapes this view of the creation story. What is more, echoes of the first nine books suggest a parallel with Augustine's spiritual journey. In *Augustine's Prayerful Ascent*, McMahon proposes that the nine acts of God in the creation story of *Genesis* mirror the nine books of the *Confessions*.<sup>872</sup> The link, he argues, is established through metaphors that are used in the account of Augustine's life and are then echoed in the allegorical reading of *Genesis*. It is easy to take issue with the thesis that the metaphors create an exact correspondence of each creation act with one book respectively. The imagery of water and darkness, for instance, is deployed not only in book 3, but also figures prominently in other books,<sup>873</sup> which undermines the distinctness of the echo. To give another example, McMahon argues that the interpretation of the firmament in day two as an allegory of the scriptures resonates with Monica's role in book 2 as Christian influence on Augustine;<sup>874</sup> this, however, is not so much based on textual evidence as it is dictated by the exigencies of the model. If the allegorical

---

<sup>870</sup> Freccero 1982: 65.

<sup>871</sup> Along similar lines, Flores 1984: 48 entertains 'the strong possibility' that Augustine would have regarded literary embellishment 'not as a lapse from truth but on the contrary as truth's intensification'.

<sup>872</sup> McMahon 1989.

<sup>873</sup> McMahon 1989: 57 notes this himself for book 4. The same can be observed for the imagery used simultaneously in books 1 and 2, cf. McMahon 1989: 50.

<sup>874</sup> McMahon 1989: 52.

reading of the firmament is to be seen in light of the autobiographic part at all, it would be more natural to link it with Augustine's encounters with the Bible in books 5 and 8.

McMahon's search for correspondences between each creation act with exactly one of the first nine books pushes the case too far, but there are some marked reverberations that cannot fail to evoke the first nine books in the final book of the *Confessions*.<sup>875</sup> The three temptations, for example, that separate man from the Spirit (13.21.30) are exactly those that haunt Augustine in his life: *superbia*, *luxuria* and *curiositas*.<sup>876</sup> The fall of Adam, which was reworked in Augustine's pear-theft, is explicitly mentioned as the reason for man's afflictions (13.20.28), and as O'Donnell notes, observing the density of references to Paul: 'It is surely significant that Paul looms here as so central a figure, when the role assigned him in Bks. 7-8 was crucial in the turning from Plotinus to the Gospel.'<sup>877</sup> The *Confessions* thus not only project Augustine's biography against the foil of salvation history, but also embed echoes of it in the allegorical interpretation of the creation story. In this manifold blending together of Augustine's life with biblical narratives, the *Confessions* establish a view of the life that leaves behind sequentiality and moves towards God's timeless perspective.

To sum up, the narrator of the *Confessions* defines human temporality as sequential in contrast to divine eternity and illustrates its workings through narrative. Nonetheless, the narrative of the *Confessions* aspires to God's view of time. While the final books leave behind the sequence of Augustine's life for a timeless exegesis, the autobiographic part is punctuated by a dense network of scriptural quotes that transcends its sequentiality just as the typological use of narrative framing opens up a spatial view of the deeper meaning of history. Consisting of syllables and telling the sequence of a life, the narrative, however, remains tied to human time; it only offers a glimpse of divine eternity, in Ricoeur's words: 'The journey and narration are founded in an approximation of eternity through time which, however, far from abandoning the difference, continues to deepen it.'<sup>878</sup>

---

<sup>875</sup> See, for example, Kusch 1953, who elaborates on the Trinitarian structure underlying the exegesis of book 13 as well as of books 4-6. On the Trinitarian structure and its unifying function in the *Confessions*, see also O'Donnell 2005: 65-72. Further parallels include the invective against Manichaeism in 13.30.45 and the mention of baptism (cf. Mohrmann 1959: 368-9).

<sup>876</sup> The parallels can be traced back to the use of the same words and images, e.g. in 13.20.28 the *genus humanum* is called *procellose tumidum* ('with the storms of its pride'), in 3.3.6, the narrator says: *tumebam tyfo* ('I ... was ... swollen with arrogance').

<sup>877</sup> O'Donnell 1992: *ad* 13.21.30.

<sup>878</sup> Ricoeur 1983-5: I: 52: 'Pérégrination et narration sont fondées dans une approximation de l'éternité par le temps, laquelle, loin d'abolir la différence, ne cesse de la creuser.'

The aspiration to eternity gives the *Confessions* a peculiar place in the history of autobiographical writing:<sup>879</sup> ‘The human story is gradually erased, with all its confusion and mystery and perplexities and contradictions; and the divine story, serene and bland and bright, emerges behind it. Every story, on this reading, turns out to be the same story.’<sup>880</sup> Modern autobiography, on the other hand, strives to emphasize the individual, as is nicely epitomized by Rousseau’s *Confessions*: ‘Only myself. I sense my heart and I know the men. I am not made like those that I have seen. I daresay that I am not made like anybody who exists. If I am not better, I am at least different.’<sup>881</sup> While autobiography leads ‘from me to myself’,<sup>882</sup> the Augustinian *Confessions* are an ‘epic journey to the word of God’.<sup>883</sup>

This direction towards God pushes the *Confessions* beyond the sequentiality defining narrative as well as of human life. The spatializing tendency goes against the futures past that, I think, is a crucial aspect of narrative’s temporal dynamic; the divine view which Augustine can only approximate is free of the tension between experience and teleology. The *Confessions* thus illustrate the tension of the future past as well as its limits.

#### IV. FROM RICOEUR TO AUGUSTINE

The reflections on time in the *Confessions* have proven very influential for the phenomenological tradition. Husserl notes: ‘The analysis of the temporal consciousness is an age-old crux of descriptive psychology and epistemology. The first who sensed its tremendous difficulties and desperately laboured over them, was Augustine.’<sup>884</sup> Heidegger did not hesitate to list Augustine beside Kant and Husserl as one of three peaks in the philosophical investigation of time.<sup>885</sup> It is therefore not surprising that Augustine figures prominently in arguably the most ambitious attempt to understand time and narrative in light of one another, Ricoeur’s *Temps et récit*. Augustine’s place in the argument illustrates a tension in Ricoeur’s train of thought that Raphaël Baroni has recently pointed out: whilst the first volume of *Temps et récit* juxtaposes the discordance of time in our

<sup>879</sup> An interest in the universal is also visible in the account of Augustine’s childhood. The narrator acknowledges that he does not rely on his memory, but on his observation of other babies (1.7.12).

<sup>880</sup> O’Donnell 2005: 72. Cf. Vance 1973: 13; Brachtendorf 2005: 290-1.

<sup>881</sup> Rousseau 1964: 3: ‘Moi seul. Je sens mon coeur et je connais les hommes. Je ne suis fait comme aucun de ceux que j’ai vus; j’ose croire n’être fait comme aucun de ceux qui existent. Si je ne vau pas mieux, au moins je suis autre.’ Sturrock 1993 explores the tension in autobiography between the claim to singularity and the need to rely on conventions.

<sup>882</sup> Gusdorf 1980: 38.

<sup>883</sup> Vance 1973: 13.

<sup>884</sup> Husserl 1966: 3: ‘Die Analyse des Zeitbewußtseins ist ein uraltes Kreuz der deskriptiven Psychologie und der Erkenntnistheorie. Der erste, der die gewaltigen Schwierigkeiten, die hier liegen, tief empfunden und sich daran fast bis zur Verzweiflung abgemüht hat, war Augustinus.’

<sup>885</sup> Heidegger 1930. For a close reading of the *Confessions* in the light of Husserl and Heidegger, see von Herrmann 1992.

experience with the concordance of time in narrative, the third volume takes the tension between discordance and concordance in narrative as a poetic answer to the *aporiai* of a phenomenology of time.<sup>886</sup> At the beginning of *Temps et récit*, book 11 of the *Confessions* is juxtaposed with Aristotle's *Poetics*: the *distentio animi* is pitted against the unity of mythos.<sup>887</sup> When Ricoeur returns to the *Confessions* in the final part of *Temps et récit*, he contrasts Augustine again with Aristotle, but this time his analysis of time in the *Physics*.<sup>888</sup> The *Confessions* now serve as an illustration of experienced time that jars with objective time as discussed in the *Physics*. No longer does narrative dissolve the discordance of our experience through its *mise-en-intrigue*; it rather puts to work the tension between experienced and objective time that according to Ricoeur is the crux of any philosophy of time.

Despite his interest in narrative, Ricoeur only uses the *Confessions* as an exposition of the discordance between objective time and experienced time, but does not consider it in terms of its narrative qualities.<sup>889</sup> When he turns to narrative, he concentrates on the juxtaposition of fictional with historiographic stories.<sup>890</sup> The argument of this chapter, on the other hand, suggests that there is much to gain from reading the form of the *Confessions* in light of its reflections on time. Their narrative illustrates the workings of time as outlined in book 11 and thereby demonstrates, albeit along different lines, the link between time and narrative for which Ricoeur argues. Such a reading can build on the analogy that the narrator of the *Confessions* draws between narrative and life both of which proceed in time. The *distentio animi* that defines human temporality comes to the fore in the narrative process (11.28.38):

I am about to say a psalm that I know: before I begin, my expectation is directed to the whole of it; but when I have begun, so much of it as I pluck off and drop away into the past becomes matter for my memory; and the whole energy of the action is divided between my memory, in regard to what I have said, and my expectation, in regard to what I have yet to say... And what is true of the whole psalm, is true for each part of the whole, and for each syllable: and likewise for any longer action, of which the canticle may be only a part: indeed it is the same for the whole life of man ... and likewise for the whole history of the human race, of which all the lives of all men are parts.

---

<sup>886</sup> Baroni 2010.

<sup>887</sup> Ricoeur 1983-5: I: 19-84.

<sup>888</sup> Ricoeur 1983-5: III: 19-36.

<sup>889</sup> Ricoeur 1983-5: I: 21 notes, however, that the fusion of argument with hymn in the first part of book 11 seems to steer towards a poetic transfiguration.

<sup>890</sup> In Grethlein 2010d, I note the insufficiency of this approach and suggest another take on the refiguration of time in narrative.

*Dicturus sum canticum, quod novi: antequam incipiam, in totum expectatio mea tenditur, cum autem coepero, quantum ex illa in praeteritum decerpsero, tenditur et memoria mea, atque distenditur vita huius actionis meae in memoriam propter quod dixi et in expectationem propter quod dicturus sum ... et quod in toto cantico, hoc in singulis particulis eius fit atque in singulis syllabis eius, hoc in actione longiore, cuius forte particula est illud canticum, hoc in tota vita hominis ... hoc in toto saeculo filiorum hominum, cuius partes sunt omnes vitae hominum.*

However, the analogy which the narrator draws ignores a crucial difference between life and narrative: only the retrospect of narrative permits us to know what lies ahead – in life, on the other hand, the future is open. This discrepancy looms large in the *Confessions*: besides being manifest in prolepses, the superior stance of the narrator is inscribed in the narrative frame of the *Confessions*. The dialogue with God and the biblical quotations highlight the telos of the narrative. The conversion establishes a wide gulf that separates Augustine the character from Augustine the narrator in the first nine books.

At the same time, the biblical quotations in the *Confessions* transcend the sequentiality that is inherent in teleology and that defines human temporality. Together with the meditation of the last books and the application of typology, they tend to spatialize history. This striving towards the perspective of God also helps to explain the short shrift that experience is given in the *Confessions*. Autobiographic writing is in general conducive to experience as the narrator can rely on his own experiences. In the *Confessions*, on the other hand, experience is not only pushed to the rear by their teleological design; it is also abandoned in favour of a deeper truth: *in conspectu dei* the individual experience loses its distinctness and is replaced with a spatial view.

Augustine's theological agenda thus drives the *Confessions* beyond teleology and experience. This illustrates *e negativo* the anthropological dimension of the futures past, namely the desire to make the past tangible and the need to defend oneself against contingency. The divine view, on the other hand, is free of the tension between experience and teleology. God transcends the human temporality to which futures past responds. Through its autobiographic elements, the *Confessions* exacerbate the tension between experience and teleology; by virtue of their theological approach, they reveal the limits of the futures past.

However, the *Confessions* only aspire to transcend human temporality; as narrative, they are inextricably tied to human temporality: the *Confessions* are caught in *distentio* while aiming at *extentio*. Not only does the sign system of language proceed sequentially, but the first nine books also follow more or less Augustine's biography up to his conversion. Given how the narrator merges his voice with God's in the final books, it is striking that he has chosen to devote much of the text to an account of his life. This is obviously tied to the protreptic

purpose that is mirrored in the various conversion stories in book 8, but also bespeaks another specifically Christian feature that is relevant for considering futures past. In the account of Augustine's Neoplatonic phase, the narrator emphasizes the incarnation of Jesus Christ as an indispensable *proprium* of Christian faith.<sup>891</sup> The belief that the Messiah has already come gives the Christian teleology a twist and renders it distinct from its Jewish origin. Its consequences for a Christian theology of history have been drawn out by Wolfhart Pannenberg who speaks of a 'Vorwegereignis des Endes'.<sup>892</sup> Traditional apocalypsis claims an insight into what is to come: 'In the fate of Jesus Christ, on the other hand, according to the testimony of the New Testament, the end is not only viewed in anticipation, but has happened in advance. For with him that which is still to come for all humans, i.e. the resurrection from the dead, has already taken place.'<sup>893</sup> The end of history is already encapsulated in history; teleology is mitigated by a prolepsis of the telos in the past.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ, the entry of God into the world under the conditions of time and space, further bolsters the importance that history, being testimony to God's interaction with his people, already has in the Jewish tradition. This sheds light on the significance of the autobiographical part of the *Confessions*. Instead of concentrating only on an exegesis of the Bible, the narrator intertwines it with an autobiographical account. This, I suggest, may be read as a tribute to the crucial role that history plays in the Christian tradition. The experiences that allow Augustine to catch a glimpse of God's eternity happen in a temporal world just as, according to Christian belief, the transcendence of time through Jesus Christ took place in history. Augustine fully draws out narrative's capacity to express this transcendence of time that is inextricably linked to time.

---

<sup>891</sup> Cf. Madec 1989: 36-50.

<sup>892</sup> Pannenberg 1961: 106. For a brief summary of Pannenberg's theology of history and its central place in his oeuvre, see Axt-Piscalar 2009.

<sup>893</sup> Pannenberg 1961: 103-4: 'Dagegen ist im Geschick Jesu Christi nach dem Zeugnis des Neuen Testaments das Ende nicht nur im voraus erschaut, sondern im voraus ereignet worden. Denn: An ihm ist mit der Auferweckung von den Toten bereits geschehen, was allen andern Menschen noch bevorsteht.'

## 10. Epilogue: Experience in modern historiography

### I. THE FALL OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC: VIRTUES AND VICIES OF HINDSIGHT

In the Sallust chapter, I contrasted the *Bellum Catilinae* with the accounts of modern historians. Sallust envisions the turmoil of 63 BCE as a culmination of Rome's decline starting in the second century and thereby endows Catiline with a significance that he does not have in most modern accounts. At the same time, the dominant modern views of the crisis of the Roman Republic parallel in many regards Sallust's larger trajectory. While not phrasing the development in moral terms, modern scholars are inclined to trace the end of the Republic back to the first half of the first and the second half of the second centuries.<sup>894</sup> Aspects noted by Sallust such as Rome's rapid expansion, the alarming increase of debts and an erosion of political consensus figure prominently in discussions of the crisis of the Republic. Historians as different as Peter Brunt and Christian Meier envisage the history of the late Republic in the light of its end.<sup>895</sup> Such a teleological view has not remained unchallenged though. In *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic*, Eric Gruen protested vehemently against it, arguing that the institutions of the Republic and its political conventions fully functioned until Caesar's civil war.<sup>896</sup> Sulla's legislation, Gruen claims, largely endured and sustained a strong oligarchic establishment. He analyses the power of the great families, the social composition of the senate as well as the claims of the plebs and criminal trials in order to demonstrate that the fall of the Republic was by no means inevitable: 'Civil War caused the fall of the Republic – not vice versa.'<sup>897</sup>

Besides challenging the *communis opinio* on the end of the Republic, Gruen's study raises a general theoretical issue of historiography: 'The writing of history is forever plagued by the temptations of hindsight. Knowledge of the issue invariably, if unconsciously, becomes the starting point of the search of precedents.'<sup>898</sup> Trying to evade the 'retrospective fallacy', Gruen aims at reconstructing history from the point of view of the historical agents. This

---

<sup>894</sup> Cf. n. ??? ch. 8.

<sup>895</sup> Meier 1997; Brunt 1971; 1988: 1-92. For a succinct survey of approaches to the fall of the Roman Republic, see Morstein-Marx and Rosenstein 2006. See also the more recent contributions by Walter 2009 and Jehne 2009.

<sup>896</sup> Gruen 1974; see also the preface to the paperback edition (1995) in which Gruen contextualizes his emphasis on continuity in his experiences in the 60s and 70s: despite the revolutionary climate, felt with particular force in Berkeley, the political and social order proved stable. Although Gruen's book has not captured 'the citadel of *communis opinio*' (Shackleton-Bailey 1975: 437), some of his essential points have been taken up by other scholars; see the literature listed by Hölkeskamp 2009: 2 n. 5. For another discussion of the issue of teleology and the end of the Roman Republic, see Badian's polemical review (1990) of Meier's Caesar biography.

<sup>897</sup> Gruen 1974: 504.

<sup>898</sup> Gruen 1974: 449.

aspiration, among other points of *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic*, has attracted criticism: In a review entitled ‘Hamlet without the Prince’, Crawford notes:

Gruen persistently warns against the dangers of hindsight; this can of course be abused; but it is precisely the possession of hindsight which is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the historian. It is only in the light of what happened and in the course of an attempt to explain what happened that some earlier events emerge as important and some as trivial.<sup>899</sup>

By the same token, another reviewer insists: ‘Yet wisdom after the event is something which historians ought to exercise.’<sup>900</sup>

The debate triggered by *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* illustrates that the tension which this book has explored in ancient historiography also haunts modern historians. What is history, every historian must ask – is it the past as it was or as it could have been perceived by contemporaries, as Gruen seems to suggest; or is it rather, to follow his critics, the larger lines that can be made out only in hindsight? Both poles correspond to deep-seated desires, the first to our wish to connect with the past, the second to the attempt at mastering the vagaries of time in retrospect. The texts discussed in this book show that history always encapsulates both experience and teleology, albeit in very different balances. The combination of both is crucial to historical explanation: we need to know where history is heading, but also how it got there. In the words of Golo Mann: ‘The historian has always to try to do two different things simultaneously. He must swim with the stream of events, allowing himself to be carried along as though he had been present. He must from outside converge on his subject from various directions, a later, better-informed observer, and catechize it, yet never quite have it in the hollow of his hand.’<sup>901</sup>

## II. EXPERIENTIAL NARRATIVES IN CONTEMPORARY HISTORIOGRAPHY

While making a case for renouncing the benefit of hindsight, Gruen does not tap into narrative’s special capacity to restore presentness to the past present for which I have argued in the introduction: through its sequential character, narrative is conducive not only to representing experiences, but also to letting the reader re-experience the past in the frame of ‘as-if’. *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic*, on the other hand, while not without rhetorical adornment, is

---

<sup>899</sup> Crawford 1976: 214.

<sup>900</sup> Stockton 1977: 216.

<sup>901</sup> Mann 1976: 7 (in the author’s preface to the English translation).

rather analytical. Instead of giving a chronological account, Gruen discusses thematic aspects such as ‘political alliances and alignments’ and ‘discontents and violence’. This ties in with the emphasis on structure so pervasive in historiography at the time when Gruen was writing the book. That being said, not even at the peak of the influence of the Annales-school had narrative disappeared entirely as form of historiography.<sup>902</sup> In the last decades, a growing interest in agency counterbalancing the obsession with numbers and statistics has given narrative new prominence. More specifically, some historians consciously strive to restore presentness to the past. A case in point is Saul Friedländer’s *The Years of Extermination* (2007) which has been hailed not only for giving an integrated account of the Shoah, covering Germany as well as the world and shedding light on both perpetrators and victims, but also for its use of Jewish testimonies.<sup>903</sup> Strewn throughout the account are quotations from some twenty diarists. As Alon Confino notes, the diarists’ voices ‘are not used to bolster empirical evidence or to strengthen arguments about historical causality, but to insert a human dimension that ‘facts’ alone cannot quite capture. They create images in short stories and vignettes that are not so much connected to what comes before and after, as they are startling in their visualness.’<sup>904</sup> The testimonies of Jewish victims not only ‘tear through seamless interpretation and pierce the (mostly involuntary) smugness of scholarly detachment and “objectivity”,’ as Friedländer himself proclaims,<sup>905</sup> but also ‘endow the book with (what we feel is) a presence of the past,’ as Confino puts it.<sup>906</sup>

And yet, it must be noted that the goal of an experiential account easily jars with the agenda of modern historians. They face at least two problems with which ancient historians were less concerned: while the idea of development, either progress or decline, is not alien to antiquity, ancient historians did not hesitate to directly juxtapose different epochs.<sup>907</sup> The modern notion of history emerging around 1800 CE, on the other hand, is carried by an awareness of differences between ages. The discrepancy between present and past highlighted by Historicism makes the idea of a re-experience of the past through narrative at least more complex. This comes to the fore *ex negativo* in a reflection by Denig, a historian of the Pacific: ‘To catch the lost passions in places, history will have to be a little more artful than being a “non-fiction”. It will have to have, among other graces, a trust in and a sense of the continuities of living through different times,

---

<sup>902</sup> Carrard 1992 even makes a case for the relevance of narrative in the works of the Annales historians.

<sup>903</sup> See, for example, Browning 2009: 244, who calls the interspersing of Jewish accounts Friedländer’s ‘most significant methodological innovation’.

<sup>904</sup> Confino 2009: 209.

<sup>905</sup> Friedländer 2007: xxvi.

<sup>906</sup> Confino 2009: 218. See also Wulf Kansteiner 2009: 34-5.

<sup>907</sup> Cf. Grethlein 2010a: 281-90; 2011a.

despite all the transformations and translations that masquerade as discontinuities.<sup>908</sup>

Moreover, historians of most ages do not have at their disposal the wealth of ego-documents on which Friedländer can draw in his account of the Shoah. For such important mimetic devices as direct speech and introspection, the majority in our History Departments would have to rely on fiction. Ancient historians did not shy away from inventing words, thoughts and feelings for their characters. This is less shocking than it may seem at first sight: Thucydides' methodological reflections illustrate at least the claim that speeches were not randomly composed. I have further argued for a 'narrative reference'; even if direct speech and introspection do not match the actual words and thoughts, they help establish the openness of the past and thereby serve a referential function. That being said, the use of fictional devices is generally considered the privilege of the historical novel and clashes with the methods of modern historiography.<sup>909</sup> This has not deterred contemporary historians though from playing with fictional devices in order to make their narratives experiential. In the following, I will illustrate this through four works from the last three decades.

*Simon Schama, Citizens. A Chronicle of the French Revolution (1989)*

In a recent article, Monika Fludernik revisits her radical verdict in *Natural Narratology* that the genre of historiography eschews any degree of 'experientiality' and therefore does not qualify as narrative. After surveying various recent historiographic works, she concludes: 'As a summary of my journey into historiography, I can now report that experimental history writing, even at its most experience-focused, is still not particularly experiential.'<sup>910</sup> Fludernik correctly identifies a tension between 'experientiality' and 'the scholarly requirement of truthfulness and reliance on sources',<sup>911</sup> but the negative result of her investigation is at least partly due to the selection of works she takes into account: studies that focus on a single year and experiment with the spatialization of history such as Karl Schlögel's *Terror und Traum: Moskau 1937* (2008). As we have seen, however, the very aspect that Fludernik's sample texts try to discard, temporal sequence, is crucial to the experiential quality of narrative. This comes to the fore in my first example, *Citizens. A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (1989), a deliberate return to the narrative art of nineteenth century historiography. In the preface, Simon Schama points out the short-comings of

---

<sup>908</sup> Dening 2004: 43.

<sup>909</sup> See, for example, Berkhofer 1995: 68; Burke 2001: 289, who, while praising the integration of multiple viewpoints, the emphasis on the gap between narrative and the past and the mediation of structure with events in recent experimental historiography, is against 'the invention of someone's stream of consciousness'.

<sup>910</sup> Fludernik 2010: 69.

<sup>911</sup> Fludernik 2010: 69-70.

studies that analyse the French Revolution mainly through social and economic structures. Such works downplay ‘contingencies and unforeseen consequences’ as well as ‘individual agency’.<sup>912</sup> Schama bolsters his return to chronology and narrative theoretically with David Carr’s argument that already our experiences are structured as narratives<sup>913</sup> and muses: ‘Historians have been overconfident about the wisdom to be gained by distance, believing it somehow confers objectivity, one of those unattainable values in which they have placed so much faith. Perhaps there is something to be said for proximity.’<sup>914</sup>

Detailed accounts and vignettes render Schama’s account experiential. Take for example the introduction to the 1793 rising in the Vendée:

The little grain-market town of Machecoul lay twelve miles from the Atlantic. Just after dawn, on the eleventh of March 1793, seven-year-old Germain Bethius was woken by a dull, booming noise rather like the sound of an angry sea. But to his young ears it seemed to come not from the west but from the north, in the direction of the village of Saint-Philibert. The sound grew louder and he became frightened. At the soirées of women and children that helped pass the long winter evenings, some of the older countrywomen had made alarming prophecies of battles and bloodletting to be heralded by clouds bunched into sinister shapes and tinted with unnatural hues. As he peered into the thinning Vendéan morning mist, Germain thought he could make out such an apparition, darker than the fog and moving slowly over the fields to the town. His father, who was a thirty-two-year-old notary and member of the district administration, was still in bed when his son ran in to rouse him. ‘There’s a black, noisy cloud, Papa, and it’s coming to town,’ he told him.<sup>915</sup>

Schama specifies carefully the place and the time of the scene and focalizes the advance of the revolutionaries through the eyes of a contemporary, a young boy. That there was morning mist is of course not crucial for the uprising, and yet it helps the reader visualize the scene. The direct speech enhances the vividness of the account, which reads like a passage from a historical novel. However, as indicated in the endnotes, Schama relies on an account of Germain Bethius quoted in Chassin’s *La Préparation de la Guerre de Vendée 1789–1793* (1892). The delightful read of *Citizens. A Chronicle of the French Revolution* is built on painstaking scholarship.

---

<sup>912</sup> Schama 1989: xiv.

<sup>913</sup> Schama 1989: xiv-xv.

<sup>914</sup> Schama 1989: xiii.

<sup>915</sup> Schama 1989: 690-1.

A comparison of Schama's narrative with his source reveals the liberties he has taken:<sup>916</sup> Bethius, who underlines that, despite his young age at the time and the temporal gap, his memory is still very vivid (a claim that would not fail to arouse suspicion in a more critical historian), indeed compares the noise he heard with the sea which, however, is labelled not as 'angry', but as 'soulevée par la tempête'. There is nothing on the direction from which the noise came in Bethius' account; instead, he notes that the armed troops approached from all sides. The prophecies are mentioned by Bethius, but the 'older countrywomen' as their source are conjectured by Schama. Bethius' memoir features the conversation with his father; and yet, Schama has added the bedroom and transformed the report from indirect to direct speech. The core of Schama's narrative thus rests on a document which has clearly been adorned: in particular small details have been added for an *effet de réel*. Besides building on scholarship, the delightful read of *Citizens. A Chronicle of the French Revolution* hinges on a narrative polish that is on the verge of transgressing the borderline between history and fiction.

From time to time, the voice of the narrator comes to the fore in judgments, analytical passages, e.g. on the French economy before the Revolution (1789-94), and in explanations of customs and objects probably unfamiliar to his readers. By and large, however, a multi-focal 'master-narrative' consisting of numerous stories like the one just mentioned, internally focalized through prominent and ordinary contemporaries, gives the reader the sense of witnessing the French Revolution while it is unfolding. Schama backs up these stories through references to diaries, letters and other documents listed in the endnotes. *Citizens. A Chronicle of the French Revolution* hence demonstrates how a historian can use traditional narrative to sketch a gripping account of the past while, with some qualification, sticking to the critical standards of his discipline. Schama seems to have felt strongly, however, the constraints of these standards which he already pushed to their limits in *Citizens*. His subsequent book, *Dead Certainties. Unwarranted Speculations* (1991), reconstructs the death of General James Wolfe, killed at the battle of Quebec in 1759, and the trial of John Webster, a Harvard professor of chemistry, for the murder of George Parkman. In the afterword, Schama labels both stories as 'works of the imagination, not scholarship'.<sup>917</sup> The desire to write up dialogues 'from my own understanding of the sources as to how such a scene might have taken place'<sup>918</sup>, perfectly acceptable for the ancient historian, ultimately leads beyond the modern academic discipline of history.<sup>919</sup>

---

<sup>916</sup> Cf. Chassin 1892: 336-7.

<sup>917</sup> Schama 1991: 320.

<sup>918</sup> Schama 1991: 327.

<sup>919</sup> Cf. Doležel 2007: 170-84 for a comparison of *Citizens. A Chronicle of the French Revolution* and *Dead Certainties. Unwarranted Speculations* as a historiographic vs. a fictional approach towards reconstructing the past.

Robert A. Rosenstone, *The Mirror in the Stone* (1988)

While Schama's *Chronicle of the French Revolution* is indebted to the tradition of nineteenth century narrative historiography, my second example, *The Mirror in the Shrine* (1988), is more experimental. In his investigation of the American encounter with Japan, Robert A. Rosenstone focuses on what Americans learned from Japan. For this, he explores the biographies of three Americans who lived in Japan at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The book is divided into five chapters, namely 'Landing', 'Searching', 'Loving', 'Learning', and 'Remembering', each of which features separate sections on the three Americans. Rosenstone thus abandons a sequential account and chooses a structure that is reminiscent of the cuts and changes of scene in films. Within the individual sequences, however, there are highly mimetic accounts. To give a random example from the chapter 'Learning':

Griffis walks inside the walls of the old castle. You can find him here often, in seasons of mud or snow, under sun, clouds, or the autumn moon. From the ramparts he gazes at the vast sprawl of black roofs that are the city. In overgrown courtyards he strolls in a *meditative* mood, never committing thoughts to paper. But one November day, at the height of the conflict with the Mombusho, the image of far-off Fuji, the twist of autumn trees and dying vines against a castle wall, and the sharp air pierce him with the fullness of the moment: *Glorious weather, fine health, high spirits.*<sup>920</sup>

The devices by which Rosenstone makes his account experiential are obvious: the use of the present tense, the apostrophe to the reader, the focalization through the eyes of the character, the literary language. In a later comment on *The Mirror in the Shrine*, Rosenstone notes his frustration with earlier, more conventional drafts: 'Somehow the writing did not convey what I wanted to say about the past. Did not let me get close enough to my characters. Did not let me see the world through their eyes, smell it through their noses.'<sup>921</sup> However, Rosenstone's use of fictional devices is strictly controlled, as the italics signal that these words are taken from Griffis's diary, the reference being given in an endnote, thereby indicating that Rosenstone's account is not purely fictional. Here, as in many other passages, fictionalization rests on quotes from diaries and other sources that are directly integrated into the narrative, marked only by italics.

Moreover, scattered throughout the text the reader finds passages that interrupt the mimetic narrative and draw attention to the author, as when he considers the lack of sources:

---

<sup>920</sup> Rosenstone 1988: 203-4.

<sup>921</sup> Rosenstone 2004: 4.

Now the difficulties begin. Not for Morse, but for his biographer. The problem is sources—the journal he kept in Japan, the letters written home. Neither reveal what you really want to know; neither give enough detail, or the right kind of detail, to fill out the story that lies behind the words, the story that the biographer wishes to tell, of how and why Japan caused this American scientist to switch from a lifelong interest in the natural world to a passionate interest in the artifacts and customs of the human world. Easy enough to speculate on causes.<sup>922</sup>

The voice of the author is particularly strong at the beginning and the ending of the book when Rosenstone draws parallels between his characters' and his own experiences in Japan. Fictionalization in *Mirror in the Shrine* is thus not only limited to filling out the picture we gain from the sources, but is also balanced by the marking of the author and his role.

*Keith Hopkins, A World Full of Gods: Pagans, Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire (1999)*

The use of fictional devices is bolder in Keith Hopkins's book *A World Full of Gods: Pagans, Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire* (1999), a work that starts from the question, 'what was it like to be there?'<sup>923</sup> In order to make us 're-experience the thoughts, feelings, practices and images of religious life in the Roman Empire, in which orthodox Christianity emerged in all its vibrant variety',<sup>924</sup> Hopkins has designed a book with the structure of 'a triple helix of multi-coloured and interwoven strands'.<sup>925</sup> Besides conventional chapters with historical analysis, there are chapters featuring time-travelers reporting from Pompeii and other places, a TV play covering the sect of Qumran, and a fictional letter from a convert to Christianity. In addition, the author's correspondence with real and fictive colleagues punctuates the account and provides a polyphonous reflection on its form and content.

The experiential quality for which Hopkins is striving is slightly different from the mimesis we have found in ancient historians. We have seen that in focusing on motives and actions Thucydides and others emphasize the openness of the future for the historical characters, thereby making readers view specific situations from their perspective. Hopkins, on the other hand, wants to give his readers an impression of what it was like to be in an ancient city. He is not so much interested in specific historical events as in the general circumstances of

---

<sup>922</sup> Rosenstone 1988: 121-2.

<sup>923</sup> Hopkins 1999: 2.

<sup>924</sup> Hopkins 1999: 6.

<sup>925</sup> Hopkins 1999.

everyday life. In the case of *A World Full of Gods*, narrative serves not political, but sociocultural, history.

Critics disagree about whether Hopkins's combination of various forms and his play with fictional elements succeed. Whereas, for example, Hartmut Leppin writes about the first chapter, featuring time travel, that 'it gives the reader a vivid and highly suggestive introduction to the alien life in ancient cities',<sup>926</sup> G. W. Bowersock 'cannot help wondering whether in any substantive way these travel narratives are any more or less instructive than a conventional historiographical account.'<sup>927</sup> From the angle of my argument, Hopkins's blurring of the borderline between history and fiction is noteworthy. Hopkins takes far more liberty with fictional elements than Schama and Rosenstone and also most ancient historians. The time-travelers, Martha and James, for example, are freely invented characters. That being said, the fictional elements are strongly marked: while it is often hard to determine where ancient historians rely on sources and where they are making things up, the very idea of time-traveling marks the fictional character of the reports from the ancient world. Moreover, Hopkins backs up details by naming in endnotes the sources and scholarly discussions that underlie his story. For instance, he adds to Martha's report about graffiti and painted advertisements a reference to such inscriptions in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*.<sup>928</sup> Hopkins thus employs fictional elements in a way that is simultaneously more extensive and more controlled than what we find in ancient historiography.

*Jonathan Walker, Pistols! Treason! Murder! The Rise and Fall of a  
Master Spy (2007)*

The execution of Antonio Foscarini in 1622 CE and his posthumous exoneration only nine months later have exercised a lasting fascination on historians interested in the Republic of Venice. Little attention has been paid, though, to one of the witnesses against Foscarini, Gerolamo Vano, a man who worked as a spy for the State Inquisition. In the 'first true work of "punk history"',<sup>929</sup> *Pistols! Treason! Murder! The Rise and Fall of a Master Spy* (2007), Jonathan Walker draws mostly on the reports of Vano stored in the archive of the Inquisitors of State to elucidate the world of spies in Venice at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Like Rosenstone, Walker weaves into his narrative excerpts from the sources, marked only by a different typeface, and, like Schama and Hopkins, he

---

<sup>926</sup> Leppin 2002: 153: 'Durch diesen verfremdenden Kunstgriff gelingt es H[opkins], den Leser plastisch und lebendig in die Fremdartigkeit des antiken Stadtlebens einzuführen.'

<sup>927</sup> G. W. Bowersock 2000: 764.

<sup>928</sup> Hopkins 1999: 12 with n. 3.

<sup>929</sup> McCalman in a blurb on the front cover of Walker 2007.

backs up his account by references to scholarly discussion in a notes section at the end of the book. Even more than Hopkins, Walker capitalizes on the technique of collage. Interspersed among narrative and descriptive chapters is the transcript of a pub crawl that takes Jon, probably identical with the author, and two other historians through the night life of Venice. In addition, *Pistols! Treason! Murder!* contains comic-style illustrations ranging from single frames to small stories that complement the main narrative. The interweaving with the narrative is particularly tight in the case of a sequence of photographs placed in the lower right margin of the odd-numbered pages of the chapter that deals with Vano's last triumph before his death. The sequential close-ups of the firing of a wheel-lock pistol parallels the narrative of the shooting of one of Vano's victims and thereby visualizes the tension and its dissolution in the plot.

The sources on which Walker draws are very terse and reveal next to nothing about the processes of Vano's consciousness. Walker frequently elaborates on the problem of deriving a coherent narrative from the reports of Vano. Nonetheless, the quotes from Vano's reports as well as the comic strips endow *Pistols! Treason! Murder!* with great vividness. Even the frequent authorial interventions declaring uncertainty about the actual events and discussions of different possible scenarios, in one case eight that are explicitly numbered,<sup>930</sup> contribute to the experiential quality of the account. What in most narratives would undermine the mimesis here supports it: not unlike in the conspiracy narratives in Tacitus and Sallust, the ambiguity mimics the uncertainties that the characters had to grapple with. In weighing different scenarios the readers engage in an activity similar to contemporaries speculating about an impenetrable net of schemes and intrigues.<sup>931</sup>

#### *Experience in ancient and modern historiography*

Together with *Citizens*, *A Mirror in the Stone* and *A World Full of Gods*, Walker's book tells loudly against Fludernik's claim that historiography is averse to 'experientiality'. This may be true for certain branches of historiography that lean towards the social sciences, but there have always been historians eager to render the past present through narrative. While Schama's history of the French Revolution attests to the ongoing fascination of classical narrative, the works of Rosenstone, Hopkins and Walker indicate that recent trends in theory have inspired experimental narratives designed to make the past tangible. Experience is not only an important aspect of ancient historiography, it is also a goal of some of today's theoretically most sophisticated historians. That being said, the conditions

---

<sup>930</sup> Walker 2007: 116-17.

<sup>931</sup> Walker 2007: 93, explicitly compares spies with historians, both trying 'to discern meaning by making connections.' See also Walker 2004: 131.

for the attempt to render the past present have changed. I have already mentioned two differences which my samples have confirmed. In *Citizens*, for example, Schama spells out ‘the soirées of women and children’. The implicit explanation that women and children spent the evenings without men familiarizes the readers with an alien feature and alerts them to a difference between past and present.

More strikingly, all my sample texts experiment, if in different ways, with fictional devices. While ancient historians had no compunction about inventing direct speech and introspection in accordance with the known facts, the modern authors I have touched upon either strongly mark fictionalization or back it up by sources as far as possible. Other historians have gone further, for example Bryant Simon who freely supplied scanty data with fictive elements in order to narrate a case of lynching in Blacksburg in 1912:

I was interested in fiction as a way to explore the past, not as a way to distort or misrepresent the past ... I was tempted by how fiction gave me the chance to wander through the heads of any historical characters; I was tempted by the simultaneous ambiguity and certainty of fiction; and finally, I was tempted by the interior perspective of fiction and interior perspective of people’s private thoughts and anxieties.<sup>932</sup>

While being published in an academic journal, this experiment clearly goes beyond what most historians would accept.

A third point that is striking in many contemporary attempts to make the past present is the mixing of different modes of representation. Ancient historians interweave narrative passages with description, analysis and reflection, but Hopkins and Walker push the generic polyphony further. Mimetic narrative is only one element beside letters, interviews and comic-strips. Only in combination with other modes of representation, it seems, is narrative capable of making the past tangible. One point makes this development particularly interesting for my study: collages allow complementing the focus on the agents’ viewpoint with a look at the larger frame; this conforms with my thesis that history is to be found in the tension between experience and teleology.

A fourth point also deserves mention: Ancient historians interrupt the mimesis of their narratives through their narratorial voices, but while Thucydides and others thereby tend to affirm their authority, such historians as Rosenstone, Hopkins and Walker emphatically flag their narratorial *persona* in order to unveil the gap between *res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum*. The contributions to an anthology entitled *Experiments in Rethinking History* (2004) are very diverse, but nearly all contributors extensively reflect on the process of their own writing, thereby highlighting the constructedness of what we are reading. As strong as the desire for mimesis is, its mediation is always present. That there is nonetheless a

---

<sup>932</sup> Simon 2004: 181-2.

strong urge to make the past present attests to the sway of the notion of experience over history.

### III. HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION

The efforts of contemporary historians to make the past present are noteworthy, but the most thought-provoking attempts to do justice to the experiential aspect of history may stem from authors of fiction. Prominence of narrative, liberty to invent speeches and uninhibited access to the minds of the characters align the modern historical novel with ancient historiography. In the last thirty or forty years a good number of historical novels has been published that are not only based on meticulous research, but also feature a high degree of reflection on their own fictionality as well as on history. While historians have begun to experiment with fictional devices, authors of fiction have developed a strong interest in the theoretical issue of how to represent the past. Linda Hutcheon has labelled such works as ‘historiographic metafiction’: ‘Its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (*historiographic metafiction*) is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the form and contents of the past.’<sup>933</sup> Historiographic metafiction, as understood by Hutcheon, challenges both realist concepts of representation and textualist approaches which strictly separate representation and reality.<sup>934</sup> Instead, such novels as *Flaubert’s Parrot* and *Famous Last Words* put forward the belief that the past really took place, but is only accessible in the form of language.<sup>935</sup> In their narratives of historical persons and events, Julian Barnes, Salman Rushdie and other authors fully exploit the liberties of the novelist while simultaneously highlighting the constructedness of any account of the past.

A most recent novel illustrates nicely how far methodological reflections can extend in historiographic metafiction. Laurent Binet’s *HHhH* (2009) focuses on the life of Heydrich, especially his assassination in 1942. The narrative weaves together the story of the *SS-Obergruppenführer* and director of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamts* with the narrator’s own life and is frequently pierced by reflections on the relation between fiction and history. Consider for instance:

Nothing is more artificial in a historical narrative than these dialogues reconstructed on the basis of more or less first-hand witnesses, under the pretext of bringing to life the dead pages of the past. Stylistically, this device is similar to the figure of hypotyposis, which consists of rendering a description so vividly that the reader has the feeling of seeing it with his

---

<sup>933</sup> Hutcheon 1988: 5. See also Engler and Müller 1994; Nünning 1995; 1999; Onega 1995; Elias 2001; Heilmann and Llewellyn 2007.

<sup>934</sup> Hutcheon 1988: 125.

<sup>935</sup> Hutcheon 1988: 114; 146.

eyes. When there is an attempt to revive a conversation, the result is often forced and the effect is the opposite of what has been desired: I see too clearly the thick strings of the procedure, I hear too loudly the voice of the author who wants to find again those of the historical figures whom he strives to appropriate.<sup>936</sup>

A *differentia specifica* between historiography and historical novel, the liberty to render action in direct speech, is here the object of the critical reflection of the narrator of a historical novel. Note that the narrator takes issue with the conventions of his own genre! Besides narrating the past, works like *HHhH* also reflect on how to approach the past, blurring the borderline between history and fiction.

In *HHhH*, the narratorial voice is so conspicuous and the reflective mode so dominant that the mimetic appeal of the narrative is continuously undercut. Another French novel on the same troubled period, however, demonstrates the capacity of historiographic metafiction for experiential narrative. In *Les Bienveillantes*, Jonathan Littell narrates the history of the Third Reich in the form of the memoir of a fictive SS-officer, who is half German, half French and homosexual. While being arty, sensitive and cultivated, Max Aue is also an incestuous matricide and involved in the most atrocious NS-crimes. *Les Bienveillantes* have proven highly controversial: on the one hand, they were awarded the two highest literature awards in France and sold more than 700,000 copies in the first year; on the other, they received devastating reviews and were condemned for being Nazi kitsch and blatant revisionism. I have elsewhere argued that Littell's novel ought to be taken seriously as a narrative that simultaneously attempts to represent the horror of the Shoah and unveils the gulf separating itself from the past.<sup>937</sup> The Aeschylean intertext – Max Aue is stylized as an Orestes *redivivus* – closely entangles the hero's fictive life with the political history of Nazi-Germany and expresses the atrocity of the genocide by blending it together with the transgression of matricide, while also, together with a wealth of other intertexts, hyper-coding the narrative and thereby highlighting its fictional status.

For my argument here, the combination of intricate self-reflection with a strong mimetic grip is worth considering. *Les Bienveillantes* are strongly experiential as the story of Nazi-Germany is narrated from the perspective of the

---

<sup>936</sup> Binet 2009: 33: 'Rien n'est plus artificiel, dans un récit historique, que ces dialogues reconstitués à partir de témoignages plus ou moins de première main, sous prétexte d'insuffler de la vie aux pages mortes du passé. En stylistique, cette démarche s'apparente à la figure de l'hypotypose, qui consiste à rendre un tableau si vivant qu'il donne au lecteur l'impression de l'avoir sous les yeux. Quand il s'agit de faire revivre une conversation, le résultat est souvent forcé, et l'effet obtenu est l'inverse de celui désiré: je vois trop les grosses ficelles du procédé, j'entends trop la voix de l'auteur qui veut retrouver celle des figures historiques qu'il tente de s'approprier.'

<sup>937</sup> Grethlein 2009a; 2010c; 2011a.

character Max Aue. The mimetic dimension is particularly striking in some of the more experimental chapters. Stream-of-consciousness technique, for example, makes the account of Stalingrad highly experiential: the aimless rambling of the narrative mimics the perspective of the starving and increasingly weak-willed Aue whom a head injury finally deprives of any sense of orientation. Even more disturbing is the extensive rendering of Aue's fever phantasies in 'Air'. Many readers have taken offence at the highly graphic and repulsive pornographic passages permeating this chapter and also surfacing in other parts of the novel. Such transgressive features, however, not only continue the tradition of Marquis de Sade and Bataille,<sup>938</sup> but more specifically, through the entanglement of Aue's incest and matricide with the genocide of the Nazis, serve to express aesthetically the moral abyss of the 'Endlösung'.<sup>939</sup> Together with the wealth of facts and self-referential quality, the experiential appeal makes Littell's novel as intriguing as controversial.

This epilogue has, in the form of a few spotlights, considered contemporary exercises in experiential narrative. It is perhaps not incidental that my survey ends with a Shoah narrative. The fundamental issues of historical representation, such as its perspectivity, ethical implications and ultimate failure to map the past fully, are exacerbated in the case of the Shoah. For no other time does the point of view matter more, towards no other dead is felt an equally strong debt and no other event has proven more elusive. The impossibility of doing justice to the experiences of the historical agents is as urgent as the need to do so. The mimetic efforts of ancient historians investigated in this book do not map directly onto the experiments launched by modern authors of historiography and fiction. As we have seen, the methodological standards of history as an academic discipline, the postmodern play with forms and genres and the scepticism towards reference have created new challenges that contemporary authors have to take into account. That being said, not only is my exploration of ancient historiography at least partly inspired by a current theoretical debate, but the works of Herodotus and his successors are without doubt still 'good to think with'. The concept of a 'narrative reference', for example, stems from an attempt to grasp how ancient historians could align the use of fictional devices with their quest for truthfulness. Here as in other cases, the relation between antiquity and the present is multi-faceted, including continuity and similarity as well as difference and rupture. Greek and Roman historiography provides a background that sheds new light on issues historians are currently grappling with just as the present raises questions that allow us to see the narratives of ancient authors in new light.

---

<sup>938</sup> Cf. Mendelsohn 2009: 21.

<sup>939</sup> See Grethlein 2010c: 575-8.

- Abbott, P. H. (2005) 'The future of all narrative futures', in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, eds. J. Phelan and P. J. Rabinowitz. Malden: 529-41.
- Ahl, F. (1984) 'The art of safe criticism in Greece and Rome' *AJPh* 105: 174-208.
- Ajouri, P. (2009) *Erzählen nach Darwin. Die Krise der Teleologie im literarischen Realismus. Friedrich Theodor Vischer und Gottfried Keller*. Berlin.
- Alheit, L. (1919) 'Charakterdarstellung bei Sallust' *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum* 22: 17-53.
- Allan, R. J. (2011) 'The historical present in Thucydides: capturing the case of αἰρεῖ and λαμβάνει', in *The Historical Present in Thucydides: Semantics and Narrative Function*, ed. J. Lalot. Leiden: ???
- Allison, J. W. (1990) 'Dissimulatio: Tiberius or Tacitus?', in *Conflict, Antithesis and the Ancient Historian*, ed. J. W. Allison. Columbus: 133-55.
- Alonso-Núñez, J. M. (2002) *The Idea of Universal History in Greece. From Herodotus to the Age of Augustus*. Amsterdam.
- Anderson, A. R. (1930) 'Bucephalas and his legend' *AJPh* 51: 1-21.
- Ankersmit, F. R. (1994) *History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor*. Berkeley.
- Ankersmit, F. R. (2001) *Historical Representation*. Stanford.
- Ankersmit, F. R. (2005) *Sublime Historical Experience*. Stanford.
- Archambault, P. J. (1986) 'Shifts of narrative level in Saint Augustine's Confessions' *AugStud* 17: 109-17.
- Arend, W. (1933) *Die typischen Szenen bei Homer*. Berlin.
- Armayer, O. K. (1978) 'Herodotus' catalogue of the Persian empire' *TAPhA* 108: 1-9.
- Armstrong, J. I. (1958) 'The arming motif in the Iliad' *AJPh* 79: 337-54.
- Aron, R. (1938) *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire: essai sur les limites de l'objectivité historique*. Paris.
- Asheri, D. (1993) 'Erodoto e Bacide. Considerazioni sulla feda di Erodoto negli oracoli (Hdt. VIII 77)', in *La Profezia nel Mondo Antico*, ed. M. Sordi. Milan: 63-76.
- Ashley, K. M. (1994) *Autobiography & Postmodernism*. Amherst.
- Astin, A. E. (1967) *Scipio Aemilianus*. Oxford.
- Aubrión, E. (1985) *Rhétorique et histoire chez Tacite*. Metz.
- Auerbach, E. (1953) [1946] *Mimesis. The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Tr. W. R. Trask. Princeton.
- Auerbach, E. (1967) 'Figura', in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur romanischen Philologie*, ed. G. Konrad. Bern: 55-92.
- Auffarth, C. (2009) 'Imago mortis – imago vitae: Senecas Aufführung von Sokrates' Tod – Repräsentation, Performance, Theatralität', in *Antike Mythen*, eds. U. Dill and C. Walde. Berlin: 532-62.

- Avenarius, G. (1956) *Lukians Schrift zur Geschichtsschreibung*. Meisenheim am Glan.
- Axt-Piscalar, C. (2009) 'Offenbarung als Geschichte – Die Neubegründung der Geschichtstheologie in der Theologie Wolfhart Pannenberg', in *Heil und Geschichte. Die Geschichtsbezogenheit des Heils und das Problem der Heilsgeschichte in der biblischen Tradition und in der theologischen Deutung*, eds. J. Frey, S. Krauter and H. Lichtenberger Tübingen: 725-43.
- Azoulay, V. (2004) 'Exchange as entrapment: mercenary Xenophon?', in *The Long March. Xenophon and the Ten Thousand*, ed. R. L. Fox. New Haven: 289-304.
- Babbitt, F. C. (1936) *Plutarch's Moralia*. IV. Cambridge, MA.
- Badian, E. (1990) 'Review: C. Meier, *Caesar's Gnomon* 62: 22-39.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981) 'Epic and Novel: towards a methodology for the study of the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. M. Holquist, Tr. C. Emerson and M. Holquist. Austin: 3-40.
- Bakker, E. (1993) 'Discourse and performance. Involvement, visualization and "presence" in Homeric poetry' *ClAnt* 12: 1-29.
- Bakker, E. (1997) 'Verbal aspect and mimetic description in Thucydides', in *Grammar as Interpretation. Greek Literature in its Linguistic Contexts*, ed. E. Bakker. Leiden: 7-54.
- Bal, M. (2007) *Narratologie. Essais sur la signification narrative dans quatre romans modernes*. Paris.
- Banz, R. (1904) *Die Würdigung Ciceros in Sallusts Geschichte der catilinarischen Verschwörung*. Einsiedeln.
- Baragwanath, E. (2008) *Motivation and Narrative in Herodotus*. Oxford.
- Barker, E. (2006) 'Paging the oracle: interpretation, identity and performance in Herodotus' History' *G&R* 53: 1-28.
- Baroni, R. (2010) 'Ce que l'intrigue ajoute au temps' *Poétique* 163 361-82.
- Barthes, R. (2002) [1968] 'L'effet de réel', in *Oeuvres complètes (III)*. Paris: 25-32.
- Bartsch, S. (1994) *Actors in the Audience. Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian*. Cambridge.
- Batstone, W. (1986) 'Incerta pro certis. An interpretation of Sallust *Bellum Catilinae* 48.4-49.4' *Ramus* 15: 105-21.
- Batstone, W. (1988) 'The antithesis of virtue. Sallust's *synkrisis* and the crisis of the Late Republic' *ClAnt* 7: 1-29.
- Batstone, W. (1990) 'Intellectual conflict and mimesis in Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*', in *Conflict, Antithesis, and the Ancient Historian*, ed. J. W. Allison. Columbus: 112-32.
- Baxter, R. T. S. (1972) 'Virgil's influence on Tacitus in books 1 and 2 of the *Annals*' *CPh* 67: 246-69.
- Beck, M. (2007) 'Plutarch', in *Time in Ancient Greek Literature*, eds. I. de Jong

- and R. Nünlist. Leiden: 397-411.
- Beneker, J. (2005) 'Thematic correspondences in Plutarch's *Lives of Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus*', in *The Statesman in Plutarch's Works. Vol. II: The Statesman in Plutarch's Greek and Roman Lives*, eds. L. de Blois, J. Bons, T. Kessels and D. M. Schenkeveld. Leiden: 315-25.
- Berkhofer, R. F. (1995) *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse*. London.
- Bernstein, M. A. (1994) *Foregone Conclusions. Against Apocalyptic History*. Berkeley.
- Betensky, A. (1978) 'Neronian style, Tacitean content: the use of ambiguous confrontations in the *Annals*' *Latomus* 37: 419-35.
- Billerbeck, M. (1991) 'Die dramatische Kunst des Tacitus' *ANRW* II.33.4: 2752-71.
- Binet, L. (2009) *HHhH*. Paris.
- Bischoff, H. (1932) *Der Warner bei Herodot*. Diss. Marburg.
- Bleckmann, B. (2002) *Die römische Nobilität im Ersten Punischen Krieg. Untersuchungen zur aristokratischen Konkurrenz in der Republik*. Berlin.
- Bleicken, J. (1995) *Gedanken zum Untergang der römischen Republik*. Stuttgart.
- Blumenberg, H. (1973) *Der Prozeß der theoretischen Neugierde*. Frankfurt.
- Boedeker, D. (1988) 'Protesilaos and the end of Herodotus' *Histories' ClAnt* 7: 30-48.
- Boedeker, D. (2002) 'Epic heritage and mythical patterns in Herodotus', in *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, eds. E. Bakker, I. de Jong and H. van Wees. Leiden: 97-116.
- Boesche, R. (1987) 'The politics of pretence: Tacitus and the political theory of despotism' *HPTH* 8: 189-210.
- Bolgiani, F. (1956) *La conversione di S. Agostino e l' VIIIo libro delle 'Confessioni'*. Torino.
- Bollansée, J. (2005) 'Historians of Agathocles of Samus. Polybius on writers of historical monographs', in *The Shadow of Polybius. Intertextuality as a Research Tool in Greek Historiography*, eds. G. Schepens and J. Bollansée. Leuven: 237-54.
- Bornitz, H.-F. (1968) *Herodot-Studien. Beiträge zum Verständnis der Einheit des Geschichtswerkes*. Berlin.
- Bowersock, G. W. (2000) 'Early christianity as historical' *JRA* 13: 763-6.
- Brachtendorf, J. (2005) *Augustinus' Confessiones*. Darmstadt.
- Bradley, P. J. (2001) 'Irony and the narrator in Xenophon's *Anabasis*', in *Essays in Honor of Gordon Williams. Twenty-five Years at Yale*, eds. E. Thylawsky and C. G. Weiss. New Haven: 59-84.
- Braun, T. (2004) 'Xenophon's dangerous liaisons', in *The Long March. Xenophon and the Ten Thousand*, ed. R. L. Fox. New Haven: 97-130.
- Brenk, F. E. (1992) 'Plutarch's *life Markos Antonios*: a literary and cultural study'

- ANRW II.33.6: 4347-469.
- Brewer, W. F. (1996) 'The nature of narrative suspense and the problem of rereading', in *Suspense: Conceptualizations, Theoretical Analyses, and Empirical Explorations*, eds. P. Vorderer, H. J. Wulff and M. Friedrichsen. Mahwah, NJ: 107-27.
- Bringmann, K. (1972) 'Sallusts Umgang mit der historischen Wahrheit in seiner Darstellung der catilinarischen Verschwörung' *Philologus* 116: 98-113.
- Bringmann, K. (1977) 'Weltherrschaft und innere Krise Roms im Spiegel der Geschichtsschreibung des zweiten und ersten Jahrhunderts v. Chr.' *A&A* 23: 28-49.
- Brockmeier, J. (2001) 'From the End to the Beginning. Retrospective Teleology in Autobiography', in *Narrative and Identity. Studies in Autobiographie, Self and Culture*, eds. J. Brockmeier and D. Carbaugh. Amsterdam: 247-82.
- Brooks, P. (1984) *Reading for the Plot. Design and Intention in Narrative*. Oxford.
- Browning, C. (2009) 'Evocation, analysis, and the "Crisis of Liberalism"' *History and Theory* 48: 238-47.
- Brownson, C. L. (1998) [1922] *Xenophon. Anabasis*. Cambridge, MA.
- Bruner, J. S. (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, MA.
- Bruner, J. S. (1990) *Acts of Meaning*. Cambridge, MA.
- Bruner, J. S. (2002) *Making Stories. Law, Literature, Life*. Cambridge, MA.
- Brunt, P. A. (1971) *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic*. London.
- Brunt, P. A. (1988) *The Fall of the Roman Republic. And Related Essays*. Oxford.
- Bubner, R. (1989) *Ästhetische Erfahrung*. Frankfurt.
- Buchheit, V. (1968) 'Augustinus unter dem Feigenbaum (zu *Conf.* VIII).' *VChr* 22: 257-71.
- Büchner, K. (1960) *Sallust*. Heidelberg.
- Bühler, K. (1934) *Sprachtheorie. Die Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache*. Jena.
- Burckhardt (1918)???
- Burke, K. (1961) *The Rhetoric of Religion. Studies in Logology*. Berkeley.
- Burke, P. (2001) 'History of events and the revival of narrative', in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. P. Burke. Cambridge: 283-300.
- Butterfield, H. (1931) *The Whig Interpretation of History*. London.
- Cancik-Lindemaier, H. (2006) 'Lucius Annaeus Seneca', in *Von Atheismus bis Zensur: Römische Lektüren in kulturwissenschaftlicher Hinsicht*, eds. H. Harich-Schwarzbauer and B. von Reibnitz. Würzburg: 297-304.
- Cancik-Lindemaier, H. and H. Cancik (1986) 'Zensur und Gedächtnis. Zu Tacitus, *Annales* IV 32-36' *AU* 29 (4): 16-35.
- Canfora, L. (1993) *Studi di storia della storiografia*. Bari.
- Caputo, J. and M. J. Scanlon (eds.) (2005) *Augustine and Postmodernism. Confessions and Circumfession*. Bloomington.

- Carney, E. (2000a) *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*. Norman.
- Carney, E. (2000b) 'Artifice and Alexander history', in *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction*, eds. A. B. Bosworth and E. J. Baynham. Oxford: 263-85.
- Carr, D. (1986) *Time, Narrative, and History: Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy*. Bloomington.
- Carr, D. (2006) 'The reality of history', in *Meaning and Representation in History*, ed. J. Rüsen. New York: 123-36.
- Carrard, P. (1992) *Poetics of the New History. French Historical Discourse from Braudel to Chartier*. London.
- Cartledge, P. and E. Greenwood (2002) 'Herodotus as a critic: truth, fiction, polarity', in *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, eds. E. Bakker, I. de Jong and H. van Wees. Leiden: 351-71.
- Cary, E. (1914-27) *Dio's Roman History*. I-IX. London.
- Cavallin, S. (1947) 'Avant Zama. Tite-Live XXX 29-31' *Eranos* 45: 25-36.
- Cavallin, S. (1948) 'Nochmals "Avant Zama". II' *Eranos* 46: 64-71.
- Cawkwell, G. L. (1976) 'Agesilaus and Sparta' *CQ* 26: 62-84.
- Cayré, F. (1951) 'La conversion de saint Augustin: le "tolle, lege" des Confessions.' *Année théologique* 12: 145-51, 244-52.
- Chassin, C.-L. (1892) *La préparation de la Guerre de Vendée 1789-1793. III*. Paris.
- Christ, K. (1994) *Caesar. Annäherungen an einen Diktator* Munich.
- Christ, M. R. (1994) 'Herodotean kings and historical inquiry' *ClAnt* 13: 167-202.
- Clarke, K. (1999) *Between Geography and History. Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World*. Oxford.
- Clarke, K. (2001) 'An island nation: re-reading Tacitus' *Agricola*' *JRS* 91: 94-112.
- Clarke, K. (2002) 'In arto et inglorius labor: Tacitus' anti-history', in *Representations of Empire: Rome and the Mediterranean World*, eds. A. K. Bowman, H. M. Cotton, M. Goodman and S. Price. Oxford: 83-103.
- Cobet, J. (1971) *Herodots Exkurse und die Frage der Einheit seines Werkes*. Wiesbaden.
- Cobet, J. (1977) 'Wann wurde Herodots Darstellung der Perserkriege publiziert?' *Hermes* 105: 2-27.
- Cohen, A. (1995) 'Alexander and Achilles – Macedonians and "Myceneans"', in *Zu Alexander dem Großen. Festschrift G. Wirth, I-II*, eds. W. Will and J. Heinrichs. Amsterdam: 657-92.
- Confino, A. (2009) 'Narrative form and historical sensation: On Saul Friedländer's *The Years of Extermination*' *History and Theory* 48: 199-219.
- Connor, W. R. (1985) 'Narrative discourse in Thucydides', in *The Greek Historians. Literature and History. Papers Presented to A. E. Raubitschek*, ed. M. H. Jameson. Stanford: 1-17.

- Connors, C. (1994) 'Famous last words: authorship and death in the *Satyricon* and Neronian Rome', in *Reflections of Nero. Culture, history & representation*, eds. J. Elsner and J. Masters. London: 225-35.
- Corcella, A. (1984) *Erodoto e l'analogia*. Palermo.
- Cornell, T., A. Fear and P. Liddel (2010) 'Introduction', in *Historiae mundi: Studies in Universal Historiography*, eds. P. Liddel and A. Fear. London: 1-13.
- Cornford, F. M. (1907) *Thucydides Mythistoricus*. London.
- Corsi Zoli, D. (1972) 'Aspetti inavvertiti della congiura pisoniana' *StudRom* 20: 329-39.
- Costanza, S. (1956) 'La synkrisis nello schema biografico di Plutarco' *Messana* 4: 127-56.
- Courcelle, P. (1950) *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin*. Paris.
- Courcelle, P. (1963) *Les Confessions de Saint Augustine dans la tradition littéraire. Antécédents et postérité*. Paris.
- Crawford, M. H. (1976) 'Review: Hamlet without the Prince' *JRS* 66: 214-17.
- Croke, B. (1983) 'A. D. 476. The manufacture of a turning point' *Chiron* 13: 81-119.
- D'Huys, V. (1990) 'Χρήσιμον καὶ τερπνόν in Polybios' Schlachtschilderungen. Einige literarische Topoi in seiner Darstellung der Schlacht bei Zama (XV 9-16)', in *Purposes of History. Studies in Greek Historiography from the 4th to the 2nd Centuries B. C. Proceedings of the International Colloquium Leuven, 24-26 May 1988*, ed. H. Verdin. Leuven: 267-88.
- Dalby, A. (1992) 'Greeks abroad: social organisation and food among the ten thousand' *JHS* 112: 16-30.
- Damon, C. (1999) 'The trial of Cn. Piso in Tacitus' *Annals* and the *Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre*: new light on narrative technique' *AJPh* 120: 143-62.
- Danto, A. (1985) *Narration and Knowledge. Including the Integral Text of Analytical Philosophy of History*. New York.
- Davidson, J. (1991) 'The gaze in Polybios *Histories*' *JRS* 81: 10-24.
- Demandt, A. (1984) *Der Fall Roms. Die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt*. Munich.
- Dening, G. (2004) 'Writing, rewriting the beach: an essay', in *Experiments in Rethinking History*, eds. A. Munslow and R. A. Rosenstone. New York: 30-55.
- Desideri, P. (1992) 'I documenti di Plutarco' *ANRW* II.33.6: 4536-67.
- Desmond, W. (2004) 'Punishments and the conclusion of Herodotus' *Histories*' *GRBS* 44: 19-40.
- Develin, R. (1983) 'Tacitus and techniques of insidious suggestion' *Antichthon* 17: 64-95.
- Devillers, O. (1994) *L'art de la persuasion dans les Annales de Tacite*. Brussels.

- Devillers, O. (1999) 'Le récit de la conjuration de Pison dans les *Annales* de Tacite (XV, 48-74). Quelques aspects', in *Neronia. V: Néron: histoire et légende. Actes du Ve colloque international de la SIEN*, eds. J.-M. Croisille, R. Martin and Y. Perrin. Brussels: 45-65.
- Dewald, C. (1997) 'Wanton kings, pickled heroes, and gnostic founding fathers: strategies of meaning at the end of Herodotus' *Histories*', in *Classical Closure. Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature*, eds. D. H. Roberts, F. M. Dunn and D. P. Fowler. Princeton: 62-82.
- Dewald, C. (2005) *Thucydides' War Narrative. A Structural Study*. Berkeley.
- Dilke, O. A. W. (1957) 'The literary output of the Roman emperors' *G&R* 4: 78-97.
- Dillery, J. (1995) *Xenophon and the History of His Times*. London.
- von Doderer, H. (1956) *Die Dämonen. I-II*. Munich.
- Doležel, L. (2007) 'Postmodern narratives of the past. Simon Schama', in *A Sense of the World. Essays on Fiction, Narrative, and Knowledge*, eds. J. Gibson, W. Huemer and L. Poggi. New York: 170-84.
- Domanska, E. (2006) 'The material presence of the past' *History and Theory* 45: 337-48.
- Douglass, L. (1996) 'Voice re-cast: Augustine's use of conversation in *De ordine* and the *Confessions*' *AugStud* 27: 39-54.
- Downing, C. (1977) 'Revisioning autobiography: The bequest of Freud and Jung' *Soundings* 60: 210-28.
- Drexler, H. (1976) *Die Catilinarische Verschwörung*. Darmstadt.
- Droysen, J. G. (1977) [1868] *Historik*. Stuttgart.
- Drummond, A. (1995) *Law, Politics and Power: Sallust and the Execution of the Catilinarian Conspirators*. Stuttgart.
- DuBois, P. (1988) *Sowing the Body. Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women*. Chicago.
- Duff, T. (1999) *Plutarch's Lives. Exploring Virtue and Vice*. Oxford.
- Duff, T. (2003) 'Plutarch on the childhood of Alkibiades (*Alk* 2-3)' *PCPhS*: 89-113.
- Dunkle, J. R. (1981) 'Some notes on the funeral games, *Iliad* 23' *Prometheus* 7: 11-8.
- Dunn, F. (2007) *Present Shock in Late Fifth-Century Greece*. Ann Arbor.
- Dürnbach, F. (1893) 'L'Apologie de Xénophon dans l'*Anabase*' *REG* 6: 343-86.
- Durry, M. (1956) 'Les empereurs comme historiens d'Auguste à Hadrien' *Entretiens Hardt* 4: 213-35.
- Eakin, P. J. (1985) *Fictions in Autobiography. Studies in the Art of Self-Invention*. Princeton.
- Eakin, P. J. (1988) 'Narrative and chronology as structures of reference and the new model autobiographer', in *Studies in Autobiography*, ed. J. Olney. Oxford: 32-41.

- Earl, D. C. (1961) *The Political Thought of Sallust*. Cambridge.
- Edelmaier, W. (1964) *Tacitus und die Gegner Roms*. Heidelberg.
- Edlund, I. (1967) 'Before Zama. A comparison between Polybios' and Livy's descriptions of the meeting between Hannibal and Scipio' *Eranos* 65: 146-68.
- Edmunds, L. (1971) 'The religiosity of Alexander' *GRBS* 12: 363-91.
- Edwards, C. (2007) *Death in Ancient Rome*. New Haven.
- Elias, A. J. (2001) *Sublime Desire. History and Post-1960s Fiction*. Baltimore.
- Enlger, B. and K. Müller (eds.) (1994) *Historiographic Metafiction in Modern American and Canadian Literature*. Paderborn.
- Erbse, H. (1956) 'Die Bedeutung der Synkrisis in den Parallelbiographien Plutarchs' *Hermes* 84: 378-424.
- Erbse, H. (1966) 'Xenophons *Anabasis*' *Gymnasium* 73: 485-505.
- Erbse, H. (1979) 'Über Herodots Kroisoslogos', in *Ausgewählte Schriften zur Klassischen Philologie*. Berlin: 180-202.
- Erbse, H. (1992) *Studien zum Verständnis Herodots*. Berlin.
- Évrard, É. (1997) 'L'émergence du narrateur principal dans l'oeuvre de Salluste', in *Présence de Salluste*, ed. R. Poignault. Tours: 13-26.
- Fehling, D. (1989) *Herodotus and His Sources. Citation, Invention and Narrative Art*. Leeds.
- Feldherr, A. (1998) *Spectacle and Society in Livy's History*. Berkeley.
- Feldherr, A. (2012) 'Magna mihi copia est memorandi', in *Time and Narrative in Ancient Historiography. The Plupast from Herodotus to Appian*, eds. J. Grethlein and C. Krebs. Cambridge: xx-xx.
- Feldmann, E. (1986) 'Confessiones', in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, ed. C. Mayer. Basel: 1134-93.
- Ferguson, N. (ed.) (1997) *Virtual History. Alternatives and Counterfactuals*. London.
- Ferrari, L. C. (1970) 'The Pear-Theft in Augustine's Confessions' *REAug* 16: 233-42.
- Ferrari, L. C. (1979) 'The arboreal polarisation in Augustine's *Confessions*' *REAug* 25: 35-46.
- Ferrari, L. C. (1980) 'Paul at the Conversion of Augustine (Conf. VIII, 12, 29-30)' *AugStud* 11: 5-20.
- Ferrari, L. C. (1982) 'Saint Augustine on the road to Damascus' *AugStud* 13: 151-70.
- Ferrari, L. C. (1984) *The Conversions of Saint Augustine*. Villanova.
- Ferrari, L. C. (1989) 'Saint Augustine's conversion scene: the end of a modern debate?' *Studia Patristica* 22: 235-50.
- Ferrari, L. C. (1992) 'Beyond Augustine's Conversion Scene', in *Augustine. From Rhetor to Theologian*, ed. J. McWilliam. Waterloo: 97-107.
- Ferrary, J.-L. (1988) *Philhellénisme et impérialisme. Aspects idéologiques de la*

- conquête romaine du monde hellénistique, de la seconde guerre de Macédoine à la guerre contre Mithridate*. Rome.
- Ferrero, L. (1946) 'La voce publica nel proemio degli *Annali* di Tacito' *RFIC* 24: 50-86.
- Flores, R. (1984) *The Rhetoric of Doubtful Authority. Deconstructive Readings of Self-Questioning Narratives, St Augustine to Faulkner*. Ithaca.
- Flory, S. (1978) 'Laughter, tears and wisdom in Herodotus' *AJPh* 99: 145-53.
- Flory, S. F. (1988) 'Thucydides' hypotheses about the Peloponnesian War' *TAPhA* 118: 43-56.
- Flower, M. (2000) 'Alexander the Great and panhellenism', in *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction*, eds. A. B. Bosworth and E. J. Baynham Oxford: 96-135.
- Flower, M. A. (2012) *Xenophon's Anabasis or the Expedition of Cyrus*. New York.
- Flower, M. A. and J. Marincola (2002) *Herodotus. Histories Book IX*. Cambridge.
- Fludernik, M. (1996) *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*. London.
- Fludernik, M. (2010) 'Experience, experientiality, and historical narrative. A view from narratology', in *Erfahrung und Geschichte. Historische Sinnbildung in Pränarrativen*, eds. T. Breyer and D. Creutz. Berlin: 40-72.
- Fontaine, J. (1988) 'Augustin penseur chrétien du temps' *BAGB* 67: 53-71.
- Fornara, C. W. (1971a) *Herodotus. An Interpretative Essay*. Oxford.
- Fornara, C. W. (1971b) 'Evidence for the date of Herodotus' publication' *JHS* 91: 25-34.
- Fornara, C. W. (1981) 'Herodotus' knowledge of the Archidamian War' *Hermes* 109: 149-56.
- Forsdyke, S. (1999) 'From aristocratic to democratic ideology and back again: the Thrasylbulus anecdote in Herodotus' *Histories* and Aristotle's *Politics*' *CPh* 94: 361-72.
- Forsdyke, S. (2002) 'Greek history c. 525-480 BC', in *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, eds. E. J. Bakker, I. de Jong and H. van Wees. Leiden: 521-49.
- de Foucault, J. A. (1972) *Recherches sur la langue et le style de Polybe*. Paris.
- Foulon, É. (2003) 'Entre ἀρχή et τέλος: les *Histoires* de Polybe', in *Grecs et Romains aux prises avec l'histoire. Représentations, récits et idéologie. Colloque de Nantes et Angers. I*, eds. G. Lachenaud and D. Longrée. Rennes: 31-50.
- Fowler, D. (1989) 'First Thoughts on Closure. Problems and Prospects' *MD* 22: 75-122.
- Fowler, R. L. (1996) 'Herodotus and his contemporaries' *JHS* 116: 62-87.
- Frank, J. (1991) *The Idea of Spatial Form*. New Brunswick.
- Frazier, F. (1992) 'Contribution à l'étude de la composition des Vies de Plutarque: l'élaboration des grandes scènes' *ANRW* II.33.6: 4487-535.
- Frazier, F. (1996) *Histoire et morale dans les Vies Parallèles de Plutarque*. Paris.

- Freccero (1982) 'Logology: Burke on St. Augustine', in *Representing Kenneth Burke*, eds. H. White and M. Brose. Baltimore: 52-67.
- Frederiksen, P. (1986) 'Paul and Augustine: conversion narratives, orthodox traditions and the retrospective self' *JThS* 37: 3-34.
- Freeman, M. (1993) *Rewriting the Self: History, Memory, Narrative*. New York.
- Freemann, M. (1993) *Rewriting the Self*. London.
- Freyburger-Galland, M.-L. (1997) 'Catilina chez Salluste et Dion Cassius', in *Présence de Salluste*, ed. R. Poignault. Tours: 63-81.
- Friedländer, S. (2007) *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945*. New York.
- von Fritz, K. (1972) 'Die Bedeutung des Aristoteles für die Geschichtsschreibung', in *Ethik und Politik des Aristoteles*, ed. F.-P. Hager Darmstadt 313-67.
- Fromentin, V. (2008) 'Ordre du temps et ordre des causes: ἀρχή et αἰτία chez Thucydide, Polybe et Denys d' Halicarnasse', in *Commencer et finir: débuts et fins dans les littératures grecque, latine et néolatine* eds. B. Bureau and C. Nicolas Paris: 59-70.
- Froeyman, A. (2012) 'Frank Amkersmit and Eelco Runia : The presence and the otherness of the past' *Rethinking History* 16: 393-415.
- Fuhrer, T. (2009) 'La révélation de soi comme stratégie d'authenticité : la représentation du 'moi' dans les 'Confessions' d'Augustin', in *Jeux de voix. Enonciation, intertextualité et intentionnalité dans la littérature antique*, eds. D. van Mal-Maeder, A. Burnier and L. Núñez. Frankfurt/Bern: 385-98.
- Funari, R. (1998) 'Motivi ciceroniani nell' "excursus" del *De Catilinae coniuratione* (36,4-34, 9) di Sallustio' *Fontes* 1: 15-62.
- Furneaux, H. (1896) *The Annals of Tacitus. I-II*. (2nd edition). Oxford.
- Gadamer, H. G. (1986) *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. . Tübingen.
- Gauthier, P. (1986) 'Xénophone et l'Odyssée des Dix-Mille', in *La Grèce ancienne* ed. C. Mossé. Paris: 237-69.
- Genette, G. (1966) 'Frontières du récit' *Communications* 8: 152-63.
- Genette, G. (1980) [1972] *Narrative discours. An essay in method*. Tr. J. E. Lewin. Ithaca.
- Genette, G. (1980) *Narrative Discourse. An Essay in Method*. Ithaca.
- Genette, G. (1991) *Fiction et diction*. Paris.
- Gentili, B. and G. Cerri (eds.) (1988) *History and Biography in Ancient Thought*. Amsterdam.
- Gerrig, R. J. (1989a) 'Reexperiencing fiction and non-fiction' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 47: 277-80.
- Gerrig, R. J. (1989b) 'Suspense in the absence of uncertainty' *Journal of Memory and Language* 28: 633-48.

- Giangiulio, M. (2005) 'Tradizione storica e strategie narrative nelle Storie di Erodoto: il caso del discorso di Socle corinzio', in *Erodoto e il modello erodoteo: formazione e trasmissione delle tradizioni storiche in Grecia*. Trento: 91-122.
- Giangiulio, M. (2010) 'Oracoli esametrici a Corinto arcaica tra epos e tradizione orale', in *Tra panellenismo e tradizioni locali: generi poetici e storiografia*. Alessandria: 411-31.
- Gill, C. (1983) 'The question of character-development: Plutarch and Tacitus' *CQ* 33: 469-87.
- Gilmartin, K. (1975) 'A rhetorical figure in Latin historical style: the imaginary second person singular' *TAPhA* 105: 99-121.
- Ginsburg, J. (1981) *Tradition and Theme in the Annals of Tacitus*. New York.
- Ginsburg, J. (1993) 'In maiores certamina. Past and present in the Annals.' In *Tacitus and the Tacitean Tradition*, ed. T. J. Luce and A. J. Woodman. Princeton: 86-103.
- Ginsburg, J. (2006) *Representing Agrippina. Constructions of Female Power in the Early Roman Empire*. Oxford.
- Giuliani, L. (2003) *Bild und Mythos. Geschichte der Bilderzählung in der griechischen Kunst*. Munich.
- Gomme, A. W., A. Andrewes and K. J. Dover (1941-81) *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides. I-V*. Oxford.
- Goodyear, F. R. D. (1970) 'Cyclic development in history: a note on Tac. Ann. 3.55.5' *BICS* 17: 101-6.
- Goodyear, F. R. D. (1972) *The Annals of Tacitus. I-II*. Cambridge.
- Gould, J. (1989) *Herodotus*. London.
- Gowing, A. M. (1992) *The Triumviral Narratives of Appian and Cassius Dio*. Ann Arbor.
- Graf, F. (1931) *Untersuchungen über die Komposition der Annalen des Tacitus*. Bern.
- Gray, V. J. (1996) 'Herodotus and images of tyranny: the tyrants of Corinth' *AJPh* 117: 361-89.
- Gray, V. J. (2003) 'Interventions and citations in Xenophon, *Hellenica* and *Anabasis*' *CQ* 53(111-23).
- Gray, V. J. (2004) 'Xenophon', in *Narrators, Narratees and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature*, eds. I. de Jong, R. Nünlist and A. Bowie. Leiden: 129-46.
- Green, P. M. (1994) 'Text and context in the matter of Xenophon's exile', in *Ventures into Greek History*, ed. I. Worthington. Oxford: 215-27.
- Greenwood, E. (2006) *Thucydides and the Shaping of History*. London.
- Grethlein, J. (2006a) *Das Geschichtsbild der Ilias. Eine Untersuchung aus phänomenologischer und narratologischer Perspektive*. Göttingen.
- Grethlein, J. (2006b) 'The manifold uses of the epic past. The embassy scene in

- Hdt. 7.153-163' *AJPh* 127: 485-509.
- Grethlein, J. (2006c) 'The unthucydidean voice of Sallust' *TAPhA* 136: 299-327.
- Grethlein, J. (2007) 'Ritual and epic narrative. The case of the Funeral Games in the *Iliad*', in *Literatur und Religion I. Wege zu einer mythisch/rituellen Poetik bei den Griechen*, eds. A. Bierl, R. Lämmle and K. Wesselmann. Berlin: 151-77.
- Grethlein, J. (2009a) *Littell's Orestie. Mythos, Macht und Moral in Les Bienvveillantes*. Freiburg.
- Grethlein, J. (2009b) 'How not to do history: Xerxes in Herodotus *Histories*' *AJPh* 130: 195-218.
- Grethlein, J. (2010a) *The Greeks and Their Past. Poetry, Oratory and History in the Fifth Century BCE*. Cambridge.
- Grethlein, J. (2010b) 'Experientiality and narrative reference. With thanks to Thucydides' *History and Theory* 49: 315-35.
- Grethlein, J. (2010c) 'S. S. officers as tragic heroes? Jonathan Littell's *Les Bienvveillantes* and the narrative representation of the Shoah' *Style* 44: 566-85.
- Grethlein, J. (2010d) 'The narrative reconfiguration of time beyond Ricoeur' *Poetics Today* 31: 313-29.
- Grethlein, J. (2011a) 'Historia magistra vitae in Herodotus and Thucydides?', in *The Western Time of Ancient History: Historiographical Encounters with the Greek and Roman Past*, ed. A. Lianeri. Cambridge: 247-63.
- Grethlein, J. (2011b) 'The rise of Greek historiography and the invention of prose', in *The Oxford history of Historical Writing. I: Beginnings to AD 600*. Oxford: 148-70.
- Grethlein, J. (2011c) 'Myth, Morals, and Metafiction in Jonathan Littell's *Les Bienvveillantes*' *PMLA* forthcoming.
- Grethlein, J. (2012) 'Xenophon's *Anabasis* from Character to Narrator' *JHS* forthcoming.
- Grethlein, J. and C. Krebs (2012) 'The historian's plupast: introductory remarks on its forms and functions', in *Time and Narrative in Ancient Historiography. The Historian's Plupast from Herodotus to Appian*, eds. J. Grethlein and C. Krebs. Cambridge.
- Grethlein, J. and C. Krebs (eds.) (forthcoming) *Time and Narrative in Ancient Historiography. The 'Plupast' from Herodotus to Appian*. Cambridge.
- Grethlein, J. and A. Rengakos (2010) 'Introduction', in *Narratology and Interpretation. The Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature*, eds. J. Grethlein and A. Rengakos. Berlin: 1-11.
- Gribble, D. (1998) 'Narrator interventions in Thucydides' *JHS* 118: 41-67.
- Griffin, M. T. (1976) *Seneca. A Philosopher in Politics* Oxford.
- Griffin, M. T. (2009) 'Tacitus as a historian', in *The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus*, ed. A. J. Woodman. Cambridge: 168-83.

- Gruber, J. (2008) 'Tacitus und der Ort der Varus-Schlacht' *Gymnasium* 115: 453-67.
- Gruen, E. S. (1995) *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic*. Berkeley.
- Gudemann, A. (1934) *Aristoteles. Poetik*. Berlin.
- Gumbrecht, H. U. (1997) *In 1926: Living at the Edge of Time*. Cambridge, MA.
- Gunderson, E. (2000) 'The history of the mind and philosophy of history in Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*' *Ramus* 29: 85-126.
- Gusdorf, G. (1980) 'Conditions and limits of autobiography', in *Autobiography. Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. J. Olney. Princeton: 28-48.
- Habermas, J. (1977) 'A review of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*', in *Understanding and Social Inquiry*, eds. F. Dallmayr and T. McCarthy. Notre Dame, IN: 335-65.
- Halliwell, S. (2002) *The Aesthetics of Mimesis. Ancient Texts and Modern Problems*. Princeton.
- Hamilton, J. R. (1969) *Plutarch, Alexander: A Commentary*. Oxford.
- Harris, B. F. (1970) 'The portrayal of autocratic power in Plutarch's *Lives*', in *Auckland Classical Essays*, ed. B. F. Harris. Auckland: 185-202.
- Harris, W. V. (1979) *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome. 327-70 B. C.* Oxford.
- Harrison, T. (2000) *Divinity and History. The Religion of Herodotus* Oxford.
- Hartog, F. (1988) *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*. Tr. J. Lloyd. Berkeley.
- Hartog, F. (2010) 'Polybius and the first universal history', in *Historiae mundi: Studies in Universal Historiography*, eds. P. Liddel and A. Fear. London: 15-29.
- Hausen, C. R. (1779) *Von dem Einfluß der Geschichte auf das menschliche Herz*. Halle.
- Häußler, R. (1965) *Tacitus und das historische Bewußtsein*. Heidelberg.
- Havas, L. (1990) 'Schemata und Wahrheit in der Darstellung der spätrepublikanischen politischen Ereignisse' *Klio* 72: 216-24.
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1955) [1837] *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*. (5th edition). Hamburg.
- Heidegger, M. (1930) *Des hl. Augustinus Betrachtung über die Zeit. Confessiones lib. XI*. unpublished manuscript Beuron, Erzabtei St. Martin.
- Heidegger, M. (2006) [1927] *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen.
- Heilmann, A. and M. Llewellyn (2007) *Metafiction and Metahistory in Contemporary Women's Writing*. Basingstoke.
- Heldmann, K. (1993) *Sallust über die römische Weltherrschaft. Ein Geschichtsmodell*. Stuttgart.
- Hellegouarc'h, J. (1963) *Le vocabulaire latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la république*. Paris.
- Hellmann, F. (1934) *Herodots Kroisos-Logos*. Berlin.

- Hellwig, B. (1964) *Raum und Zeit im homerischen Epos*. Hildesheim.
- Herington, J. (1991) 'The closure of Herodotus' *Histories*' *ICS* 16: 149-60.
- von Herrmann, F.-W. (1992) *Augustinus und die phänomenologische Frage nach der Zeit*. Frankfurt.
- Herzog, R. (1984) 'Non in sua voce – Augustins Gespräch mit Gott in den *Confessiones*', in *Das Gespräch*, eds. K. Stierle and R. Warning. München: 213-50.
- Heuß, A. (1956) 'Der Untergang der römischen Republik und das Problem der Revolution' *HZ* 182: 1-28.
- Heuß, A. (1970) *Der Erste Punische Krieg und das Problem des römischen Imperialismus. Zur politischen Beurteilung des Krieges*. Darmstadt.
- Hoffmann, U. (2002) "'Der Anfang reicht bis zum Ende". Drei Bemerkungen zu Polybios' teleologischer Denkweise' *Saeculum* 53: 193-225.
- Hoffmann, W. (1959) 'Catilina und die römische Revolution' *Gymnasium* 66: 459-77.
- Hollmann, A. (2011) *The Master of Signs: Signs and the Interpretation of Signs in Herodotus' Histories*. Cambridge.
- Hölkeskamp, K.-J. (ed.) (2009) *Eine politische Kultur (in) der Krise?* München.
- Hölscher, L. (2003) *Neue Annalistik. Umriss einer Theorie der Geschichte*. . Göttingen.
- Hommel, H. (1936) 'Die Bildkunst des Tacitus', in *Studien zu Tacitus. Carl Hosius zum 70. Geburtstag am 21. März 1936 dargebracht*, eds. H. Hommel, K. Keyssner, J. Martin, F. Pfister and J. Vogt. Stuttgart: 116-48.
- Hopkins, K. (1999) *A World Full of Gods. Pagans, Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire*. London.
- Hornblower, J. (1981) *Hieronymus of Cardia*. Oxford.
- Hornblower, S. (1987) *Thucydides*. Baltimore.
- Hornblower, S. (1991-6) *A Commentary on Thucydides. I-II*. Oxford.
- Hornblower, S. (1994) 'Narratology and narrative techniques in Thucydides', in *Greek Historiography*, ed. S. Hornblower. Oxford: 131-66.
- Hornblower, S. (2007) 'The Dorieus episode and the Ionian Revolt (5.42-8)', in *Reading Herodotus*, eds. E. Irwin and E. Greenwood. Cambridge: 168-78.
- Hose, M. (1994) *Erneuerung der Vergangenheit. Die Historiker im Imperium Romanum von Florus bis Cassius Dio*. Stuttgart.
- Howland, J. (2000) 'Xenophon's philosophic Odyssey: on the *Anabasis* and Plato's *Republic*' *American Political Science Review* 94: 875-89.
- Hoyos, D. (1998) *Unplanned Wars. The Origins of the First and Second Punic Wars*. Berlin.
- Humble, N., ed. (2010) *Plutarch's Lives: Parallelism and Purpose*. Swansea.
- Hunter, V. (1973) *Thucydides, the Artful Reporter*. Toronto.
- Hunter, V. (1982) *Past and Process in Herodotus and Thucydides*. Princeton, NJ.
- Husserl, E. (1928) *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins*.

- Halle.
- Husserl, E. (1950) 'Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie', in *Gesammelte Werke III*, ed. W. Biemel. Tübingen.
- Husserl, E. (1966) 'Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins', in *Husserliana X*, ed. R. Boehm. Den Haag.
- Husserl, E. (2006) *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934)*. Dordrecht.
- Hutcheon, L. (1988) *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York.
- Hutchinson, G. O. (1993) *Latin Literature from Seneca to Juvenal*. Oxford.
- Immerwahr, H. R. (1954) 'Historical action in Herodotus' *TAPhA* 85: 16-45.
- Immerwahr, H. R. (1956) 'Aspects of historical causation in Herodotus' *TAPhA* 87: 241-80.
- Immerwahr, H. R. (1960) 'Ergon. History as monument in Herodotus and Thucydides' *AJPh* 81: 261-90.
- Immerwahr, H. R. (1966) *Form and Thought in Herodotus*. Cleveland.
- Jaeger, M. (1997) *Livy's Written Rome*. Ann Arbor.
- Jauf, H. R. (1955) *Zeit und Erinnerung in Marcel Prousts 'À la recherche du temps perdu'*. Ein Beitrag zur Theorie des Romans. Heidelberg.
- Jauf, H. R. (1982) *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik*. Frankfurt.
- Jay, M. (2005) *Songs of Experience. Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme*. Berkeley.
- Jehne, M. (2009) 'Caesars Alternative(n). Das Ende der römischen Republik zwischen autonomem Prozeß und Betriebsunfall', in *Eine politische Kultur (in) der Krise?*, ed. K.-J. Hölkeskamp. München: 141-60.
- John, C. (1876a) 'Die Entstehungsgeschichte der Catilinarischen Verschwörung' *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie* Suppl. 8: 701-819.
- John, C. (1876b) 'Sallustius über Catilina's Candidatur im Jahre 688' *RhM* 31: 401-31.
- Johnson, D. M. (2001) 'Herodotus' storytelling speeches. Socles (5.92) and Leotychides (6.86)' *CJ* 97: 1-26.
- de Jong, I. (1999) 'Aspects narratologiques des *Histoires* d'Hérodote' *Lalies* 19: 217-75.
- de Jong, I. (2009) 'Metalepsis in ancient Greek literature', in *Narratology and Interpretation. The Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature*, eds. J. Grethlein and A. Rengakos. Berlin: 87-115.
- Kallet-Marx, L. (1993) *Money, Expense, and Naval Power in Thucydides' History I - 5.24*. Berkeley.
- Kansteiner, W. (2009) 'Success, Truth and Modernism in Holocaust Historiography. Reading Saul Friedländer thirty-five years after the publication of *Metahistory*' *History and Theory* 48: 25-53.

- Ker, J. (2009) *The Deaths of Seneca*. Oxford.
- Kindt, J. (2006) 'Delphic oracle stories and the beginning of historiography: Herodotus' *Croesus Logos*' *CPh* 101: 34-51.
- Kitto, H. D. F. (1966) *Poiesis. Structure and Thought*. Berkeley.
- Kleinknecht, H. (1940) 'Herodot und Athen. 7.139/8.140-4' *Hermes* 75: 241-64.
- Klingner (1981) [1928] 'Über die Einleitung der *Historien* Sallusts', in *Sallust*, ed. V. Pöschl. Darmstadt: 1-30.
- Knauer, G. N. (1955) *Die Psalmenzitate in Augustins Konfessionen*. Göttingen.
- Koestermann, E. (1955) 'Die Majestätsprozesse unter Tiberius' *Historia* 4: 72-106.
- Koestermann, E. (1957) 'Die Feldzüge des Germanicus 14-16 n. Chr.' *Historia* 6: 429-79.
- Koestermann, E. (1958) 'Die Mission des Germanicus im Orient' *Historia* 7: 331-75.
- Koestermann, E. (1963-8) *Tacitus. Annalen I-IV*. Heidelberg.
- Konstan, D. (1987) 'Persians, Greeks and empire' *Arethusa* 20: 59-73.
- Koselleck, R. (1975) 'Die Herausbildung des modernen Geschichtsbegriffs', in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. II*, eds. O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck. Stuttgart: 647-91.
- Koselleck, R. (1979) *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*. Frankfurt.
- Koselleck, R. (1985) *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Tr. K. Tribe. Cambridge, MA.
- Kotzé, A. (2004) *Augustine's Confessions: Communicative Purpose and Audience*. Leiden.
- Kramer, L. (2009) 'Searching for something that is here and there and also gone' *History and Theory* 48: 85-97.
- Kraus, C. S. (1999) 'Jugurthine disorder', in *The Limits of Historiography. Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts*, ed. C. S. Kraus. Leiden: 217-47.
- Kraus, C. S. and A. J. Woodman (1997) *Latin Historians*. Cambridge.
- Krebs, C. (2008a) 'Catiline's ravaged mind: "uastus animus" (Sall. BC 5.5)' *CQ* 58: 682-6.
- Krebs, C. (2008b) 'Hebescere virtus (Sallust BC 12.1): metaphorical ambiguity' *HSPH* 104: 231-6.
- Kroymann, J. (1969) 'Fatum, Fors, Fortuna und Verwandtes im Geschichtsdenken des Tacitus', in *Tacitus*, ed. V. Pöschl. Darmstadt: 130-60.
- Kusch, H. (1953) 'Studien über Augustinus', in *Festschrift Franz Dornseiff*, ed. H. Kusch. Leipzig: 124-200.
- Kyle, D. G. (2008) 'Dying with honor: Cato, Seneca, and noble suicide' *JRA* 2008: 401-4.
- La Penna, A. (1968) *Sallustio e la 'rivoluzione' Romana*. Milan.
- Lachenaud, G. (1978) *Mythologies, religion et philosophie de l'histoire dans*

*Hérodote*. Lille.

- Lambert, A. (1948) 'Nochmals "avant Zama"'. *Livius XXX* 29-31. I' *Eranos* 46: 54-63.
- Lana, I. (1989) 'Introspicere in Tacito' *Orpheus* 10: 26-57.
- Lang, M. L. (1984) *Herodotean Narrative and Discourse*. Cambridge/MA.
- Lang, M. L. (1995) 'Participial motivation in Thucydides' *Mnemosyne* 48: 48-65.
- Lateiner, D. (1975) 'The speech of Teutiaplus (Thuc 3.30)' *GRBS* 16: 175-84.
- Lateiner, D. (1989) *The Historical Method of Herodotus*. Toronto.
- Latta, B. (1988) 'Der Wandel in Sallusts Geschichtsauffassung: vom *Bellum Catilinae* zum *Bellum Jugurthinum*' *Maia* 40: 271-88.
- Latta, B. (1989) 'Die Ausgestaltung der Geschichtskonzeption Sallusts. Vom *Bellum Jugurthinum* zu den *Historien*' *Maia* 41: 41-57.
- Lattimore, S. (1998) *Thucydides. The Peloponnesian War*. Indianapolis.
- Lazenby, J. F. (1996) *The First Punic War. A Military History*. Warminster.
- Ledworuski, G. (1994) *Historiographische Widersprüche in der Monographie Sallusts zur Catilinarischen Verschwörung*. Frankfurt.
- Leeman, A. D. (1985) *Form und Sinn. Studien zur römischen Literatur (1954-1984)*. Frankfurt.
- Legrand, E. P. (1937) 'Hérodote croyait-il aux oracles?', in *Mélanges offerts à A. M. Desrousseaux par ses amis et ses élèves*. Paris: 275-84.
- Lehmann, G. A. (1989) 'The "Ancient" Greek history in Polybios' *Historiae: tendencies and political objectives*' *SCI* 10: 66-77.
- Lejeune, P. (1975) *Le pacte autobiographique*. Paris.
- Lendle, O. (1995) *Kommentar zu Xenophons Anabasis (Bücher 1-7)*. Darmstadt.
- Lendon, T. (2009) 'Historians without history: against Roman historiography', in *Cambridge Companion to Roman Historiography*, ed. A. Feldherr. Cambridge: 41-62.
- Leo, F. (1969) 'Tacitus', in *Tacitus*, ed. V. Pöschl. Darmstadt: 1-15.
- Leppin, H. (2002) 'Review: K. Hopkins: *A World Full of Gods. Pagans, Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire*' *Gnomon* 74: 153-57.
- Lessing, G. E. (1962) [1766] *Laokoon: an Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*. Tr. E. A. McCormick. Indianapolis.
- Levene, D. S. (1992) 'Sallust's *Jugurtha*: an "Historical Fragment"?' *JRS* 82: 51-70.
- Levene, D. S. (1997) 'Pity, fear and the historical audience: Tacitus on the fall of Vitellius', in *The Passions in Roman Thought and Literature*, eds. S. M. Braund and C. Gill. Cambridge: 128-49.
- Levene, D. S. (2000) 'Sallust's Catiline and Cato the censor' *CQ* 50: 170-91.
- Liddel, P. (2008) 'Scholarship and morality: Plutarch's use of inscriptions', in *The Unity of Plutarch's Work*, ed. A. G. Nikolaidis. Berlin: 125-37.
- Liddel, P. and A. Fear (eds.) (2010) *Historiae mundi: Studies in Universal Historiography*. London.

- Lipsius, I. (1589) *Cornelius Tacitus. Opera, quae exstant*. Antwerpen.
- Lorenz, K. (1931) *Untersuchungen zum Geschichtswerk des Polybios*. Stuttgart.
- Lossau, M. (1990) 'Xenophons Odyssee' *A&A* 36: 47-52.
- Luce, T. J. (1989) 'Ancient views on the causes of bias in historical writing' *CPh* 84: 16-31.
- Luce, T. J. (1991) 'Tacitus on 'history's highest function': *praecipuum munus annalium* (Ann. 3.65)' *ANRW II* 33.4: 2904-27.
- Luschnat, O. (1942) *Die Feldherrnreden im Geschichtswerk des Thukydides*. Leipzig.
- Ma, J. (2004) 'You can't go home again: displacement and identity in Xenophon's *Anabasis*', in *The Long March. Xenophon and the Ten Thousand*, ed. R. L. Fox. New Haven: 330-45.
- Madec, G. (1989) *Le Christ du Saint Augustin. La patrie et la voie*. Paris.
- Madec, G. (1996) *Saint Augustin et la philosophie: notes critiques*. Paris.
- de Man, P. (1979) 'Autobiography as de-facement' *MLN* 94: 919-30.
- Mandouze, A. (1968) *Saint Augustin: l'aventure de la raison et de la grâce*. Paris.
- Manieri, A. (1998) *L'immagine poetica nella teoria degli antichi: phantasia ed enargeia*. Pisa.
- Mann, G. (1976) *Wallenstein, His Life Narrated*. Tr. C. Kessler. London.
- Mann, T. (1926) *Der Zauberberg*. Berlin.
- Mann, T. (1960) *Joseph und seine Brüder*. Frankfurt.
- Marasco, G. (1976) *Plutarco: Vita di Nicia*. Rome.
- Marcone, A. (2008) 'A long late antiquity? Considerations on a controversial periodization' *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1: 4-19.
- Marincola, J. (1997) *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography*. Cambridge.
- Marincola, J. (1999a) 'Genre, convention and innovation in Greco-Roman historiography', in *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts*, ed. C. S. Kraus. Leiden: 281-324.
- Marincola, J. (1999b) 'Tacitus' prefaces and the decline of imperial historiography' *Latomus* 58: 391-404.
- Marincola, J. (2003) 'Beyond pity and fear: the emotions of history' *AncSoc* 33: 285-315.
- Marincola, J. (2005) 'Concluding narratives: looking to the end in classical historiography', in *Papers of the Langford Latin Seminar 12. Greek and Roman Poetry, Greek and Roman Historiography*, ed. F. Cairns. Leeds: 285-320.
- Marincola, J. (2007a) 'Universal history from Ephorus to Diodorus', in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, ed. J. Marincola. Malden: 171-9.
- Marincola, J. (2007b) 'Odysseus and the historians' *Histos* 1.
- Marrou, H.-I. (1958) *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*. Paris.

- Marsh, F. B. (1931) *The Reign of Tiberius*. London.
- Martin, R. H. (1981) *Tacitus*. London.
- Martin, R. H. and A. J. Woodman (1989) *Tacitus: Annals Book IV*. Cambridge.
- Mastellone Iovane, E. (1989) *Paura e angoscia in Tacito. Implicazioni ideologiche e politiche*. Naples.
- Maurizio, L. (1997) 'Delphic oracles as oral performances. Authenticity and historical evidence' *ClAnt* 16: 308-34.
- Mayer, C. (1998) 'Die Confessiones des Aurelius Augustinus' *Theologie und Glaube* 88: 285-305.
- McCullough, H. Y. (1991) 'The historical process and theories of history in the *Annales* and *Histories* of Tacitus' *ANRW* II.33.4: 2928-48.
- McGing, B. (2010) *Polybius' Histories*. Oxford.
- McGing, B. (2012) 'Polybius and Herodotus' *Imperialism, Cultural Politics, and Polybius*, eds. C. J. Jones and L. M. Yarrow. Oxford: 33-49.
- McGowan, A. (1996) 'Ecstasy and charity: Augustine with Nathanael under the fig tree' *AugStud* 27: 27-38.
- McGushin, P. (1977) *C. Sallustius Cripus Bellum Catilinae A Commentary*. Leiden.
- McMahon, R. (1989) *Augustine's Prayerful Ascent. An Essay on the Literary Form of the Confessions*. Athens.
- McNellen, B. (1997) 'Herodotean symbolism: Pericles as lion cub' *ICS* 22: 11-23.
- Meier, C. (1975) 'Geschichte II. Antike', in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. II*, eds. O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck. Stuttgart: 595-610.
- Meier, C. (1997) *Res publica amissa. Eine Studie zu Verfassung und Geschichte der späten römischen Republik*. Frankfurt.
- Meijering, E. P. (1979) *Augustin über Schöpfung, Ewigkeit und Zeit: Das elfte Buch der Bekenntnisse*. Leiden.
- Meister, K. (1975) *Historische Kritik bei Polybios*. Wiesbaden.
- Meijering, R. (1987) *Literary and Rhetorical Theories in Greek Scholia*. Groningen.
- Mendell, C. W. (1935) 'Dramatic construction of Tacitus' *Annals*' *YCLS* 5: 3-54.
- Mendels, D. (1984) 'Did Polybius have another view of the Aetolian League? A note' *AncSoc* 15-17: 63-73.
- Mendelsohn, D. (2009) 'Transgression' *The New York Review of Books* 56/5: 15-21.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945) *Phénoménologie de la perception*. Paris.
- Mersch, D. (2002) *Was sich zeigt. Materialität, Präsenz, Ereignis*. Munich.
- Mikalson, J. D. (2003) *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars*. Chapel Hill.
- Miles, M. R. (1982) 'Infancy, parenting and nourishment in Augustine's *Confessions*' *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50: 349-64.
- Mohrmann, C. (1959) 'Observations sur les *Confessions* de Saint Augustin' *RSR*

33: 360-71.

- Moles, J. (1993) 'Truth and untruth in Herodotus and Thucydides', in *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World*, eds. C. Gill and T. P. Wiseman. Exeter: 88-121.
- Moles, J. (1996) 'Herodotus warns the Athenians' *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 9: 259-84.
- Moles, J. (1998) 'Cry freedom: Tacitus Annals 4.32-35' *Histos* 2.
- Moles, J. (1999) 'Ἀνάθημα καὶ κτῆμα: The inscriptional inheritance of ancient historiography' *Histos* (http://www.dur.ac.uk/Classics/histos/1999/moles.html).
- Moles, J. (2002) 'Herodotus and Athens', in *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, eds. E. Bakker, I. de Jong and H. van Wees. Leiden: 33-52.
- Moles, J. (2007) "'Saving" Greece from the "ignominy" of tyranny? The "famous" and "wonderful" speech of Socles (5.92)', in *Reading Herodotus*, eds. E. Irwin and E. Greenwood. Cambridge: 245-68.
- Moles, J. L. (1988) *Plutarch: The Life of Cicero*. Warminster.
- Momigliano, A. (1966) 'Storiografia su tradizione scritta e storiografia su tradizione orale', in *Terzo contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, ed. A. Momigliano. Rome: 13-22. [= 1961/2, *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino* 96: 186-97].
- Momigliano, A. (1971) *The Development of Greek Biography*. Cambridge, MA.
- Momigliano, A. (1975) *Alien Wisdom. The Limits of Hellenization*. Cambridge.
- Momigliano, A. (1977) *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*. Oxford.
- Momigliano, A. (1990) *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*. Berkeley.
- Montgomery, H. (1965) *Gedanke und Tat. Zur Erzählungstechnik bei Herodot, Thukydides, Xenophon und Arrian*. Lund.
- Morello, M.-R. (2002) 'Livy's Alexander digression (9.17-19): counterfactuals and apologetics' *JRS* 92: 62-85.
- Morrison, J. V. (1999) 'Preface to Thucydides: rereading the Corcyrean conflict (1.24-55)' *ClAnt* 18: 94-131.
- Morrison, J. V. (2006) 'Interaction of speech and narrative in Thucydides', in *Brill's Companion to Thucydides*, eds. A. Rengakos and A. Tsakmakis. Leiden: 251-77.
- Morson, G. S. (1994) *Narrative and Freedom. The Shadows of Time*. New Haven.
- Morstein-Marx, R. (2009) 'Dignitas and res publica. Caesar and Republican Legitimacy', in *Eine politische Kultur (in) der Krise?*, ed. K.-J. Hölkeskamp. Munich: 115-40.
- Morstein-Marx, R. and N. Rosenstein (eds.) (2006) *A Companion to the Roman Republic*. Malden.
- Morstein-Marx, R. and N. Rosenstein (2006) 'The transformation of the Republic', in *A Companion to the Roman Republic*, eds. N. Rosenstein and

- R. Morstein-Marx. Oxford: 625-37.
- Mossman, J. M. (1995) 'Tragedy and epic in Plutarch's *Alexander*', in *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, ed. B. Scardigli. Oxford: 209-28. [= 1988, JHS 108: 83-93.].
- Mossman, J. M. (2006) 'Travel, writing, history, and biography', in *The Limits of Ancient Biography*, eds. B. C. McGing and J. M. Mossman. Swansea: 281-303.
- Munson, R. V. (2001) *Telling Wonders: Ethnographic and Political Discourse in the Work of Herodotus*. Ann Arbor.
- Munson, R. V. (2007) 'The trouble with the Ionians: Herodotus and the beginning of the Ionian Revolt (5.28-38.1)', in *Reading Herodotus*, eds. E. Irwin and E. Greenwood. Cambridge: 146-67.
- Nagy, G. (1990) *Pindar's Homer. The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past*. Baltimore.
- Naiden, F. S. (1999) 'The prospective imperfect in Herodotus' *HSPH* 99: 135-49.
- Nelles, W. (1997) *Frameworks. Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative*. Frankfurt.
- Nicolai, R. (2006) 'Polibio e la memoria della parola: i discorsi diretti', in *Scrivere la storia nel mondo antico. Atti del convegno nazionale di studi*, ed. R. Uglione. Alessandria: 75-107.
- Nietzsche, F. (1916) *Briefwechsel mit Franz Overbeck*, eds. R. Oehler and C. A. Bernoulli. Leipzig.
- Nightingale, A. W. (2004) *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy. Theoria in its Cultural Context*. Cambridge.
- Nipperdey, K. and G. Andresen (1884) *Publius Cornelius Tacitus. Vol. I: Ab excessu Divi Augusti I-VI*. (8th edition). Berlin.
- Novalis (1999) [1798/9] *Das allgemeine Brouillon: Materialien zur Enzyklopädistik*. Hamburg.
- Novokhatko, A. A. (2009) *The Invectives of Sallust and Cicero*. Berlin.
- Nünning, A. (1995) *Von historischer Fiktion zu historiographischer Metafiktion. I-II*. Trier.
- Nünning, A. (1999) *Der englische Roman des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart/Düsseldorf/Leipzig.
- Nünning, A. (2003) 'Narratology or narratologies? Taking stock of recent developments, critique and modest proposals for future usages of the term', in *What is Narratology? Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory*, eds. T. Kindt and H. H. Müller. Berlin: 239-75.
- O'Donnell, J. J. (1992) *Aurelius Augustinus, Confessions. I-III*. Oxford.
- O'Donnell, J. J. (2005) *Augustine. A New Biography*. New York.
- O'Gorman, E. (2000) *Irony and Misreading the Annals of Tacitus*. Cambridge.
- O'Gorman, E. (2006) 'Alternate empires: Tacitus's virtual history of the Pisonian principate' *Arethusa* 39: 281-301.

- O'Meara, J. J. (1992) 'Augustine's *Confessions*. Elements of Fiction', in *Augustine. From Rhetor to Theologian*, ed. J. McWilliam. Waterloo: 77-95.
- Oakley, S. P. (1997) *A Commentary on Livy, Books VI-X. I: Book VI*. Oxford.
- Odahl, C. M. (2010) *Cicero and the Catilinarian Conspiracy*. New York.
- Olney, J. (1980) 'Autobiography and the cultural moment: a thematic, historical, and bibliographical introduction', in *Autobiography. Essays theoretical and critical*, ed. J. Olney. Princeton: 3-27.
- Olney, J. (1998) *Memory & Narrative: The Weave of Life-Writing*. Chicago.
- Onega, S. (1995) *Telling Stories. Narrativizing History, Historicizing Literature*. Amsterdam.
- Ortega y Gasset, J. (1925) *Ideas sobre la Novela*. Madrid.
- Otto, N. (2009) *Enargeia. Untersuchung zur Charakteristik alexandrinischer Dichtung*. Stuttgart.
- Pagán, V. E. (1999) 'Beyond Teutoburg: transgression and transformation in Tacitus *Annales* 1.61-62' *CPh* 94: 302-20.
- Pagán, V. E. (2002) 'Actium and Teutoburg: Augustan victory and defeat in Vergil and Tacitus', in *Clio & the Poets. Augustan Poetry & the Traditions of Ancient Historiography*, eds. D. S. Levene and D. P. Nelis. Leiden: 45-59.
- Pagán, V. E. (2005) *Conspiracy Narratives in Roman History*. Austin.
- Paladini, M. L. (1961) 'Osservazioni ai discorsi e alle lettere del Sallustiano *Bellum Catilinae*' *Latomus* 20: 3-32.
- Pannenberg, W. (1961) *Offenbarung als Geschichte*. Göttingen.
- Paton, W. R. (1922-7) *Polybius. The Histories*. I-VI. London.
- Pauw, D. (1980) 'Impersonal expressions and unidentified spokesmen in Greek and Roman historiography and biography' *AClass* 23: 83-95.
- Pédech, P. (1964) *La méthode historique de Polybe*. Paris.
- Pelling, C. (1973) 'Plutarch, *Alexander* and *Caesar*: two new fragments?' *CQ* 23: 343-4.
- Pelling, C. (1988) *Plutarch's Life of Antony*. Cambridge.
- Pelling, C. (1991) 'Thucydides' Archidamus and Herodotus' Artabanus', in *Georgica. Greek Studies in Honour of George Cawkwell*, eds. M. Flower and M. Toher. London: 120-42.
- Pelling, C. (1992) 'Plutarch and Thucydides', in *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition*, ed. P. A. Stadter. London: 10-40.
- Pelling, C. (1993) 'Tacitus and Germanicus', in *Tacitus and the Tacitean Tradition*, eds. T. J. Luce and A. J. Woodman. Princeton/NJ: 59-85.
- Pelling, C. (1997a) 'Is death the end? Closure Plutarch's Lives', in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature*, eds. D. H. Roberts, F. M. Dunn and D. P. Fowler. Princeton: 228-50.
- Pelling, C. (1997b) 'East is east and west is west – or are they? National

- stereotypes in Herodotus' *Histos* 1.
- Pelling, C. (1999) 'Epilogue', in *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts*, ed. C. S. Kraus. Leiden: 325-60.
- Pelling, C. (2000) *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian*. London.
- Pelling, C. (2002a) 'Plutarch and Catiline', in *Plutarch and History*, ed. C. Pelling. London: 45-63. [= 1985, *Hermes* 113: 311-29.].
- Pelling, C. (2002b) 'Plutarch's adaptation of his source-material', in *Plutarch and History*, ed. C. Pelling. London: 91-115. [= 1980, *JHS* 100: 127-40.].
- Pelling, C. (2002c) 'Plutarch and Thucydides', in *Plutarch and History*, ed. C. Pelling. London: 117-41. [= 1992; in *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition*; ed. P. A. Stadter. Routledge: 10-40.].
- Pelling, C. (2002d) "'Making myth look like history": Plutarch's *Theseus-Romulus*', in *Plutarch and History*, ed. C. Pelling. London: 171-95.
- Pelling, C. (2002e) 'Dionysiac diagnostics: some hints of Dionysius in Plutarch's *Lives*', in *Plutarch and History*, ed. C. Pelling. London: 197-206. [= 1999; in *Plutarco, Dioniso, y el vino*; eds. J. G. Montes, M. Sánchez and R. J. Gallé. Madrid: 359-68.].
- Pelling, C. (2002f) 'The moralism of Plutarch's *Lives*', in *Plutarch and History*, ed. C. Pelling. London: 237-51. [= 1995; in *Ethics and Rhetoric: Classical Essays for Donald Russell on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*; eds. D. C. Innes, H. M. Hine and C. B. R. Pelling. Oxford: 205-20.].
- Pelling, C. (2002g) 'Synkrisis in Plutarch's *Lives*', in *Plutarch and History*; ed. C. Pelling. London: 349-63. [= 1986; in *Miscellanea Plutarchea*; eds. F. E. Brenk and I. Gallo. Ferrara: 83-96.].
- Pelling, C. (2002h) 'Is death the end? Closure in Plutarch's *Lives*', in *Plutarch and History*, ed. C. Pelling. London: 365-86. [= 1997; in *Classical Closure: Endings in Ancient Literature*; eds. D. H. Roberts, F. M. Dunn and D. Fowler. Princeton: 228-50.].
- Pelling, C. (2004) 'Plutarch', in *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature*, eds. I. de Jong, R. Nünlist and A. Bowie. Leiden: 403-21.
- Pelling, C. (2006) 'Breaking the bounds: writing about Julius Caesar', in *The Limits of Ancient Biography*, eds. B. C. McGing and J. M. Mossman. Swansea: 255-80.
- Pelling, C. (2009) 'Tacitus' personal voice', in *The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus*, ed. A. J. Woodman. Cambridge: 147-67.
- Pelling, C. (2010) 'The spur of fame: *Annals* 4.37-8', in *Ancient Historiography and its Contexts. Studies in Honour of A. J. Woodman*, eds. C. S. Kraus, J. Marincola and C. B. R. Pelling. Oxford: 364-84.
- Pelling, C. (forthcoming) 'Historical explanation and what didn't happen. The virtues of virtual history'
- Pellizer, E. (1993) 'Periandro di Corinto e il forno freddo', in *Tradizione e*

- innovazione nella cultura greco da Omero all' età ellenistica. Scritti in onore di Bruno Gentili*, ed. R. Pretagostini. Rome: 801-11.
- Perl, G. (1969) 'Sallust und die Krise der römischen Republik' *Philologus* 113: 201-16.
- Perrin, B. (1914-26) *Plutarch's Lives*. I-XI. Cambridge, MA.
- Petzold, K.-E. (1977) 'Kyklos und Telos im Geschichtsdenken des Polybios' *Saeculum* 28: 253-90.
- Pippidi, D. M. (1965) [1944] *Autour de Tibère*. Rome.
- Pöschl, V. (1940) *Grundwerte römischer Staatsgesinnung in den Geschichtswerken des Sallust*. Berlin.
- Pöschl, V. (1959) 'Das Bild der politischen Welt bei Tacitus', in *Tacitus. Historien*, ed. W. Sontheimer. Stuttgart: VII-XXXIX.
- Pöschl, V. (1969) 'Der Historiker Tacitus', in *Tacitus*, ed. V. Pöschl. Darmstadt: 161-76.
- Pöschl, V. (1981) 'Die Reden Caesars und Catos in Sallusts *Catilina*', in *Sallust*, ed. V. Pöschl. Darmstadt: 368-97.
- Préaux, C. (1965) 'Polybe et Ptolemée Philopator' *CE* 40: 364-75.
- Prince, G. (1988) 'The Disnarrated' *Style* 22: 1-8.
- Purves, A. C. (2010) *Space and Time in Ancient Greek Narrative*. Cambridge.
- Quinn, K. (1963) *Latin Explorations. Critical Studies in Roman Literature* London.
- Raaflaub, K. (1974) *Dignitatis contentio*. Munich.
- Raaflaub, K. (1979) 'Polis Tyrannos. Zur Entstehung einer politischen Metapher', in *Arktouros. Hellenic Studies presented to Bernard M. W. Knox on the occasion of his 65th birthday*, eds. G. W. Bowersock, W. Burkert and C. J. Putnam. Berlin: 237-52.
- Raaflaub, K. (1987) 'Herodotus, political thought, and the meaning of history' *Arethusa* 20: 221-48.
- Raaflaub, K. (1996) 'Born to be wolves? Origins of Roman imperialism', in *Transitions to Empire. Essays in Greco-Roman History, 360-146 B. C.: honor of E. Badian*, eds. R. W. Wallace and E. M. Harris. Norman: 273-314.
- Raaflaub, K. (???)???
- Rademacher, U. (1975) *Die Bildkunst des Tacitus*. Hildesheim.
- Rahn, P. J. (1981) 'The date of Xenophon's exile', in *Classical Contributions. Studies in Honour of Malcolm Francis McGregor*, eds. G. S. Shrimpton and D. J. McCargar. Locust Valley: 103-19.
- Ramsey, J. T. (1984) *Bellum Catilinae*. Chico.
- Ratzinger, J. (1957) 'Originalität und Überlieferung in Augustins Begriff der *confessio*' *REAug* 3: 375-92.
- Raubitschek, A. E. (1941) 'The heroes of Phyle' *Hesperia* 10: 284-95.
- Rawlings, H. R. (1981) *The Structure of Thucydides' History*. Princeton.

- Reichel, M. (2005) 'Ist Xenophons *Anabasis* eine Autobiographie?', in *Antike Autobiographien: Werke – Epochen – Gattungen*, ed. M. Reichel. Köln: 45-73.
- Rengakos, A. (2006) 'Homer and the historians: the influence of epic narrative technique on Herodotus and Thucydides' *Entretiens Hardt* 52: 183-209.
- Reynolds, L. D. (1991) *C. Salusti Crispi Catilina, Iugurtha, Historiarum fragmenta selecta, Appendix Sallustiana*. Oxford.
- Richardson, S. (1990) *The Homeric Narrator*. Nashville.
- Ricoeur, P. (1975) *Le métaphore vive*. Paris.
- Ricoeur, P. (1983-5) *Temps et récit. I-III*. Paris.
- Rimmon-Kenan, S. (1983) *Narrative Fiction. Contemporary Poetics*. London.
- Rinner, W. (1978) 'Zur Darstellungsweise bei Xenophon, *Anabasis* III 1-2' *Philologus* 122: 144-9.
- Roisman, J. (1985) 'Clearchus in Xenophon's *Anabasis*' *Scripta Classica Israelica* 8/9: 30-52.
- Rolfe, J. C. (1921) *Sallust*. Cambridge, MA.
- de Romilly, J. (1956) *Histoire et raison chez Thucydide*. Paris.
- de Romilly, J. (1988) 'Plutarch and Thucydides or The free use of quotations' *Phoenix* 42: 22-34.
- Rood, T. (1998) *Thucydides. Narrative and Explanation*. Oxford.
- Rood, T. (2004a) 'Panhellenism and self-presentation: Xenophon's speeches', in *The Long March. Xenophon and the Ten Thousand*, ed. R. L. Fox. New Haven: 305-29.
- Rood, T. (2004b) 'Polybius', in *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature. Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative. I*, eds. I. de Jong, R. Nünlist and A. Bowie. Leiden: 147-64.
- Rood, T. (2006) 'Objectivity and authority: Thucydides' historical method', in *Brill's Companion to Thucydides*, eds. A. Rengakos and A. Tsakmakis. Leiden: 225-49.
- Rood, T. (2007a) 'Xenophon', in *Time in Ancient Greek Literature*, eds. I. de Jong and R. Nünlist. Leiden: 147-64.
- Rood, T. (2007b) 'Polybius', in *Time in Ancient Greek Literature. Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative. II*, eds. I. de Jong and R. Nünlist. Leiden: 165-81.
- Rood, T. (2012) 'Polybius, Thucydides, and the First Punic War' in *Imperialism, Cultural Politics, and Polybius*, eds. C. J. Jones and L. M. Yarrow. Oxford: 50-67.
- Rood, T. and R. Waterfield (2005) *Xenophon. The Expedition of Cyrus*. Oxford.
- Rosenstone, R. A. (1988) *Mirror in the Shrine. American Encounters with Meiji Japan*. Cambridge MA.
- Rosenstone, R. A. (2004) 'Introduction. Practice and theory', in *Experiments in Rethinking History*, eds. A. Munslow and R. A. Rosenstone. New York: 1-

7.

- Rösler, W. (1991) 'Die "Selbsthistorisierung" des Autors. Zur Stellung Herodots zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit' *Philologus* 135: 215-20.
- Rösler, W. (2002) 'The *Histories* and writing', in *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, eds. E. Bakker, I. de Jong and H. van Wees. Leiden: 79-94.
- Ross, D. L. (1991) 'Time, the heaven of heavens, and memory in Augustine's Confessions' *AugStud* 22: 191-205.
- Ross, J., D. O (1973) 'The Tacitean Germanicus' *YCIS* 23: 209-27.
- Rousseau, J.-J. (1964) *Les Confessions*, ed. J. Voisine. Paris.
- Roveri, A. (1964) *Studi su Polibio*. Bologna.
- Runia, E. (2006) 'Presence' *History and Theory* 45: 1-29.
- Russell, B. (1948) *History of Western Philosophy and Its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. London.
- Russell, D. A. (1973) *Plutarch*. London.
- Russell, D. A. (1995a) 'On reading Plutarch's *Lives*', in *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, ed. B. Scardigli. Oxford: 75-94. [= 1966, *G&R* 13: 139-54.].
- Russell, D. A. (1995b) 'Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 1-16', in *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, ed. B. Scardigli. Oxford: 191-207. [= 1966, *PCPhS* 12: 37-47.].
- Russell, D. A. (1995c) 'Plutarch's *Life of Coriolanus*', in *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, ed. B. Scardigli. Oxford: 357-72. [= 1963, *JRS* 53: 21-8.].
- Russell, D. A. (2001) *Quintilian. The Orator's Education*. I-V. Cambridge, MA.
- Rutherford, R. B. (1989) *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. Oxford.
- Rutledge, S. (1998) 'Trajan and Tacitus' audience: reader reception of *Annals* 1-2' *Ramus* 27: 141-59.
- Ryberg, I. S. (1942) 'Tacitus' art of innuendo' *TAPhA* 73: 383-404.
- Sacks, K. S. (1981) *Polybius on the Writing of History*. Berkeley.
- Sage, P. W. (1991) 'Tradition, genre, and character portrayal. *Cyropaedia* 8.7 and *Anabasis* 1.9' *GRBS* 32: 61-79.
- Sailor, D. (2008) *Writing and Empire in Tacitus*. Cambridge.
- Sansone, D. (1980) 'Plutarch, Alexander and the discovery of naphtha' *GRBS* 21: 63-74.
- Sansone, D. (1985) 'The date of Herodotus' publication' *ICS* 10: 1-9.
- Sarbin, T. R. (1986) *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct*. New York.
- von Scala, R. (1890) *Die Studien des Polybios*. Stuttgart.
- Scanlon, T. F. (1987) *Spes frustrata. A Reading of Sallust*. Heidelberg.
- Scardigli, B. (1995) 'Introduction', in *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, ed. B. Scardigli. Oxford: 1-46.
- Schackleton-Baily, D. R. (1975) 'Review: E. S. Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic*' *AJPh* 96: 436-43.
- Schama, S. (1989) *Citizens. A Chronicle of the French Revolution*. London.

- Schama, S. (1991) *Dead Certainties. Unwarranted Speculations*. New York.
- Schapp, W. (1976) [1953] *In Geschichten verstrickt: Zum Sein von Mensch und Ding*. (2nd edition). Wiesbaden.
- Scheller, P. (1911) *De hellenistica historiae conscribendae arte*. Leipzig.
- Schepens, G. (1975) “Ἐμφασις und ἐνάργεια in Polybios’ Geschichtstheorie’ *RSA* 5: 185-200.
- Schepens, G. (1990a) ‘Polemic and methodology in Polybius, book XII’, in *Purposes of History. Studies in Greek Historiography from the 4th to the 2nd Centuries B. C. Proceedings of the International Colloquium Leuven, 24-26 May 1988*, ed. H. Verdin. Leuven: 39-61.
- Schepens, G. (1990b) ‘Polybius on the Punic Wars. The problem of objectivity in history’, in *Punic Wars*, eds. H. Devijver and E. Lipinski. Leuven: 317-28.
- Schepens, G. (2005) ‘Polybius on Phylarchus’ “tragic” historiography’, in *The Shadow of Polybius. Intertextuality as a Research Tool in Greek Historiography*, eds. G. Schepens and J. Bollansée. Leuven: 141-64.
- Schepens, G. (2007) ‘Zum Verhältnis von Biographie und Geschichtsschreibung in hellenistischer Zeit’, in *Die griechische Biographie in hellenistischer Zeit. Akten des internationalen Kongresses vom 26.-29. Juli 2006 in Würzburg*, eds. M. Erler and S. Schorn. Berlin: 335-61.
- Scheuer, M. (2004) ‘... denn die Zeit selber hast Du geschaffen (Conf. 11,14,17). Schöpfung und Zeit in den *Confessiones* des Augustinus’, in *Unruhig ist unser Herz. Interpretationen zu Augustins Confessiones*, ed. M. Fiedrowicz. Trier: 153-70
- Schmal, S. (2001) *Sallust*. Hildesheim.
- Schmid, W. and O. Stählin (1934) *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*. Munich.
- Schmidt, E. A. (1985) *Zeit und Geschichte bei Augustinus*. Heidelberg.
- Schmidt-Dengler, W. (1969) ‘Der rhetorische Aufbau des achten Buches der *Konfessionen* des heiligen Augustin’ *REAug* 15: 195-208.
- Schneider, C. (1974) *Information und Absicht bei Thukydides. Untersuchung zur Motivation des Handelns*. Göttingen.
- Schnorr von Carolsfeld, H. (1888) *Über die Reden und Briefe bei Sallust*. Leipzig.
- Schur, W. (1934) *Sallust als Historiker*. Stuttgart.
- Schwartz, E. (1897) ‘Die Berichte über die catilinarische Verschwörung’ *Hermes* 32: 554-608.
- Schwinge, E.-R. (2008) *Komplexität und Transparenz. Thukydides: Eine Leseanleitung* Heidelberg.
- Scott, R. D. (1974) ‘The death of Nero’s mother (Tacitus, Annals, XIV, 1-13)’ *Latomus* 33: 105-15.
- Seager, R. (1964) ‘The first Catilinarian conspiracy’ *Historia* 13: 338-47.
- Seel, O. (1930) *Von den Briefen Ad Caesarem zur Coniuratio Catilinae*. Leipzig.
- Segal, C. (1962) ‘Gorgias and the psychology of the *logos*’ *HSPH* 66: 99-155.
- Shatzman, I. (1974) ‘Tacitean rumours’ *Latomus* 33: 549-78.

- Sheed, F. J. (2011) *Augustine. Confessions*. Ed. M. P. Foley. (2nd edition). Indianapolis.
- Sheridan, B. (2010) 'Diodorus' reading of Polybius' universalism', in *Historiae mundi: Studies in Universal Historiography*, eds. P. Liddel and A. Fear. London: 41-55.
- Shimron, B. (1979/80) 'Polybius on Rome. A reexamination of the evidence' *SCI* 5: 94-117.
- Shimron, B. (1989) *Politics and Belief in Herodotus*. Stuttgart.
- Shotter, D. C. A. (1968) 'Tacitus, Tiberius and Germanicus' *Historia* 18: 194-214.
- Sieben, H. J. (1977) 'Der Psalter und die Bekehrung der VOCES und AFFECTUS. Zu Augustinus, Conf. IX, 4.6 und X, 33.. ' *Theologie und Philosophie* 52: 481-97.
- Simon, B. (2004) 'Narrating a southern tragedy. Historical facts and historical fiction', in *Experiments in Rethinking History*, eds. A. Munslow and R. A. Rosenstone. New York: 156-82.
- Sinclair, P. (1991) 'Rhetorical generalizations in *Annales* 1-6. A review of the problem of innuendo and Tacitus' integrity' *ANRW* II.33.4: 2795-831.
- Sinclair, P. (1995) *Tacitus the Sententious Historian. A Sociology of Rhetoric in Annales 1-6*. University Park.
- Skard, E. (1943) 'Die Bildersprache des Sallust' *SO Suppl.* 11: 141-64.
- Sklenář, S. (1998) 'La République des Signes: Caesar, Cato, and the language of Sallustian morality' *TAPhA* 128: 205-20.
- Skutsch, O. (1985) *The Annals of Q. Ennius*. Oxford.
- Smart, J. D. (1977) 'Review article: the Athenian empire' *Phoenix* 31: 245-57.
- Smitten, J. R. and A. Daghistany (eds.) (1981) *Spatial Form in Narrative*. Ithaca.
- Snell, B. (1924) *Die Ausdrücke für den Begriff des Wissens in der vorplatonischen Philosophie*. Berlin.
- Soares, C. (2007) 'Rules for a good description: theory and practice in the Life of Artaxerxes (§§ 1-19)' *Hermathena* 182: 85-100.
- Solignac, A. (1962) *Les Confessions. I-II*. Paris.
- Solmsen, F. (1982) 'Two crucial decisions in Herodotus', in *Kleine Schriften III*. Hildesheim: 78-109.
- Soubiran, J. (1964) 'Thèmes et rythmes d'épopée dans les *Annales* de Tacite' *Pallas* 12: 55-79.
- Sourvinou-Inwood, C. (1991) 'Reading' *Greek Culture: Texts and Images, Rituals and Myths*. Oxford.
- Squire, M. (2009) *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*. Cambridge.
- Stadter, P. (1992) 'Herodotus and the Athenian Arche' *ASNP* 22: 781-809.
- Stadter, P. A. (ed.) (1973) *The Speeches in Thucydides*. Chapel Hill.
- Stadter, P. A. (ed.) (1973) *The Speeches in Thucydides*. Chapel Hill.
- Stadter, P. A. (1989) *A Commentary on Plutarch's Pericles*. Chapel Hill.

- Stadter, P. A. (1992) 'Herodotus and the Athenian arche' *ASNP* III 22: 781-809.
- Stadter, P. A. (1995) 'Plutarch's comparison of Pericles and Fabius Maximus', in *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, ed. B. Scardigli. Oxford: 155-64. [= 1975, *GRBS* 16: 77-85.].
- Stadter, P. A. (1996) 'Anecdotes and the thematic structure of Plutarchean biography', in *Estudios sobre Plutarco: Aspectos formales*, eds. J. A. F. Delgado and F. P. Pardo. Madrid: 291-303.
- Stahl, H.-P. (2003) *Thucydides: Man's Place in History*. Swansea.
- Stahl, M. (1983) 'Tyrannis und das Problem der Macht. Die Geschichten Herodots über Kypselos und Periander von Korinth' *Hermes* 111: 202-20.
- de Ste. Croix, G. E. M. (1972) *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*. London.
- Steidle, W. (1958) *Sallusts historische Monographien. Themenwahl und Geschichtsbild*. Wiesbaden.
- Steiner, D. (1994) *The Tyrant's Writ: Myths and Images of Writing in Ancient Greece*. Princeton.
- Stendhal (2007) *La Chartreuse de Parme*, ed. M. Crouzet. Orléans.
- Stewart, A. (1993) *Faces of Power. Alexander's Images and Hellenistic Politics*. Berkeley.
- Stock, B. (1996) *Augustine the Reader: Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation*. London.
- Van der Stockt, L. (1992) *Twinkling and Twilight. Plutarch's Reflections on Literature*. Brussels.
- Stockton, D. L. (1977) 'Review: R. S. Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic*' *Gnomon* 49: 216-18.
- Stoichita, V. I. (1993) *L'instauration du tableau: Metapeinture à l'aube des temps modernes*. Paris.
- Strasburger, H. (1955) 'Herodot und das perikleische Athen' *Historia* 4: 1-25.
- Strasburger, H. (1966) *Die Wesensbestimmung der Geschichte durch die antike Geschichtsschreibung*. Wiesbaden.
- Strauss Clay, J. (2010) *Homer's Trojan Theater. Space, Vision, and Memory in the Iliad*. Cambridge.
- Sturrock, J. (1993) *The Language of Autobiography: Studies in the First Person Singular*. Cambridge.
- Suerbaum, W. (1971) 'Der Historiker und die Freiheit des Wortes. Die Rede des Cremutius Cordus bei Tacitus, *Ann.* 4,34/35', in *Politik und literarische Kunst im Werk des Tacitus*, ed. G. Radke. Stuttgart: 61-99.
- Sullivan, D. (1976) 'Innuendo and the "weighted alternative" in Tacitus' *CJ* 71: 312-26.
- Svenbro, J. (1993) *Phrasikleia: An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece*. Tr. J. Lloyd. Ithaca.
- Syme, R. (1958) *Tacitus. I-II*. Oxford.
- Syme, R. (1964) *Sallust*. Berkeley.

- Tavard, G. (1988) *Les jardins de Saint Augustin: lecture des Confessions*. Montréal.
- Tchekhov, A. (1974) [1927] *Literary and Theatrical Reminiscences*, ed. S. S. Koteliansky. New York.
- Tengelyi, L. (2007) *Erfahrung und Ausdruck: Phänomenologie im Umbruch bei Husserl und seinen Nachfolgern*. Dordrecht.
- Thompson, E. P. (1966) *The Making of the English Working Class*. New York.
- Tolstoi, L. (2007) *War and Peace*. Tr. R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky. New York.
- Tritle, L. A. (2004) 'Xenophon's portrait of Clearchus. A study in post-traumatic stress disorder', in *Xenophon and His World. Papers from a Conference Held in Liverpool in July 1999*, ed. C. J. Tuplin. Stuttgart: 325-39.
- Troxel, A. C. (1994) 'What did Augustine confess in his *Confessions*?' *TJ* 15: 163-80.
- Tsagalidis, C. (2002) 'Xenophon Homericus: an unnoticed loan from the Iliad in Xenophon's *Anabasis*' *Cl&M* 53: 101-21.
- Tucker, R. A. (1987) 'Tacitus and the death of Lucan' *Latomus* 46: 330-7.
- Tuplin, C. (2003) 'Heroes in Xenophon's *Anabasis*', in *Modelli eroici dall'antichità alla cultura europea*, ed. A. Barzanò. Rome: 115-56.
- Ullman, B. L. (1942) 'History and tragedy' *TAPhA* 73: 25-53.
- von Ungern-Sternberg, J. (1982) 'Weltreich und Krise: äußere Bedingungen für den Niedergang der römischen Republik' *MH* 39: 254-71.
- von Ungern-Sternberg, J. (1998) 'Die Legitimitätskrise der römischen Republik' *HZ* 266: 607-24.
- Usher, S. (1974-85) *Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The Critical Essays*. I-II. Cambridge, MA.
- Valgiglio, E. (1987) 'Ἰστορία ε βίος in Plutarco' *Orpheus* 8: 50-70.
- Vance, E. (1973) 'Augustine's *Confessions* and the grammar of selfhood' *Genre* 6: 1-28.
- van der Veen, J. E. (1996) *The Significant and the Insignificant: Five Studies in Herodotus' View of History*. Amsterdam.
- Vercruyssen, M. (1990) 'Polybe et les épopées homériques' *AncSoc* 21: 293-309.
- Verdin, H. (1990) 'Polybius over het Agathoclesdrama (Pol. XV. 25-36)', in *Opes Atticae. Miscellanea philologica et historica Raymondo Bogaert et Hermanno Van Looy oblata*, eds. M. Geerard, J. Desmet and R. V. Plaetse. Steenbrugge: 443-54.
- Vianey, J. (1896) *Quomodo dici possit Tacitum fuisse summum pingendi artificem*. Paris.
- De Vivo, A. (2003) 'Le parole ambigue della storia. La morte di Germanico negli *Annales* di Tacito', in *Tra strategie retoriche e generi letterari. Dieci studi di letteratura latina*, ed. V. Viparelli. Naples: 69-102.
- Vogt, J. (1936) 'Tacitus und Unparteilichkeit des Historikers', in *Studien zu Tacitus. Carl Hosius zum 70. Geburtstag am 21. März 1936 dargebracht*,

- eds. H. Hommel, K. Keyssner, J. Martin, F. Pfister and J. Vogt. Stuttgart: 1-20.
- Vretska, K. (1937) 'Geschichtsbild und Weltanschauung bei Sallust' *Gymnasium* 48: 24-43.
- Vretska, K. (1955) *Studien zu Sallusts Bellum Jugurthinum*. Wien.
- Vretska, K. (1976) *Sallust. De Catilinae coniuratione I-II*. Heidelberg.
- Walbank, F. W. (1938) 'Φίλιππος Τραγωιδούμενος. A Polybian experiment' *JHS* 58: 55-68.
- Walbank, F. W. (1945) 'Polybius, Philinus, and the First Punic War' *CQ* 39: 1-18.
- Walbank, F. W. (1955) 'Tragic history. A reconsideration' *BICS* 2: 4-14.
- Walbank, F. W. (1957-79) *Commentary on Polybius. I-III*. Oxford.
- Walbank, F. W. (1960) 'History and tragedy' *Historia* 9: 216-34.
- Walbank, F. W. (1972) *Polybius*. Berkeley.
- Walbank, F. W. (1974) 'Polybius between Greece and Rome', in *Polybe*, ed. E. Gabba. Geneva: 1-31.
- Walbank, F. W. (1975) 'Symploke: its role in Polybius' Histories' *YCS* 24: 197-212.
- Walbank, F. W. (1977) 'Polybius' last ten books', in *Historiographica Antiqua*, ed. T. Reekmans. Leuven: 139-62.
- Walbank, F. W. (2002) *Polybius, Rome and the Hellenistic World*. Cambridge.
- Walbank, F. W. (2007) 'Fortune (*tyche*) in Polybius', in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, ed. J. Marincola. Malden: 349-55.
- Waldenfels, B. (2004) *Phänomenologie der Aufmerksamkeit*. Frankfurt.
- Walker, A. (1993) 'Enargeia and the spectator in Greek historiography' *TAPhA* 123: 353-77.
- Walker, B. (1952) *The Annals of Tacitus*. Manchester.
- Walker, J. (2004) 'Antonio Foscarini in the City of Crossed Destinies', in *Experiments in Rethinking History*, eds. A. Munslow and R. A. Rosenstone. New York: 124-55.
- Walker, J. (2007) *Pistols! Treason! Murder! The Rise and Fall of a Master Spy*. Melbourne.
- Walter, U. (2009) 'Struktur, Zufall, Kontingenz? Überlegungen zum Ende der römischen Republik', in *Eine politische Kultur (in) der Krise? Die letzte Generation der römischen Republik*, eds. K.-J. Hölkesskamp and E. Müller-Luckner. Munich: 27-51.
- Wardman, A. (1974) *Plutarch's Lives*. Berkeley.
- Waterfield, R. (1998) *Herodotus. The Histories*. Ed. C. Dewald. Oxford.
- Waters, K. H. (1970) 'Cicero, Sallust and Catiline' *Historia* 19: 195-215.
- Webb, R. (2009) *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice*. Farnham.
- Weçowski, M. (1996) 'Ironie et histoire: le discours de Socrès (Hérodote V 92)' *AncSoc* 27: 205-58.

- Weinryb, E. (2009) 'Historiographic counterfactuals', in *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, ed. A. Tucker. London: 109-19.
- Weishaupt, A. (1788) *Geschichte der Vervollkommnung des menschlichen Geschlechts. I.* Frankfurt.
- Weizsäcker, A. (1931) *Untersuchungen über Plutarchs biographische Technik.* Berlin.
- Welser, C. (2009) 'Two didactic strategies at the end of Herodotus' *Histories* (9.108-122)' *CIAnt* 28: 359-85.
- Westlake, H. D. (1977) 'Λέγεται in Thucydides' *Mnemosyne* 30: 345-62.
- Westlake, H. D. (1989) *Studies in Thucydides and Greek History.* Bristol.
- White, H. (1973) *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe.* Baltimore.
- Whitmarsh, T. (2002) 'Alexander's Hellenism and Plutarch's textualism' *CQ* 52: 174-92.
- Wiedemann, T. (1990) 'Rhetoric in Polybius', in *Purposes of History. Studies in Greek Historiography from the 4th to the 2nd Centuries B. C. Proceedings of the International Colloquium Leuven, 24-26 May 1988*, ed. H. Verdin. Leuven: 287-300.
- Wieland, W. (1978) *Offenbarung bei Augustinus.* Mainz.
- Wilkins, A. T. (1994) *Hero or Villain? Sallust's Portrayal of Catiline.* New York.
- Williams, M. F. (2007) 'Polybius' historiography and Aristotle' *Poetics*' *AHB* 21: 1-64.
- Wilson, J. P. (1990) 'The death of Lucan: suicide and execution in Tacitus' *Latomus* 49: 458-63.
- Wimmel, W. (1967) 'Die zeitlichen Vorwegnahmen in Sallusts *Catilina*' *Hermes* 95: 192-221.
- Winkler, J. (1985) *Auctor & Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius's Golden Ass.* Berkeley.
- Winkler, J. J. (1985) *Auctor and Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius' Golden Ass.* Berkeley.
- Wiseman, T. P. (1967) 'Tacitus, *Ann.* XV. 53.2' *CR* 17: 264-5.
- Wolf, W. (2002) 'Das Problem der Narrativität in Literatur, Bildender Kunst und Musik. Ein Beitrag zu einer intermedialen Erzähltheorie', in *Erzähltheorie transgenerisch, intermedial, interdisziplinär*, eds. A. Nünning and V. Nünning. Trier: 23-104.
- Wolf, W. and W. Bernhart (eds.) (2007) *Description in Literature and Other Media.* Amsterdam.
- Wolff, E. (1964) 'Das Weib des Masistes' *Hermes* 92: 51-81.
- Wolters, R. (2003) 'Hermeneutik des Hinterhalts. Die antiken Berichte zur Varuskatastrophe und der Fundplatz von Kalkriese' *Klio* 85: 131-70.
- Woodman, A. (1988) *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography. Four Studies.*

Portland.

- Woodman, A. J. (1998) *Tacitus Reviewed*. Oxford.
- Woodman, A. J. (2004) *Tacitus. The Annals*. Indianapolis.
- Woodman, A. J. and R. H. Martin (1996) *The Annals of Tacitus. Book 3*. Cambridge.
- Wooten, C. (1974) 'The speeches in Polybius. An insight into the nature of Hellenistic oratory' *AJPh* 95: 235-51.
- Wormell, D. E. (1963) 'Croesus and the Delphic oracle's omniscience' *Hermathena* 97: 20-2.
- Wunderer, C. (1909) *Gleichnisse und Metaphern bei Polybios*. Leipzig.
- Young, F. (1997) *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*. Oxford.
- Zadoroinyi, A. V. (2011) 'Mimesis and the (plu)past in Plutarch's *Lives*', in *Time and Narrative in Ancient Historiography. The 'Plupast' from Herodotus to Appian*, eds. J. Grethlein and C. Krebs. Cambridge: xx-xx.
- Zanker, G. (1981) 'Enargeia in the ancient criticism of poetry' *RhM* 124: 297-311.
- Ziegler, K. (1935) 'Plutarchstudien, XIX-XX' *RhM* 84: 369-90.
- Ziegler, K. (1952) 'Polybios von Megalopolis' *RE* 21: 1440-578.
- Zimmermann, B. (2005) 'Augustinus, *Confessiones* – eine Autobiographie? Überlegungen zu einem Scheinproblem', in *Antike Autobiographien. Werke – Epochen – Gattungen*, ed. M. Reichel. Cologne: 237-49.