An Introduction to Ancient Historiography

Herodotus, the Histories


Book One

The results of the inquiries\(^1\) of Herodotus of Halicarnassus are herein set for public display,\(^2\) to the end that neither the deeds of men may be forgotten by lapse of time, nor the works great and marvellous, both those which have been produced by Greeks and those by Barbarians, may lose their renown; and especially that the causes may be remembered for which these waged war with one another.\(^3\)

The Abduction Logos i. 1 - 5.

1. [1] The Persian storytellers say\(^4\) that the Phoenicians first began the quarrel. These, they say, came from the sea which is called the Erythraian\(^5\) to this sea of ours; and having settled in the land where they continue even now to dwell, set themselves immediately to make long voyages by sea. And conveying merchandise of Egypt and of Assyria they arrived at other places and also at Argos; [2] now Argos was at that time in all points the first of the States within that land which is now called Hellas;\(^6\) the Phoenicians arrived then at this land of Argos, and began to dispose of their ship's cargo. [3] And on the fifth or sixth day after they had arrived, when their goods had

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\(^1\) The results of inquiries, *historia* (ἱστορία), is the term by which the work was named, and which became the modern term for the past, investigations into the past, and books about the past.

\(^2\) According to the standard manuscripts. But see Aristotle *Rhetoric* 3.9 where, quoting this opening line, he has ‘Herodotus of Thurii’ instead.

\(^3\) The *proem* is the editor’s translation.

\(^4\) Herodotus rarely reports directly, but rather recounts what he has heard from others. It is important here to understand a cultural distinction: ‘The Persians say…’ that they have their own versions of the Greek stories.

\(^5\) The Erythraian Sea is all of the bodies of water now included in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf (How and Wells).

\(^6\) The first indication of Herodotus' attention to detail and his acute sense of time: the myth of Io occurred prior to the conquests of the sons of Hellen, so the land could not yet be called Hellas.
been almost all sold, there came down to the sea a great company of women, and among them the
daughter of the king; and her name, as the Greeks also agree, was Io the daughter of Inachus.7
These standing near to the stern of the ship were buying the wares such as pleased them most,
when of a sudden the Phoenicians, passing the word from one to another, made a rush upon them;
and the greater part of the women escaped by flight, but Io and certain others were carried off. So
they put them on board their ship, and quickly departed, sailing away to Egypt.

2

[1] In this manner the Persians, not agreeing with the Greeks, report that Io came to Egypt
and this they say was the first beginning of wrongs. Then after this, they say, certain Greeks (but
the name of the people they are not able to report) put in to the city of Tyre in Phoenicia and carried
off the king's daughter Europa8 - these would doubtless be Cretans - and so they were quits for the
former injury. After this however the Greeks, they say, were the authors of the second wrong; [2]
for they sailed in to Aia of Colchis and to the river Phasis with a ship of war, and from thence,
after they had done the other business for which they came, they carried off the king's daughter
Medea: and the king of Colchis sent a herald to the land of Greece and demanded satisfaction for
the abduction9 and to have his daughter back; but they answered that, as the Barbarians had given
them no satisfaction for the abduction of Io the Argive, so neither would they give satisfaction to
the Barbarians for this.10

3

[1] In the next generation after this, they say, Alexander the son of Priam,11 having heard of
these things, desired to get a wife for himself by violence from Greece, being fully assured that he
would not be compelled to give any satisfaction for this wrong, inasmuch as the Greeks gave none
for theirs. [2] So he carried off Helen, and the Greeks resolved to send messengers first and to
demand her back with satisfaction for the abduction; and when they put forth this demand, the

7 Apollodorus (ii.1.3) and Pausanias (ii.16.1) say that Io was the daughter of Iasus. This needn't be a contradiction:
The genitive of origin, especially as deployed by Herodotus, is not necessarily immediate. It could just as well read
"Io the descendant of Inachus" (See also Aeschulus Prometheus Bound 590; τῆς Ἰναχείας) Iassus was a great-
grandson of Niobe and Zeus, Niobe the grand-daughter of Inachus.
8 The Greek legend has it that Zeus appeared to Europa, the daughter of Agenor, and disguised as a white bull he
carried her away to Crete (Apollodorus iii.1.1).
9 Macaulay here translates "rape." But the verb Herodtus uses is consistent, and while it can mean abduct, steal or
rape, consistency suggests that 'carried off' or 'abducted' is the better translation.
10 The reference here is to the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts to Colchis. Medea helped Jason take the Golden
Fleece and escaped with him (Apollodorus i.9.16 - 26: Apollonius, Argonautica).
11 Alexander is another name for Paris. Homer uses them both.
others alleged to them the abduction of Medea, saying that the Greeks were now desiring satisfaction to be given to them by others, though they had given none themselves nor had surrendered the person when demand was made.12

4. [1] Up to this point, they say, nothing more happened than the carrying away of women on both sides; but after this the Greeks were very greatly to blame; for they set the first example of war, making an expedition into Asia before the Barbarians made any into Europe. [2] Now they say that in their judgment, though it is an act of wrong to carry away women by force, it is a folly to set one's heart on taking vengeance for their abduction, and the wise course is to pay no regard when they have been carried away; for it is evident that they would never be carried away if they were not themselves willing to go.13 [3] And the Persians say that they, namely the people of Asia, when their women were carried away by force, had made it a matter of no account, but the Greeks on account of a woman of Sparta gathered together a great armament, and then came to Asia and destroyed the kingdom of Priam; [4] and that from this time forward they had always considered the Greek people to be their enemy: for Asia and the Barbarian peoples which dwell there the Persians claim as belonging to them; but Europe and the Greek people to be their enemy: for Asia and the Barbarian peoples which dwell there the Persians claim as belonging to them; but Europe and the Greek people they consider to be parted off from them.

5 [1] The Persians for their part say that things happened that way; and they conclude that the beginning of their quarrel with the Greeks was on account of the taking of Ilium: [2] but as regards Io, the Phoenicians do not agree with the Persians in the way they tell the tale; for they deny that they carried her off to Egypt by violent means, and they say on the other hand that when they were in Argos she was intimate with the master of their ship, and perceiving that she was with child, she was ashamed to confess it to her parents, and therefore sailed away with the Phoenicians of her own will, for fear of being found out.

12 This is, of course, a completely different reading of the story from what we have in Homer and other sources. Most agree that Helen left Menelaus for love of Paris. In every tradition, including Homer and Herodotus, Paris is guilty of a crime - either violation of the marriage bond and the guest-host relationship, or outright abduction. The question, then, is the guilt of Helen. Herodotus seems to suggest here that she is an innocent victim...

13 Hence the necessity of the change in translation. Not even Herodotus would suggest that a woman could not be raped unless a willing victim and he is not suggesting that they were willingly kidnapped. He is suggesting that there was no abduction at all; that these are all stories of elopement. The blame comes back to Helen.
These are the stories told by the Persians and the Phoenicians: concerning these things I am not going to say that they happened this way or that, but when I have pointed to the man who I know first began to commit wrong against the Greeks, I shall go forward further with the story, giving an account of the cities of men, small as well as great: for those which in old times were great have for the most part become small, while those that were in my own time great used in former times to be small: so then, since I know that human prosperity never continues steadfast, I shall make mention of both indifferently.

The Lydian Logos i. 6 - 94

6.

[1] Croesus was Lydian, the son of Alyattes and ruler of the nations which dwell on this side of the river Halys; which river, flowing from the South between the Syrians and the Paphlagonians, runs out towards the North Wind into that Sea which is called the Euxine. This Croesus, first of all the Barbarians of whom we have knowledge, subdued certain of the Greeks and forced them to pay tribute, while others he gained over and made them his friends. Those whom he subdued were the Ionians, the Aiolians, and the Dorians who dwell in Asia; and those whom he made his friends were the Spartans. But before the reign of Croesus all the Greeks were free; for the expedition of the Cimmerians, which came upon Ionia before the time of Croesus, was not a conquest of the cities but a plundering incursion only.

7.

[1] Now the supremacy which had belonged to the Heraclidae came to the family of Croesus, called Mermnadae, in the following manner: [2] Candaules, whom the Greeks call Myrsilus, was ruler of Sardis and a descendant of Alcaeus, son of Heracles: for Agron, the son of Ninus, the son of Belus, the son of Alcaeus, was the first of the Heraclidae who became king of Sardis, and Candaules the son of Myrsus was the last; [3] but those who were kings over this land before Agron, were descendants of Lydus the son of Atys, whence this whole nation was called Lydian,

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14 A methodological statement that Herodotus will repeat often. He is telling us what he has heard others say and is withholding his own judgment so that his audience can become participants in the dialogue.
15 Iliad ii.116 – 17: "Such is the will of Zeus, who has brought low many great cities, and many more will he ruin."
16 The Black Sea.
17 See Chapter 15.
18 Not to be confused with the Myrmidons of Pthiotis in the Iliad.
19 The name may be Hittite in origin. It is also the name of Pelop's charioteer and Hall (JHS 29.19) suggests that this is proof of the Phrygian origin of Pelops (How and Wells).
having been before called Meonian. \textsuperscript{20} From these the Heraclidae, descended from Heracles and
the slave-girl of Iardanus, \textsuperscript{21} obtained the government, being charged with it by reason of an oracle;
and they reigned for twenty two generations of men, five hundred and five years, handing on the
power from father to son, till the time of Clandaules the son of Myrsus.

8. Candaules and Gyges

[1] This Candaules then of whom I speak had become passionately in love with his own
wife; \textsuperscript{22} and having become so, he deemed that his wife was fairer by far than all other women; and
thus deeming, to Gyges the son of Daskylus \textsuperscript{23} (for he of all his spearmen was the most pleasing to
him), to this Gyges, I say, he used to impart as well the more weighty of his affairs as also the
beauty of his wife, praising it above measure: [2] and after no long time, since it was destined that
evil should happen to Candaules, he said to Gyges as follows: "Gyges, I think that you do not
believe me when I tell you of the beauty of my wife, for it happens that men's ears are less apt of
belief than their eyes: contrive therefore means by which you may look upon her naked." [3] But
he cried aloud and said: "Master, what word of foolishness is this which you speak, bidding me
look upon my mistress naked? When a woman loses her clothes she also loses her respect. \textsuperscript{24}
Moreover of old time those fair sayings have been found out by men, from which we ought t o
learn wisdom; and of these one is this: That each man should look to his own. \textsuperscript{25} But I believe
indeed that she is of all women the fairest and I entreat you not to ask of me that which it is not
lawful for me to do."

9.

[1] With such words as these he resisted, fearing lest some evil might come to him from this;
but the king answered him thus: "Be of good courage, Gyges, and have no fear, either of me, that
I am saying these words to try you, or of my wife, lest any harm may happen to you from her. For
I will contrive it so from the first that she shall not even perceive that she has been seen by you.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} \textit{Iliad} ii.864.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Omphale was the name of the daughter - not the slave - of Iardanus (Jordan) and it was Heracles who was her
slave (Apollod. ii.6.3).
\item \textsuperscript{22} Understandable as an oddity when we consider that royal marriages were always political; love had nothing to do
with it.
\item \textsuperscript{23} The name is suggestive of Daskyleum, a city on the Asian side of the Propontis and capital of the Persian Satrapy
(How and Wells).
\item \textsuperscript{24} The Greek here, \textit{aidos}, is \textit{reverence, awe, honour, self-respect, dignity}, etc.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Herodotus is, here, establishing the moral overtone of Book One. See below Ch. 29 - 33, the advice of Solon to
Croesus.
\end{itemize}
[2] I will place you in the room where we sleep, behind the open door; and after I have gone in, my wife also will come to lie down. Now there is a seat near the entrance of the room, and upon this she will lay her garments as she takes them off one by one; and so you will be able to gaze upon her at full leisure. [3] And when she goes from the chair to the bed and you shall be behind her back, then let it be your part to take care that she sees you not as you go through the door."\(^{26}\)

10.

[1] He then, since he might not avoid it, gave consent: and Candaules, when he considered that it was time to rest, led Gyges to the chamber; and straightway after this the woman also appeared, and Gyges looked upon her after she came in and as she laid down her garments. [2] And when she had her back turned towards him, as she went to the bed, then he slipped away from his hiding-place and made his escape. And as he went out, the woman caught sight of him, and perceiving that which had been done by her husband she did not cry out, though struck with shame, but she made as though she had not perceived the matter, meaning to avenge herself upon Candaules: [3] For among the Lydians as also among most other Barbarians it is a shame even for a man to be seen naked.\(^{27}\)

11.

[1] At the time then she kept silence, as I say, and made no outward sign; but as soon as day had dawned, and she made ready those of the servants whom she perceived to be the most attached to herself, and after that she sent to summon Gyges. He then, not supposing that anything of that which had been done was known to her, came upon her summons; for he had been accustomed before to go whenever the queen summoned him. [2] And when Gyges was come, the woman said to him these words: "There are now two ways open to you, Gyges, and I give you the choice which of the two you will prefer to take. Either you must slay Candaules and possess both me and the kingdom of Lydia, or you must yourself here on the spot be slain, so that you may not in future, by obeying Candaules in all things, see that which you should not. [3] Either he must die who formed this design, or you who hast looked upon me naked and done that which is not accounted lawful." For a time then Gyges was amazed at these words, and afterwards he began to entreat her.

\(^{26}\) This is, again, a pragmatic interpretation of a myth. See Plato, *Republic* 359d - 360b; 612b.4, in which Gyges is a shepherd who finds a magic ring in a cave. The ring makes him invisible, a power he uses to seduce the queen and kill the king (to which J. R. R. Tolkein is clearly indebted). Herodotus' question is: if the story is based on fact, what is more likely; that he had a magic ring or that he was hiding in a corner?

\(^{27}\) As opposed to Greek culture, where male nudity was not regarded as shameful.
that she would not bind him by necessity to make such a choice: [4] then however, as he could not prevail with her, but saw that necessity was in truth set before him either to slay his master or to be himself slain by others, he made the choice to live himself, and he inquired further as follows: "Since you compel me to take my master's life against my own will, let me hear from you also what is the manner in which we shall lay hands upon him." [5] And she answering said: "From that same place shall the attempt be, where he displayed me naked; and we will lay hands upon him as he sleeps."

12

[1] So after they had prepared the plot, when night came on, (for Gyges was not let go nor was there any way of escape for him, but he must either be slain himself or slay Candaules), he followed the woman to the bedchamber; and she gave him a dagger and concealed him behind that very same door. [2] Then afterwards, while Candaules was sleeping, Gyges came privily up to him and slew him, and he obtained both his wife and his kingdom: of him moreover Archilochus of Paros, who lived about that time, made mention in a trimeter iambic verse. 28

13.

[1] He obtained the kingdom however and was strengthened in it by means of the Oracle at Delphi; for when the Lydians were angry because of the fate of Candaules, and had risen in arms, a treaty was made between the followers of Gyges and the other Lydians to this effect, that if the Oracle should give answer that he was to be king of the Lydians, he should be king, and if not, he should give back the power to the sons of Heracles. [2] So the Oracle gave answer, and Gyges accordingly became king. But the Pythian prophetess said this also, that vengeance for the Heraclidae should come upon the descendants of Gyges in the fifth generation. Of this oracle the Lydians and their kings made no account until it was in fact fulfilled.

14.

[1] Thus the Mermnadae obtained the government having driven out from it the Heraclidae: and Gyges, when he became ruler, sent not a few votive offerings to Delphi, for of all the silver offerings at Delphi his are more in number than those of any other man; and besides the silver he offered a vast quantity of gold, and especially one offering which is more worthy of mention than

28 Nothing remains of this verse. Archilochus was one of the most famous poets of the ancient world. He lived roughly from 714 to 676 BC and is said to have invented iambic verse. He is most famous today for his poem about discarding his shield.
the rest, namely six golden mixing-bowls, which are dedicated there as his gift: of these the weight is thirty talents, [2] and they stand in the treasury of the Corinthians, (though in truth this treasury does not belong to the State of the Corinthians, but is that of Cypselus the son of Aetion²⁹). This Gyges was the first of the Barbarians within our knowledge who dedicated votive offerings at Delphi, except only Midas the son of Gordias king of Phrygia, [3] who dedicated for an offering the royal throne on which he sat before all to decide causes; and this throne, a sight worth seeing, stands in the same place with the bowls of Gyges.³⁰ This gold and silver which Gyges dedicated is called Gygian by the people of Delphi, after the name of him who offered it. [4] Now Gyges also, as soon as he became king, led an army against Miletus and Smyrna, and he took the lower town of Colophon: but no other great deed did he do in his reign, which lasted thirty-eight years, therefore we will pass him by with no more mention than has already been made,

15.

[1] and I will speak now of Ardys the son of Gyges, who became king after Gyges. He took Priene and made an invasion against Miletus; and while he was ruling over Sardis, the Cimmerians driven from their abodes by the nomad Scythians came to Asia and took Sardis except the citadel.³¹

16.

[1] Now when Ardys had been king for forty-nine years, Sadyattes his son succeeded to his kingdom, and reigned twelve years; and after him Alyattes. [2] This last made war against Cyaxares the descendant of Deioces and against the Medes, and he drove the Cimmerians forth out of Asia, and he took Smyrna which had been founded from Colophon,³² and made an invasion against Clazomenae. From this he returned not as he desired, but with great loss. During his reign however he performed other deeds very worthy of mention as follows:

17.

[1] He made war with those of Miletus, having received this war as an inheritance from his father; for he used to invade their land and besiege Miletus in the following manner: Whenever

²⁹ Tyrant of Corinth from 655 to 625 BC. See forward v.92.
³⁰ This is the mythical King Minos who entertained Dionysus on his journey eastward. Dionysus offered to reward Minos and the king asked that anything he touched be turned to gold. See forward vii.73; viii.138. See also Pausanias i.4.5
³¹ ca. 657 BC. Assyrian and Babylonian records corroborate an invasion by people from the area of the Crimaea. How and Wells suggest that this invasion is the origin of the biblical imagery of armies from the north and that the Lydian Gyges is equivalent to Gog. But their theory does not explain the duo Gog and Magog, or that Gyges and Lydia were targets, not invaders.
³² Or, more accurately, he destroyed it. Smyrna was refounded in 300 BC.
there were ripe crops upon the land, then he led an army into their confines, making his march to
the sound of pipes and harps and flutes both of male and female tone. [2] And when he came to
the Milesian land, he neither pulled down the houses that were in the fields, nor set fire to them
nor tore off their doors, but let them stand as they were; the trees however and the crops that were
upon the land he destroyed, and then departed by the way he came: [3] for the men of Miletus had
command of the sea, so that it was of no use for his army to blockade them. And he abstained from
pulling down the houses to the end that the Milesians might have places to dwell in while they
sowed and tilled the land, and by the means of their labour he might have somewhat to destroy
when he made his invasion.33

18.

[1] Thus he continued to war with them for eleven years; and in the course of these years the
Milesians suffered two great defeats, once when they fought a battle in the district of Limenion in
their own land, and again in the plain of Maiander. [2] Now for six of the eleven years Sadyattes
the son of Ardys was still ruler of the Lydians, the same who was wont to invade the land of
Miletus at the times mentioned; for this Sadyattes was he who first began the war: but for the five
years which followed these first six the war was carried on by Alyattes the son of Sadyattes, who
received it as an inheritance from his father (as I have already said) and applied himself to it
earnestly. [3] And none of the Ionians helped those of Miletus bear the burden of this war except
only the men of Chios. These came to their aid to pay back like with like, for the Milesians had
formerly assisted the Chians throughout their war with the people of Erythrae.

19.

[1] Then in the twelfth year of the war, when standing corn was being burnt by the army of
the Lydians, it happened as follows: As soon as the corn was kindled, it was driven by a violent
wind and set fire to the temple of Athena surnamed of Assesus;34 and the temple being set on fire
was burnt down to the ground. [2] Of this no account was made then; but afterwards when the
army had returned to Sardis, Alyattes fell sick, and as his sickness lasted long, he sent messengers
to inquire of the Oracle at Delphi, either being advised to do so by someone, or because he himself
thought it best to send and inquire of the god concerning his sickness. [3] But when these arrived

33 No Athenian, or Greek for that matter, could have heard or read this passage in the late 430’s, without thinking of
the Peloponnesian War. Herodotus is telling his audience here that his references are to the present by way of the
past.
34 Assesus was a satellite town of Miletus.
at Delphi, the Pythian prophetess said that she would give them no answer, until they should have built up again the temple of Athena which they had burnt at Assesus in the land of Miletus.

20.

[1] Thus much I know by the report of the people of Delphi;[35] but the Milesians add to this that Periander the son of Cypselus,[36] being a special guest-friend of Thrasybulus, then tyrant of Miletus, heard of the oracle which had been given to Alyattes, and sending a messenger told Thrasybulus, in order that he might have knowledge of it beforehand and take such counsel as the case required. This is the story told by the Milesians.

21.

[1] And Alyattes, when this answer was reported to him, sent a herald immediately to Miletus, desiring to make a truce with Thrasybulus and the Milesians for so long a time as he should be building the temple. He then was being sent as envoy to Miletus; and Thrasybulus in the meantime being informed beforehand of the whole matter and knowing what Alyattes was meaning to do, contrived this device: [2] He gathered together in the market-place all the store of provisions which was found in the city, both his own and that which belonged to private persons; and he proclaimed to the Milesians that on a signal given by him they should all begin to drink and make merry with one another.

22.

[1] This Thrasybulus did and thus proclaimed to the end that the herald from Sardis, seeing a vast quantity of provisions carelessly piled up, and the people feasting, might report this to Alyattes: [2] and so in fact it happened; for when the herald returned to Sardis after seeing this and delivering to Thrasybulus the charge which was given to him by the king of Lydia, the peace which was made, came about, as I am informed, merely because of this. [3] For Alyattes, who thought that there was a great famine in Miletus and that the people had been worn down to the extreme of misery, heard from the herald, when he returned from Miletus, the opposite to that which he himself supposed. [4] And after this the peace was made between them on condition of being guest-friends and allies to one another, and Alyattes built two temples to Athena at Assesus in

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35 This is a bold and emphatic statement on Herodotus' part: "I know" rather than "I have heard" indicates his trust in information from Delphi.

36 Periander ruled as tyrant until 581 BC (Arist. Pol. 1315b) when he and his family were run out of Corinth by the Spartans (Plut. Mor. 859). Periander was considered for membership in the Seven Sages but was refused because he was a tyrant (Diod. ix.7.1). He did, however, hold a conference for the seven sages in Corinth (Plut. Sol. 4.1). See forward iii. 48 - 53; v.92.
place of one, and himself recovered from his sickness. With regard then to the war waged by Alyattes with the Milesians and Thrasybulus things went thus.37

23. Arion and the Dolphin

[1] As for Periander, the man who gave information about the oracle to Thrasybulus, he was the son of Cypselus, and tyrant of Corinth. In his life, say the Corinthians, (and with them agree the Lesbians), there happened to him a very great marvel, namely that Arion of Methymna was carried ashore at Tainaron upon a dolphin's back. This man was a musician second to none of those who then lived, and the first, so far as we know, who composed a dithyramb, naming it so and teaching it to a chorus at Corinth.

24.

[1] This Arion, they say, who for the most part of his time stayed with Periander, conceived a desire to sail to Italy and Sicily; and after he had there acquired large sums of money, he wished to return again to Corinth. [2] He set forth therefore from Tarentum, and as he had faith in Corinthians more than in other men, he hired a ship with a crew of Corinthians. These, the story says, when out in open sea, formed a plot to cast Arion overboard and so possess his wealth. [3] And he, having obtained knowledge of this, made entreaties to them, offering them his wealth and asking them to grant him his life. With this however he did not prevail upon them, but the men who were conveying him bade him either slay himself there, that he might receive burial on the land, or leap straightway into the sea. [4] So Arion being driven to a strait entreated them that, since they were so minded, they would allow him to take his stand in full minstrel's garb upon the deck of the ship and sing; and he promised to put himself to death after he had sung. [5] They then, well pleased to think that they should hear the best of all minstrels upon earth, drew back from the stern towards the middle of the ship; and he put on the full minstrel's garb and took his lyre, and standing on the deck performed the Orthian measure.38 Then as the measure ended, he threw himself into the sea just as he was, in his full minstrel's garb; [6] and they went on sailing away to Corinth, but him, they say, a dolphin supported on its back and brought him to shore at Tainaron: and when he had come to land he proceeded to Corinth with his minstrel's garb. Having arrived there he related all that had been done; [7] and Periander doubting of his story kept Arion in guard

37 This war likely ended in 612 BC.
38 There is a pun here that cannot be rendered into English. The Greek "Orthian measure" looks and sounds like a phrase that would be translated 'the correct behavior.' See Konstan (1983, 13-14).
and would let him go nowhere, while he kept careful watch for those who had conveyed him. When these came, he called them and inquired of them if they had any report to make of Arion; and when they said that he was safe in Italy and that they had left him at Tarentum faring well, Arion suddenly appeared before them in the same guise as when he made his leap from the ship; and they being struck with amazement were no longer able to deny when they were questioned. [8] This is the tale told by the Corinthians and Lesbians alike, and there is at Tainaron a votive offering of Arion of no great size, namely a bronze figure of a man upon a dolphin's back.

25.

[1] Alyattes the Lydian, when he had thus waged war against the Milesians, afterwards died, having reigned fifty-seven years. [2] This king, when he recovered from his sickness, dedicated a votive offering at Delphi (being the second of his house who had so done), namely a great mixing-bowl of silver with a stand for it of iron welded together, which last is a sight worth seeing above all the offerings at Delphi and the work of Glaucus the Chian, who of all men first found out the art of welding iron.

26.

[1] After Alyattes was dead Croesus the son of Alyattes received the kingdom in succession, being thirty-five years of age. He (as I said) fought against the Greeks and of them he attacked the Ephesians first. [2] The Ephesians then, being besieged by him, dedicated their city to Artemis and tied a rope from the temple to the wall of the city: now the distance between the ancient city, which was then being besieged, and the temple is seven stadia. [3] These, I say, were the first upon whom Croesus laid hands, but afterwards he did the same to the other Ionian and Aeolian cities one by one, alleging against them various causes of complaint, and making serious charges against those in whose cases he could find serious grounds, while against others of them he charged merely trifling offences.

27.

[1] Then when the Hellenes in Asia had been conquered and forced to pay tribute, he designed next to build for himself ships and to lay hands upon those who dwelt in the islands; [2] and when all was prepared for his building of ships, they say that Bias of Priene (or, according to

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39 Cited here as a source because Methymna is on Lesbos.
40 On stadion being about 180 metres.
another account, Pittacus of Mytilene) came to Sardis, and being asked by Croesus whether there was any new thing doing in Hellas, brought to an end his building of ships by this saying: [3] "O king," said he, "the men of the islands are hiring a troop of ten thousand horse, and with this they mean to march to Sardis and fight against you." And Croesus, supposing that what he reported was true, said: "May the gods put it into the minds of the dwellers of the islands to come with horses against the sons of the Lydians!" [4] And he answered and said: "O king, I perceive that you do earnestly desire to catch the men of the islands on the mainland riding upon horses; and it is not unreasonable that you should wish for this: what else however do you think the men of the islands desire and have been praying for ever since the time they heard that you were about to build ships against them, than that they might catch the Lydians upon the sea, so as to take vengeance upon you for the Greeks who dwell upon the mainland, whom you hold enslaved?" [5] Croesus, they say, was greatly pleased with this conclusion, and obeying his suggestion, for he judged him to speak suitably, he stopped his building of ships; and upon that he formed a friendship with the Ionians dwelling in the islands.42

28

[1] As time went on, when nearly all those dwelling on this side the river Halys had been subdued, (for except the Cilicians and Lycians Croesus subdued and kept under his rule all the nations, that is to say Lydians, Phrygians, Mysians, Mariandynoi, Chalybians, Paphlagonians, Thracians both Yournian and Biyournian, Carians, Ionians, Doriens, Aeolians, and Pamphylians).

29 Solon and Croesus

[1] When these, I say, had been subdued, and while he was still adding to his Lydian dominions, there came to Sardis, then at the height of its wealth, all the wise men of the Greece who chanced to be alive at that time, brought there severally by various occasions; and of them one was Solon the Athenian, who after he had made laws for the Athenians at their bidding, left his native country for ten years and sailed away saying that he desired to visit various lands, in

41 Both are members of the group called the Seven Sages
42 Croesus is one of the few despots in Herodotus who does, but occasionally, listen to advice.
order that he might not be compelled to repeal any of the laws which he had proposed.43 [2] For of themselves the Athenians were not competent to do this, having bound themselves by solemn oaths to submit for ten years to the laws which Solon should propose for them.

30

[1] So Solon, having left his native country for this reason and for the sake of seeing various lands, came to Amasis in Egypt,44 and also to Croesus at Sardis. Having there arrived he was entertained as a guest by Croesus in the king's palace; and afterwards, on the third or fourth day, at the bidding of Croesus his servants led Solon round to see his treasuries; and they showed him all things, how great and magnificent they were; [2] And after he had looked upon them all and examined them as he had occasion, Croesus asked him as follows: "Athenian guest, much report of you has come to us, both in regard to your wisdom and your wanderings, how that in your search for wisdom you have traversed many lands to see them; now therefore a desire has come upon me to ask you whether you have seen any whom you deem to be of all men the most happy."45 [3] This he asked supposing that he himself was the happiest of men; but Solon, using no flattery but the truth only, said: "Yes, O king, Tellos the Athenian." [4] And Croesus, marvelling at that which he said, asked him earnestly: "In what respect do you judge Tellos to be the most happy?" And he said: "Tellos, in the first place, living while his native State was prosperous, had sons fair and good and saw from all of them children begotten and living to grow up; and secondly he had what with us is accounted wealth, and after his life a most glorious end: [5] for when a battle was fought by the Athenians at Eleusis against the neighbouring people, he brought up supports and routed the foe and there died by a most fair death; and the Athenians buried him publicly where he fell, and honoured him greatly."

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43 The visit is likely a fiction. Solon left Athens in 592 and would have returned in 582; Croesus was born around 598 and would have been only 16 when Solon’s travels ended. Solon died in 558 so his visit to Lydia would have occurred in the last years of his life and the early years of Croesus’ reign. Not impossible, but unlikely. Diodorus (9.25) suggests that Bias and Solon visited Sardis at the same time. That would put Solon there in 560/59. Again, not impossible. According to Diogenes Laertius (i.2.50) Solon visited Croesus after Pisistratus became tyrant in 560.

44 Ahmose, king of Egypt from 546 - 526 BC (Diod. i.68.6). See forward ii. 162 - 81; iii 39 - 43

45 This whole scene is reminiscent of Anaxagoras (not the other way around): See Aristotle Eud. Eth. 1215b. Although it is unlikely that Solon ever met Croesus, it is very likely indeed that Herodotus knew Anaxagoras.
[1] So when Solon had moved Croesus to inquire further by the story of Tellos, recounting how many points of happiness he had, the king asked again whom he had seen proper to be placed next after this man, supposing that he himself would certainly obtain at least the second place; but he replied: "Cleobis and Biton: [2] for these, who were of Argos, possessed a sufficiency of wealth and, in addition to this, strength of body such as I shall tell. Both equally had won prizes in the games, and moreover the following tale is told of them: There was a feast of Hera among the Argives and it was by all means necessary that their mother should be borne in a car to the temple. But since their oxen were not brought up in time from the field, the young men, barred from all else by lack of time, submitted themselves to the yoke and pulled the wagon, their mother being borne by them upon it; and so they brought it on for forty-five stadia, and came to the temple. [3] Then after they had done this and had been seen by the assembled crowd, there came to their life a most excellent ending; and in this the deity declared that it was better for man to die than to continue to live. For the Argive men were standing round and extolling the strength of the young men, while the Argive women were extolling the mother to whose lot it had fallen to have such sons; [4] and the mother being exceedingly rejoiced both by the deed itself and by the report made of it, took her stand in front of the image of the goddess and prayed that she would give to Cleobis and Biton her sons, who had honoured her greatly, that gift which is best for man to receive: [5] and after this prayer, when they had sacrificed and feasted, the young men lay down to sleep within the temple itself, and never rose again, but were held bound in this last end. And the Argives made statues in the likeness of them and dedicated them as offerings at Delphi, thinking that they had proved themselves most excellent."46

[1] Thus Solon assigned the second place in respect of happiness to these: and Croesus was moved to anger and said: "Athenian guest, have you then so cast aside our prosperous state as worth nothing, that you prefer to us even men of private station?" And he said: "Croesus, you are inquiring about human fortunes of one who well knows that the Deity is altogether envious and apt to disturb our lot. [2] For in the course of long time a man may see many things which he would not desire to see, and suffer also many things which he would not desire to suffer. The limit of life

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46 The story was well known in Herodotus' time. There was a relief in stone in Corinth (Paus. ii.20.2) and statues were dedicated to them by Argos at Delphi.
for a man I lay down at seventy years: [3] and these seventy years give twenty-five thousand and two hundred days, not reckoning for any intercalated month.\footnote{The 360 day year was a lunar, rather than solar, year. But of course it put the Athenian calendar off of the solstices by 5 1/4 days every year.} Then if every other one of these years shall be made longer by one month, that the seasons may be caused to come round at the due time of the year, the intercalated months will be in number thirty-five besides the seventy years; and of these months the days will be one thousand and fifty. [4] Of all these days, being in number twenty-six thousand two hundred and fifty, which go to the seventy years, one day produces nothing at all which resembles what another brings with it. Thus then, O Croesus, man is altogether a creature of accident. [5] As for you, I perceive that you are both great in wealth and king of many men, but that of which you did ask me I cannot call you yet, until I learn that you have brought your life to a fair ending: for the very rich man is not at all to be accounted more happy than he who has but his subsistence from day to day, unless also the fortune go with him of ending his life well in possession of all things fair. For many very wealthy men are not happy, while many who have but a moderate living are fortunate; [6] and in truth the very rich man who is not happy has two advantages only as compared with the poor man who is fortunate, whereas this latter has many as compared with the rich man who is not happy. The rich man is able better to fulfil his desire, and also to endure a great calamity if it fall upon him; whereas the other has advantage over him in these things which follow: He is not indeed able equally with the rich man to endure a calamity or to fulfil his desire, but these his good fortune keeps away from him, while he is sound of limb, free from disease, untouched by suffering, the father of fair children and himself of good looks; [7] and if in addition to this he shall end his life well, he is worthy to be called that which you seek, namely a happy man; but before he comes to his end it is well to hold back and not to call him yet happy but only fortunate.\footnote{See Aeschylus \textit{Agamemnon} 929: “Only when man's life comes to its end in prosperity dare we pronounce him happy.”} [8] Now to possess all these things together is impossible for one who is mere man, just as no single land suffices to supply all things for itself, but one thing it has and another it lacks, and the land that has the greatest number of things is the best: so also in the case of a man, no single person is complete in himself, for one thing he has and another he lacks; [9] but whosoever of men continues to the end in possession of the greatest number of these things and then has a gracious ending of his life, he is by me accounted worthy, O king, to receive this
name. But we must of every thing examine the end and how it will turn out at the last, for to many God shows but a glimpse of happiness and then plucks them up by the roots and overturns them."  

33  
[1] Thus saying he refused to gratify Croesus, who sent him away from his presence holding him in no esteem, and thinking him utterly senseless in that he passed over present good things and bade men look to the end of every matter.

34 Atys and Adrastus  
[1] After Solon had departed, divine vengeance came upon Croesus, probably because he judged himself to be the happiest of all men. First there came and stood by him a dream, which showed to him the truth of the evils that were about to come to pass in respect of his son. [2] Now Croesus had two sons, of whom one was deficient, seeing that he was deaf and dumb, while the other far surpassed his companions of the same age in all things: and the name of this last was Atys. As regards this Atys then, the dream signified to Croesus that he should lose him by the blow of an iron spear-point: [3] and when he rose up from sleep and considered the matter with himself, he was struck with fear on account of the dream; and first he took for his son a wife; and whereas his son had been wont to lead the armies of the Lydians, he now no longer sent him forth anywhere on any such business; and the javelins and lances and all such things which men use for fighting he conveyed out of the men's apartments and piled them up in the inner bed-chambers, for fear lest something hanging up might fall down upon his son.

35  
[1] Then while he was engaged about the marriage of his son, there came to Sardis a man under a misfortune and with hands not clean, a Phrygian by birth and of the royal house. This man came to the house of Croesus, and according to the customs which prevail in that land made request that he might have cleansing; and Croesus gave him cleansing: [2] now the manner of cleansing among the Lydians is the same almost as that which the Greeks use. So when Croesus had done that which was customary, he asked of him from where he came and who he was, saying as follows: [3] "Man, who are you, and from what region of Phrygia did you come to sit upon my hearth? And whom of men or women did you kill?" And he replied: "O king, I am the son of Gordias, the son

49 This same sentiment closes Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos*.
50 The word here is *nemesis*, important for setting up the what follows.
51 This unnamed son of Croesus is the second such character in the Histories after the unnamed wife of Candaules. Also unnamed is the daughter of Hegetorides of Cos.
of Midas, and I am called Adrastus; and I slew my own brother against my will, and therefore am I here, having been driven forth by my father and deprived of all that I had." [4] And Croesus answered thus: "You are, as it chances, the offshoot of men who are our friends and you have come to friends, among whom you shall want of nothing so long as you remain in our land: and you will find it most for your profit to bear this misfortune as lightly as may be." So he had his abode with Croesus.

36

[1] During this time there was produced in the Mysian Olympus a boar of monstrous size. This, coming down from the mountain aforesaid, ravaged the fields of the Mysians, and although the Mysians went out against it often, yet they could do it no hurt, but rather received hurt themselves from it; [2] so at length messengers came from the Mysians to Croesus and said: "O king, there has appeared in our land a boar of monstrous size, which lays waste our fields; and we, desiring eagerly to take it, are not able: now therefore we ask of you to send with us your son and also a chosen band of young men with dogs, that we may destroy it out of our land." [3] Thus they made request, and Croesus calling to mind the words of the dream spoke to them as follows: "As touching my son, make no further mention of him in this matter; for I will not send him with you, seeing that he is newly married and is concerned now with the affairs of his marriage: but I will send with you chosen men of the Lydians and the whole number of my hunting dogs, and I will give command to those who go, to be as zealous as may be in helping you to destroy the wild beast out of your land."

37

[1] Thus he made reply, and while the Mysians were being contented with this answer, there came in also the son of Croesus, having heard of the request made by the Mysians: and when Croesus said that he would not send his son with them, the young man spoke as follows: [2] "My father, in times past the fairest and most noble part was allotted to us, to go out continually to wars and to the chase and so have good repute; but now you have debarred me from both of these, although you have not observed in me any cowardly or faint-hearted spirit. And now with what face must I appear when I go to and from the market-place of the city? [3] What kind of a man

52 One of the principal cities of Phrygia is Adrasteia, and in that city there is a temple to the goddess Nemesis.
53 A mountain often confused with Mt. Ida, but, according to Strabo (x.3.14), Mysian Olympus in adjacent to Ida. Mysia is a region to the north of Lydia and the south of Phrygia Minor (The Troad).
shall I be esteemed by the citizens, and what kind of a man shall I be esteemed by my newly-married wife? With what kind of a husband will she think that she is married to? Therefore either let me go to the hunt, or persuade me by reason that these things are better for me done as now they are."

38

[1] And Croesus made answer thus: "My son, not because I have observed in you any spirit of cowardice or any other ungracious thing, do I act thus; but a vision of a dream came and stood by me in my sleep and told me that you should be short-lived, and that you should perish by a spear-point of iron. [2] With thought of this vision therefore I both urged on this marriage for you, and I refuse now to send you upon the matter which is being taken in hand, having a care of you that I may steal you from your fate at least for the period of my own life, if by any means possible for me to do so. For you are, as it chances, my only son: the other I do not reckon as one, seeing that he is deficient in hearing."

39

[1] The young man made answer thus: "It may well be forgiven in you, O my father, that you should have a care of me after having seen such a vision; but that which you dost not understand, and in which the meaning of the dream has escaped you, it is right that I should expound to you. [2] You say the dream declared that I should end my life by means of a spear-point of iron: but what hands has a boar, or what spear-point of iron, of which you are afraid? If the dream had told you that I should end my life by a tusk, or any other thing which resembles that, it would be right for you doubtless to do as you are doing; but it said 'by a spear-point.' Since therefore our fight will not be with men, let me now go."

40

[1] Croesus made answer: "My son, you do partly prevail on me by declaring your judgment about the dream; therefore, having been prevailed upon by you, I change my resolution and allow you to go to the chase."

41

[1] Having thus said Croesus went to summon Adrastus the Phrygian; and when he came, he addressed him thus: "Adrastus, when you were struck with a grievous misfortune (with which I reproach you not), I cleansed you, and I have received you into my house supplying all your costs. [2] Now therefore, since having first received kindness from me you are bound to requite me with
kindness, I ask of you to be the protector of my son who goes forth to the chase, lest any evil robbers come upon you by the way to do you harm; and besides this you too ought to go where you may become famous by your deeds, [3] for it belongs to you as an inheritance from your fathers so to do, and moreover you have strength for it."

42

[1] Adrastus made answer: "O king, but for this I should not have been going to any such contest of valour; for first it is not fitting that one who is suffering such a great misfortune as mine should seek the company of his fellows who are in prosperity, and secondly I have no desire for it; and for many reasons I should have kept myself away. [2] But now, since you are urgent with me, and I ought to gratify you (for I am bound to requite you with kindness), I am ready to do this: expect therefore that your son, whom you command me to protect, will return home to you unhurt, so far as his protector may avail to keep him safe."

43

[1] When he had made answer to Croesus in words like these, they afterwards set forth provided with chosen young men and with dogs. And when they were come to Mount Olympus, they tracked the animal; and having found it and taken their stand round in a circle, they were hurling against it their spears. [2] Then the guest, he who had been cleansed of manslaughter, whose name was Adrastus, hurling a spear at it missed the boar and struck the son of Croesus. [3] So he being struck by the spear-point fulfilled the saying of the dream. And one ran to report to Croesus that which had come to pass, and having come to Sardis he signified to him of the combat and of the fate of his son.

44

[1] And Croesus was very greatly disturbed by the death of his son, and was much the more moved to complaining by this, namely that his son was slain by the man whom he had himself cleansed of manslaughter. [2] And being grievously troubled by the misfortune he called upon Zeus the Cleanser, protesting to him that which he had suffered from his guest, and he called moreover upon the Protector of Suppliants and the Guardian of Friendship, naming still the same god, and calling upon him as the Protector of Suppliants because when he received the guest into

54 This was an accepted condition of the xenia relationship between Croesus and Adrastus
his house he had been fostering ignorantly the slayer of his son, and as the Guardian of Friendship
because having sent him as a protector he had found him the worst of foes.55

45

[1] After this the Lydians came bearing the corpse, and behind it followed the slayer: and he
taking his stand before the corpse delivered himself up to Croesus, holding forth his hands and
bidding the king slay him over the corpse, speaking of his former misfortune and saying that in
addition to this he had now been the destroyer of the man who had cleansed him of it; and that life
for him was no more worth living. [2] But Croesus hearing this pitied Adrastus, although he was
himself suffering so great an evil of his own, and said to him: "Guest, I have already received from
you all the satisfaction that is due, seeing that you condemn yourself to suffer death; and not you
alone are the cause of this evil, except in so far as you were the instrument of it against your own
will, but some one, as I suppose, of the gods, who also long ago signified to me that which was
about to be." [3] So Croesus buried his son as was fitting: but Adrastus the son of Gordias, the son
of Midas, he who had been the slayer of his own brother and the slayer also of the man who had
cleansed him, when silence came of all men round about the tomb, recognising that he was more
grievously burdened by misfortune than all men of whom he knew, slew himself upon the grave.

46 Croesus and the Oracles

[1] For two years then Croesus remained quiet in his mourning, because he was deprived of
his son: but after this period of time the overthrowing of the rule of Astyages the son of Cyaxares
by Cyrus the son of Cambyses, and the growing greatness of the Persians caused Croesus to cease
from his mourning, and led him to a care of cutting short the power of the Persians, if by any means
he might, while yet it was in growth and before they should have become great.56

[2] So having formed this design he began forthwith to make trial of the Oracles, both those
of the Greeks and that in Libya, sending messengers some to one place and some to another, some
to go to Delphi, others to Abai of the Phocians,57 and others to Dodona;58 and some were sent to

55 Gordon Shrimpton has suggested that impiety may be the real crime of Croesus. If so, it begins with this challenge
to Zeus and culminates with his test of the oracles (see 46 below).
56 Cyrus became king of Anshan (Persis) in 560 BC and defeated Astyages in 550. It must have been around 550 that
Atys died because Croesus and Cyrus are at war by 548.
57 For the sanctuary of Apollo at Abae see Pausanias x.35.1-2.
58 The site of the Temple of Dononian Zeus (Paus. i.17.5 et al.). There, Zeus is associated with the oak tree (Plato
Phaedrus 275b). For the origins see below ii.55.
the shrine of Amphiaraus and to that of Trophonius, others to Branchidai in the land of Miletus. [3] these are the Oracles of the Greeks to which Croesus sent messengers to seek divination; and others he sent to the shrine of Ammon in Libya to inquire there. Now he was sending the messengers abroad to the end that he might try the Oracles and find out what knowledge they had, so that if they should be found to have knowledge of the truth, he might send and ask them secondly whether he should attempt to march against the Persians.

47

[1] And to the Lydians whom he sent to make trial of the Oracles he gave charge as follows: That from the day on which they set out from Sardis they should reckon up the number of the days following and on the hundredth day they should consult the Oracles, asking what Croesus the son of Alyattes king of the Lydians chanced then to be doing: and whatever the Oracles severally should prophesy, this they should cause to be written down and bear it back to him. [2] Now what the other Oracles prophesied is not by any reported, but at Delphi, so soon as the Lydians entered the sanctuary of the temple to consult the god and asked that which they were commanded to ask, the Pythian prophetess spoke thus in hexameter measure:

[3] "But the number of sand I know, and the measure of drops in the ocean; The dumb man I understand, and I hear the speech of the speechless: And there has come to my soul the smell of a strong-shelled tortoise Boiling in caldron of bronze, and the flesh of a lamb mingled with it; Under it bronze is laid, it has bronze as a clothing upon it."

48

[1] When the Pythian prophetess had uttered this oracle, the Lydians caused the prophecy to be written down, and went away at once to Sardis. And when the rest also who had been sent round were there arrived with the answers of the Oracles, then Croesus unfolded the writings one by one

59 Amphiaraus, a mythical king of Argos; one of the Calydonian hunters, one of the Argonauts and one of the Seven Against Thebes. As a descendant of Apollo, he had prophetic powers and was worshiped as a demi-god at Argos. See Paus. ii.13.6.

60 In Boeotia, near Thebes, Trophonius is the epithet for an underworld Zeus

61 The Branchidae were the family who controlled the priesthood of the Oracle of Apollo at Didyma, just inland from Miletus (Strabo xiv.1.5).

62 The temple of Zeus Ammon (Egyptian Amun) is at the oasis of Siwa, in Egypt.
and looked upon them: and at first none of them pleased him, but when he heard that from Delphi, immediately he did worship to the god and accepted the answer, judging that the Oracle at Delphi was the only true one, because it had found out what he himself had done. [2] For when he had sent to the several Oracles his messengers to consult the gods, keeping well in mind the appointed day he contrived the following device: He thought of something which it would be impossible to discover or to conceive of, and cutting up a tortoise and a lamb he boiled them together himself in a cauldron of bronze, laying a cover of bronze over them.

49

[1] This then was the answer given to Croesus from Delphi; and as regards the answer of Amphiaraus, I cannot tell what he replied to the Lydians after they had done the things customary in his temple, for there is no record of this any more than of the others, except only that Croesus thought that he also possessed a true Oracle.

50

[1] After this with great sacrifices he endeavoured to win the favour of the god at Delphi: for of all the animals that are fit for sacrifice he offered three thousands of each kind, and he heaped up couches overlaid with gold and overlaid with silver, and cups of gold, and robes of purple, and tunics, making of them a great pyre, and this he burnt up, hoping by these means the more to win over the god to the side of the Lydians: and he proclaimed to all the Lydians that every one of them should make sacrifice with that which each man had. [2] And when he had finished the sacrifice, he melted down a vast quantity of gold, and of it he wrought half-plinths making them six palms in length and three in breadth, and in height one palm; and their number was one hundred and seventeen. Of these four were of pure gold weighing two talents and a half each, and others of gold alloyed with silver weighing two talents. [3] And he caused to be made also an image of a lion of pure gold weighing ten talents; which lion, when the temple of Delphi was being burnt down, fell from off the half-plinths, for upon these it was set, and is placed now in the treasury of the Corinthians, weighing six talents and a half, for three talents and a half were melted away from it.

63 The temple burned in 548 BC.
So Croesus having finished all these things sent them to Delphi, and with them these besides: two mixing bowls of great size, one of gold and the other of silver, of which the golden bowl was placed on the right hand as one enters the temple, and the silver on the left, [2] but the places of these also were changed after the temple was burnt down, and the golden bowl is now placed in the treasury of the people of Clazomenae, weighing eight and a half talents and twelve pounds over, while the silver one is placed in the corner of the vestibule and holds six hundred amphors (being filled with wine by the Delphians on the feast of the Theophania): [3] This the people of Delphi say is the work of Theodorus of Samos, and, as I think, rightly, for it is evident to me that the workmanship is of no common kind: moreover Croesus sent four silver wine-jars, which stand in the treasury of the Corinthians, and two vessels for lustral water, one of gold and the other of silver, of which the gold one is inscribed "from the Lacedaemonians," who say that it is their offering: therein however they do not speak rightly; [4] for this also is from Croesus, but one of the Delphians wrote the inscription upon it, desiring to gratify the Lacedaemonians; and his name I know but will not make mention of it. The boy through whose hand the water flows is from the Lacedaemonians, but neither of the vessels for lustral water. [5] And many other votive offerings Croesus sent with these, not specially distinguished, among which are certain castings of silver of a round shape, and also a golden figure of a woman three cubits high, which the Delphians say is a statue of the baker of Croesus. Moreover Croesus dedicated the ornaments from his wife's neck and her girdles.

These are the things which he sent to Delphi; and to Amphiaraus, having heard of his valour and of his evil fate, he dedicated a shield made altogether of gold throughout, and a spear all of solid gold, the shaft being of gold also as well as the two points, which offerings were both remaining even to my time at Thebes in the temple of Ismenian Apollo.

To the Lydians who were to carry these gifts to the temples Croesus gave charge that they should ask the Oracles this question also: Whether Croesus should march against the Persians, and if so, whether he should join with himself any army of men as his friends. [2] And when the Lydians had arrived at the places to which they had been sent and had dedicated the votive offerings, they inquired of the Oracles and said: "Croesus, king of the Lydians and of other nations,
considering that these are the only true Oracles among men, presents to you gifts such as your revelations deserve, and asks you again now whether he shall march against the Persians, and if so, whether he shall join with himself any army of men as allies." [3] They inquired thus, and the answers of both the Oracles agreed in one, declaring to Croesus that if he should march against the Persians he should destroy a great empire: and they counselled him to find out the most powerful of the Greeks and join these with himself as friends.

54

[1] So when the answers were brought back and Croesus heard them, he was delighted with the oracles, and expecting that he would certainly destroy the kingdom of Cyrus, he sent again to Pythia, and presented to the men of Delphi, having ascertained the number of them, two staters of gold for each man: [2] and in return for this the Delphians gave to Croesus and to the Lydians precedence in consulting the Oracle and freedom from all payments, and the right to front seats at the games, with this privilege also for all time, that any one of them who wished should be allowed to become a citizen of Delphi.

55

[1] And having made presents to the men of Delphi, Croesus consulted the Oracle the third time; for from the time when he learnt the truth of the Oracle, he made abundant use of it. And consulting the Oracle he inquired whether his monarchy would endure for a long time. [2] And the Pythian prophetess answered him thus:

"But when it cometh to pass that a mule of the Medes shall be monarch
Then by the pebbly Hermus, O Lydian delicate-footed,
Flee and stay not, and be not ashamed to be called a coward."

56 Athenian History

[1] By these lines when they came to him Croesus was pleased more than by all the rest, for he supposed that a mule would never be ruler of the Medes instead of a man, and accordingly that he himself and his heirs would never cease from their rule. Then after this he gave thought to inquire which people of the Greeks he should esteem the most powerful and gain over to himself as friends. [2] And inquiring he found that the Lacedaemonians and the Athenians had the pre-eminence, the first of the Dorian and the others of the Ionian ethnicity. For these were the most
eminent ethnic groups in ancient times, the second being a Pelasgian and the first a Hellenic ethnicity: and the one never migrated from its place in any direction, while the other was very exceedingly given to wanderings; [3] for in the reign of Deucalion this group dwelt in Phthiotis, and in the time of Dorus the son of Hellen in the land lying below Ossa and Olympus, which is called Histiaiotis; and when it was driven from Histiaiotis by the sons of Cadmus, it dwelt in Pindos and was called Macednian; and thence it moved afterwards to Dryopis, and from Dryopis it came finally to Peloponnesus, and began to be called Dorian.64

57

[1] What language however the Pelasgians used to speak I am not able with certainty to say. But if one must pronounce judging by those that still remain of the Pelasgians who dwelt in the city of Creston above the Tyrsenians, and who were once neighbours of the group now called Dorian, dwelling then in the land which is now called Thessaliotis, [2] and also by those that remain of the Pelasgians who settled at Placia and Scylake in the region of the Hellespont, who before that had been settlers with the Athenians, and of the natives of the various other towns which are really Pelasgian, though they have lost the name, if one must pronounce judging by these, the Pelasgians used to speak a Barbarian language. [3] If therefore all the Pelasgian people was such as these, then the Attic people, being Pelasgian, at the same time when it changed and became Hellenic, unlearnt also its language. For the people of Creston do not speak the same language with any of those who dwell about them, nor yet do the people of Phacia, but they speak the same language one as the other: and by this it is proved that they still keep unchanged the form of language which they brought with them when they migrated to these places.65

58

[1] As for the Hellenic people, it has used ever the same language, as I clearly perceive, since it first took its rise; but since the time when it parted off, feeble at first, from the Pelasgian ethnicity, setting forth from a small beginning it has increased to that great number of ethnic groups which we see, and chiefly because many Barbarian ethnic groups have been added to it besides. Moreover

64 See Thucydides i.3 for a similar survey of Hellenic origins.
65 Chapter 57 is a continuation of Herodotus’ demonstration of method: In the absence of reliable information he will use deductive reasoning to reconstruct a pragmatic - as opposed to mythical - history of Greece. In the current example, he concludes that the Athenians, the Attic people, are Pelasgian in origin. In other words, they are aboriginals who became Hellenic.
it is true, as I think, of the Pelasgian people also, that so far as it remained Barbarian it never made any great increase.

[1] Of these peoples then Croesus was informed that the ethnos of Attica was held subject and torn with faction by Peisistratus the son of Hippocrates, who then was tyrant of the Athenians. For to Hippocrates, when as a private citizen he went to view the Olympic Games, a great marvel had occurred. After he had offered the sacrifice, the caldrons which were standing upon the hearth, full of pieces of flesh and of water, boiled without fire under them and ran over. [2] And Chilon the Lacedaemonian, 66 who chanced to have been present and to have seen the marvel, advised Hippocrates first not to bring into his house a wife to bear him children, and secondly, if he happened to have one already, to dismiss her, and if he chanced to have a son, to disown him. [3] When Chilon had thus recommended, Hippocrates, they say, was not willing to be persuaded, and so there was born to him afterwards this Peisistratus; who, when the Athenians of the shore were at feud with those of the plain, Megacles the son of Alcmaeon being leader of the first faction, and Lycurgus the son of Aristolaides of that of the plain, aimed at the despotism for himself and gathered a third party. So then, after having collected supporters and called himself leader of the men of the mountain-lands, he contrived a device as follows: [4] He inflicted wounds upon himself and upon his mules, and then drove his car into the market-place, as if he had just escaped from his opponents, who, as he alleged, had desired to kill him when he was driving into the country, and he asked the commons that he might obtain some protection from them, for before this he had gained reputation in his command against the Megarians, during which he took Nisaia and performed other signal service. [5] And the commons of the Athenians being deceived gave him those men chosen from the dwellers in the city who became not indeed the spear-men of Peisistratus but his club-men; for they followed behind him bearing wooden clubs. [6] And these made insurrection with Peisistratus and obtained possession of the Acropolis. Then Peisistratus was ruler of the Athenians, not having disturbed the existing magistrates nor changed the ancient

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66 Chilon was one of the Seven Sages. He was Ephor in Sparta in 556 BC (see below vi.65; vii.234) and credited with engraving the three maxims at Delphi: Know Yourself; Nothing in Excess; An Oath brings Ruin (Diod. ix.9.1; x.10).
laws; but he administered the State under that constitution of things which was already established, ordering it fairly and well.67

60

[1] However, no long time after this the followers of Megacles and those of Lycurgus joined together and drove him out. Thus Peisistratus had obtained possession of Athens for the first time, and thus he lost the power before he had it firmly rooted.68 But those who had driven out Peisistratus became afterwards at feud with one another again. [2] And Megacles, harassed by the party strife, sent a message to Peisistratus asking whether he was willing to have his daughter as wife on condition of becoming tyrant. [3] And Peisistratus having accepted the proposal and made an agreement on these terms, they contrived with a view to his return a device the most simple by far, as I think, that ever was practised, considering at least that it was devised at a time when the Greek people had been long marked off from the Barbarian as more skilful and further removed from foolish simplicity, and among the Athenians who are accounted the first of the Greeks in ability. [4] In the deme69 of Paiania there was a woman whose name was Phye, in height four cubits tall but three fingers,70 and also fair of form. This woman they dressed in full armour and caused her to ascend a chariot and showed her the bearing in which she might best play her part, and so they drove to the city, having sent on heralds to run before them, who, when they arrived at the city, spoke that which had been commanded them, saying as follows: [5] "O Athenians, receive with favour Peisistratus, whom Athena herself, honouring him most of all men, brings back to her Acropolis." So the heralds went about here and there saying this, and straightway there came to the demes in the country round a report that Athena was bringing Peisistratus back, while at the same time the men of the city, persuaded that the woman was the very goddess herself, were paying worship to the human creature and receiving Peisistratus.

61

[1] So having received back the despotism in the manner which has been said, Peisistratus according to the agreement made with Megacles married the daughter of Megacles; but as he had

67 These events occurred in 560 BC. Herodotus has chosen to jump from the Pelasgian origins of the Athenian people to the tyranny of Peisistratus, skipping the very important reforms of Solon. It was Solon's attempt to establish a balanced constitution that resulted in the factional strife which allowed Peisistratus to take power.

68 A bit of an exaggeration; this expulsion occurred in 554, after he had been in control for six years (Ath. Pol. 14.2-4).

69 A *deme* is a neighborhood, or village district, similar to the *county* in N. America.

70 About 5'9" or 1.7 meters tall. How and Wells comment that she was "only" that tall, but even by today's standards she would be above average height.
already sons who were young men, and as the descendants of Alcmaeon were said to be under a curse, therefore not desiring that children should be born to him from his newly-married wife, he did not have commerce with her in the accustomed manner. [2] And at first the woman kept this secret, but afterwards she told her mother, whether in answer to her inquiry or not I cannot tell; and the mother told her husband Megacles. He then was very indignant that he should be dishonoured by Peisistratus; and in his anger straightway he proceeded to compose his quarrel with the men of his faction. And when Peisistratus heard of that which was being done against himself, he departed wholly from the land and came to Eretria, where he took counsel together with his sons: [3] and the advice of Hippias having prevailed, that they should endeavour to win back the despotism, they began to gather gifts of money from those States which owed them obligations for favours received: and many contributed great sums, but the Thebans surpassed the rest in the giving of money. [4] Then, not to make the story long, time elapsed and at last everything was prepared for their return. For certain Argives came as mercenaries from the Peloponnesus, and a man of Naxos had come to them of his own motion, whose name was Lygdamis, and showed very great zeal in providing both money and men.71

62

[1] So starting from Eretria after the lapse of ten years they returned back; and in Attica the first place of which they took possession was Marathon. While they were encamping here, their partisans from the city came to them, and also others flowed in from the various demes, to whom despotic rule was more welcome than freedom. [2] So these were gathering themselves together; but the Athenians in the city, so long as Peisistratus was collecting the money, and afterwards when he took possession of Marathon, made no account of it; but when they heard that he was marching from Marathon towards the city, then they went to the rescue against him. [3] These then were going in full force to fight against the returning exiles, and the forces of Peisistratus, as they went towards the city starting from Marathon, met them just when they came to the temple of Athena Pallene, and there encamped opposite to them. [4] Then moved by divine guidance there came into the presence of Peisistratus Amphilytos the Arcarnanian, a soothsayer, who approaching him uttered an oracle in hexameter verse, saying thus:


71 Lygdamis was tyrant of Naxos (Arist. Pol. 1305a) but had been ousted with Spartan assistance (Plut. Mor. 859d). Peisistratus afterwards helped Lygdamis regain his tyranny (Ath. Pol. 15.3 - 4).
"But now the cast has been made and the net has been widely extended,  
And in the night the tuna-fish will dart through the moon-lighted waters."

63

[1] This oracle he uttered to him being divinely inspired, and Peisistratus, having understood the oracle and having said that he accepted the prophecy which was uttered, led his army against the enemy. Now the Athenians from the city were just at that time occupied with the morning meal, and some of them after their meal with games of dice or with sleep; and the forces of Peisistratus fell upon the Athenians and put them to flight. [2] Then as they fled, Peisistratus devised a very skilful counsel, to the end that the Athenians might not gather again into one body but might remain scattered abroad. He mounted his sons on horseback and sent them before him; and overtaking the fugitives they said that which was commanded them by Peisistratus, bidding them be of good cheer and that each man should depart to his own home.

64

[1] Thus then the Athenians did, and so Peisistratus for the third time obtained possession of Athens, and he firmly rooted his despotism by many foreign mercenaries and by much revenue of money, coming partly from the land itself and partly from about the river Strymon, and also by taking as hostages the sons of those Athenians who had remained in the land and had not at once fled, and placing them in the hands of Naxos; [2] for this also Peisistratus conquered by war and delivered into the charge of Lygdamis. Moreover besides this he cleansed the island of Delos in obedience to the oracles; and his cleansing was of the following kind: So far as the view from the temple extended he dug up all the dead bodies which were buried in this part and removed them to another part of Delos. [3] So Peisistratus was despot of the Athenians; but of the Athenians some had fallen in the battle, and others of them with the sons of Alcmaeon⁷² were exiles from their native land.

65 - Spartan History

[1] Such was the condition of things which Croesus heard was prevailing among the Athenians during this time; but as to the Lacedaemonians he heard that they had escaped from great evils and had now got the better of the Tegeans in the war. For when Leon and Hegesicles

⁷² ie: the family of Megacles, the Alcmaonidae.
were kings of Sparta, the Lacedaemonians, who had good success in all their other wars, suffered
disaster in that alone which they waged against the men of Tegea. [2] Moreover in the times before
this they had the worst laws of almost all the Greeks, both in matters which concerned themselves
alone and also in that they had no dealings with strangers. And they made their change to a good
constitution of laws thus: Lycurgus, a man of the Spartans who was held in high repute, came to
the Oracle at Delphi, and as he entered the sanctuary of the temple, straightway the Pythian
prophetess said as follows:

[3]"Lo, you have come, O Lycurgus, to this rich shrine of my temple,
Loved by Zeus and by all who possess the abodes of Olympus.
Whether to call you a god, I doubt, in my voices prophetic,
God or a man, but rather a god I think, O Lycurgus."

[4] Some say in addition to this that the Pythian prophetess also set forth to him the order of
things which is now established for the Spartans; but the Lacedaemonians themselves say that
Lycurgus having become guardian of Leobotes his brother's son, who was king of the Spartans,
brought in these things from Crete. [5] For as soon as he became guardian, he changed all the
prevailing laws, and took measures that they should not transgress his institutions: and after this
Lycurgus established their military policy, namely the 'Brotherhoods of Thirty', the Syssitia,
and in addition to this the Ephors and the Senate.

[1] Having changed thus, the Spartans had good laws; and to Lycurgus after he was dead
they erected a temple, and they pay him great worship. So then, as might be supposed, with a fertile

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73 Leon, son of Eurycratides, was Agiad king from 590 - 560, Hegesicles, son of Hippocratides, was Eurypontid king
from 575 - 550 BC. The overlap, then, is 575 - 560.
74 Which would make Lycurgus brother to Echestratus, Agiad king of Sparta from 900 - 870 BC. According to
Plutarch's biography of Lycurgus (1.4), he was the half-brother of king Polydectes, Eurypontid king of Sparta from
830 - 800. There is enough contradiction and ambiguity in the life of Lycurgus that he is considered a semi-
mythical figure.
75 Sort of a Platoon, but consisting of roughly 30 men.
76 This is the better known organizational division of Spartan men. At the age of 21, after 14 years of military
training, each man was enrolled in one of the Syssitia, or mess halls, where the men ate and slept together.
77 A council of five elders who acted as an executive council at Sparta.
78 The Gerousia, although not the term used by Herodotus. It was a council of 28 elders (60 years of age), plus the
two kings, in Sparta. The Gerousia served as a sort of senate and were elected from the ultra-elite aristocracy
within the Spartiate class.
land and with no small number of men dwelling in it, they straightway shot up and became prosperous: and it was no longer sufficient for them to keep still; but presuming that they were superior in strength to the Arcadians, they consulted the Oracle at Delphi respecting conquest of the whole of Arcadia; [2] and the Pythian prophetess gave answer thus:

"The land of Arcadia you ask; you ask me much; I refuse it; Many there are in Arcadian land, stout men, eating acorns; These will prevent you from this: but I am not grudging towards you; Tegea beaten with sounding feet I will give you to dance in, And a fair plain I will give you to measure with line and divide it."

[3] When the Lacedaemonians heard report of this, they held off from the other Arcadians, and marched against the Tegeans with fetters in their hands, trusting to a deceitful oracle and expecting that they would make slaves of the men of Tegea. [4] But having been worsted in the encounter, those of them who were taken alive worked wearing the fetters which they themselves brought with them and having "measured with line and divided" the plain of the Tegeans. And these fetters with which they had been bound were preserved even to my own time at Tegea, hanging about the temple of Athena Alea.

67

[1] In the former war then I say they struggled against the Tegeans continually with ill success; but in the time of Croesus and in the reign of Anaxandrides and Ariston at Sparta, the Spartans had at length become victors in the war; and they became so in the following manner: [2] As they continued to be always worsted in the war by the men of Tegea, they sent messengers to consult the Oracle at Delphi and inquired what god they should propitiate in order to get the better of the men of Tegea in the war: and the Pythian prophetess made answer to them that they should bring into their land the bones of Orestes the son of Agamemnon. [3] Then as they were not able to find the grave of Orestes, they sent men again to go to the god and to inquire about the spot where Orestes was laid: and when the messengers who were sent asked this, the prophetess said as follows:

[4] "Tegea there is, in Arcadian land, in a smooth place founded;
Where there do blow two blasts by strong compulsion together;
 Stroke too there is and stroke in return, and trouble on trouble.
 There Agamemnon's son in the life-giving earth is reposing;
 Him if you bring with you home, of Tegea you shalt be master."

[5] When the Lacedemonians had heard this they were none the less far from finding it out, though they searched all places; until the time that Lichas, one of those Spartans who are called "Well-doers," discovered it. Now the "Well-doers" are of the citizens the eldest who are passing from the ranks of the "Cavalry," in each year five; and these are bound during that year in which they pass out from the "Cavalry," to allow themselves to be sent without ceasing to various places by the Spartan State. 79

68

[1] Lichas then, being one of these, discovered it in Tegea by means both of fortune and ability. For as there were at that time dealings under truce with the men of Tegea, he had come to a forge there and was looking at iron being wrought; and he was in wonder as he saw that which was being done. [2] The smith therefore, perceiving that he marvelled at it, ceased from his work and said: "Surely, you stranger of Laconia, if you have seen that which I once saw, you would have marvelled much, since now it falls out that you marvel so greatly at the working of this iron; [3] for I, desiring in this enclosure to make a well, lighted in my digging upon a coffin of seven cubits in length;80 and not believing that ever there had been men larger than those of the present day, I opened it, and I saw that the dead body was equal in length to the coffin: then after I had measured it, I filled in the earth over it again." He then thus told him of that which he had seen; and the other, having thought upon that which was told, conjectured that this was Orestes according to the saying of the Oracle, forming his conjecture in the following manner: [4] Whereas he saw that the smith had two pairs of bellows, he concluded that these were the winds spoken of, and that the anvil and the hammer were the stroke and the stroke in return, and that the iron which was being wrought was the trouble laid upon trouble, making comparison by the thought that iron has

79 The Spartan royal bodyguard, always 300 in number, were called Hippeis, or cavalrymen, but they never rode or even owned horses. How the selection or rotation of the membership worked is lost to obscurity, but it seems from this passage that a certain number were rotated out of service each year and these, the agathoergoi, "good-doers" served one more year in diplomatic service.
80 Seven pechoi would be roughly 3 meters. It was generally believed that the heroes of the Bronze Age were much bigger than people of Herodotus' time.
been discovered for the evil of mankind.81 [5] Having thus conjectured he came back to Sparta and declared the whole matter to the Lacedaemonians; and they brought a charge against him on a fictitious pretext and drove him out into exile. So having come to Tegea, he told the smith of his evil fortune and endeavoured to hire from him the enclosure, but at first he would not allow him to have it: [6] At length however Lichas persuaded him and he took up his abode there; and he dug up the grave and gathered together the bones and went with them away to Sparta. From that time, whenever they made trial of one another, the Lacedaemonians had much the advantage in the war; and by now they had subdued to themselves the greater part of Peloponnesus besides.

69 Croesus and the Spartans

[1] Croesus accordingly being informed of all these things was sending messengers to Sparta with gifts in their hands to ask for an alliance, having commanded them what they ought to say: And they when they came said: [2] "Croesus king of the Lydians and also of other nations sent us here and says as follows: O Lacedaemonians, whereas the god by an oracle bade me join with the Greek as a friend, therefore, since I am informed that you are the chiefs of Greece, I invite you according to the oracle, desiring to be your friend and your ally apart from all guile and deceit." [3] Thus did Croesus announce to the Lacedaemonians through his messengers; and the Lacedaemonians, who themselves also had heard of the oracle given to Croesus, were pleased at the coming of the Lydians and exchanged oaths of friendship and alliance: for they were bound to Croesus also by some services rendered to them even before this time; [4] since the Lacedaemonians had sent to Sardis and were buying gold there with purpose of using it for the image of Apollo which is now set up on Mount Thornax in the Lacedaemonian land; and Croesus, when they desired to buy it, gave it them as a gift.

70

[1] For this reason therefore the Lacedaemonians accepted the alliance, and also because he chose them as his friends, preferring them to all the other Greeks. And not only were they ready themselves when he made his offer, but they caused a mixing-bowl to be made of bronze, covered outside with figures round the rim and of such a size as to hold three hundred amphors, and this they conveyed, desiring to give it as a gift in return to Croesus. [2] This bowl never came to Sardis for reasons of which two accounts are given as follows: The Lacedaemonians say that when the

81 See Hesiod, Works and Days, 196c - 201.
bowl was on its way to Sardis and came opposite the land of Samos, the men of Samos having heard of it sailed out with ships of war and took it away; [3] but the Samians themselves say that the Lacedaemonians who were conveying the bowl, finding that they were too late and hearing that Sardis had been taken and Croesus was a prisoner, sold the bowl in Samos, and certain private persons bought it and dedicated it as a votive offering in the temple of Hera; and probably those who had sold it would say when they returned to Sparta that it had been taken from them by the Samians.

71 Croesus and Cyrus

[1] Thus then it happened about the mixing-bowl: but meanwhile Croesus, mistaking the meaning of the oracle, was making a march into Cappadocia, expecting to overthrow Cyrus and the power of the Persians: [2] and while Croesus was preparing to march against the Persians, one of the Lydians, who even before this time was thought to be a wise man but in consequence of this opinion got a very great name for wisdom among the Lydians, had advised Croesus as follows (the name of the man was Sandanis): "O king, you are preparing to march against men who wear breeches of leather, and the rest of their clothing is of leather also; and they eat food not such as they desire but such as they can obtain, dwelling in a land which is rugged; [3] and moreover they make no use of wine but drink water; and no figs have they for dessert, nor any other good thing. On the one hand, if you overcome them, what will you take away from them, seeing they have nothing? And on the other hand, if you are overcome, consider how many good things you will lose; for once having tasted our good things, they will cling to them fast and it will not be possible to drive them away. [4] I for my own part feel gratitude to the gods that they do not put it into the minds of the Persians to march against the Lydians." Thus he spoke not persuading Croesus: for it is true indeed that the Persians before they subdued the Lydians had no luxury nor any good thing. 82

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82 Herodotus is, here, introducing a major theme - but its importance to the whole opus can only be fully understood when one reads the final chapters of Book 9.
Croesus did indeed initiate the war, but Cyrus, King of Persia, was well prepared. The Lydians crossed into Cappadocia and were met by Cyrus. After an initial and indecisive battle in the fall of 548 BC, the Persians pursued the Lydians to Sardis and after a brief siege the city fell in the spring of 547.

85 Croesus on the Pyre

[1] Meanwhile to Croesus himself it happened thus: He had a son, of whom I made mention before, who was of good disposition enough but deprived of speech. Now in his former time of prosperity Croesus had done everything that was possible for him, and besides other things which he devised he had also sent messengers to Delphi to inquire concerning him. [2] And the Pythian prophetess spoke to him thus:

"Lydian, master of many, much blind to destiny, Croesus, Do not desire to hear in your halls that voice which is prayed for, Voice of your son; much better if this from you were removed, Since he shall first utter speech in an evil day of misfortune."

[3] Now when the fortress was being taken, one of the Persians was about to slay Croesus taking him for another; and Croesus for his part, seeing him coming on, cared nothing for it because of the misfortune which was upon him, and to him it was indifferent that he should be slain by the stroke; [4] but this voiceless son, when he saw the Persian coming on, by reason of terror and affliction burst the bonds of his utterance and said: "Man, slay not Croesus." This son, I say, uttered voice then first of all, but after this he continued to use speech for the whole time of his life.

86

[1] The Persians then had obtained possession of Sardis and had taken Croesus himself prisoner, after he had reigned fourteen years and had been besieged fourteen days, having fulfilled the oracle in that he had brought to an end his own great empire. So the Persians having taken him brought him into the presence of Cyrus. [2] And he piled up a great pyre and caused Croesus to go up upon it bound in fetters, and along with him twice seven sons of Lydians, whether it was that he meant to dedicate this offering as first-fruits of his victory to some god, or whether he desired to fulfil a vow, or else had heard that Croesus was a god-fearing man and so caused him to go up on the pyre because he wished to know if any one of the divine powers would save him, so that he
should not be burnt alive. [3] He, they say, did this; but to Croesus as he stood upon the pyre there came, although he was in such evil case, a memory of the saying of Solon, how he had said with divine inspiration that no one of the living might be called happy. And when this thought came into his mind, they say that he sighed deeply and groaned aloud, having been for long silent, and three times he uttered the name of Solon. [4] Hearing this, Cyrus bade the interpreters ask Croesus who was this person on whom he called; and they came near and asked. And Croesus for a time, it is said, kept silence when he was asked this, but afterwards being pressed he said: "One whom more than much wealth I should have desired to have speech with all monarchs." Then, since his words were of doubtful import, they asked again of that which he said. [5] And as they were urgent with him and gave him no peace, he told how once Solon an Athenian had come, and having inspected all his wealth had made light of it, with such and such words; and how all had turned out for him according as Solon had said, not speaking at all especially with a view to Croesus himself, but with a view to the whole human race and especially those who seem to themselves to be happy men. And while Croesus related these things, already the pyre was lighted and the edges of it round-about were burning. [6] Then they say that Cyrus, hearing from the interpreters what Croesus had said, changed his purpose and considered that he himself also was but a man, and that he was delivering another man, who had been not inferior to himself in good luck, alive to the fire; and moreover he feared the requital, and reflected that there was nothing of that which men possessed which was secure; therefore, they say, he ordered them to extinguish as quickly as possible the fire that was burning, and to bring down Croesus and those who were with him from the pyre; and they using endeavours were not able now to get the mastery of the flames.

[1] Then it is related by the Lydians that Croesus, having learned how Cyrus had changed his mind, and seeing that everyone was trying to put out the fire but that they were no longer able to check it, cried aloud entreating Apollo that if any gift had ever been given by him which had been acceptable to the god, he would come to his aid and rescue him from the evil which was now upon him. [2] So he with tears entreated the god, and suddenly, they say, after clear sky and calm weather clouds gathered and a storm burst, and it rained with a very violent shower, and the pyre was extinguished. Then Cyrus, having perceived that Croesus was a lover of the gods and a good man, caused him to be brought down from the pyre and asked him as follows: [3] "Croesus, tell me who of all men was it who persuaded you to march upon my land and so to become an enemy
to me instead of a friend?" and he said: "O king, I did this to your felicity and to my own misfortune, and the causer of this was the god of the Greeks, who incited me to march with my army. [4] For no one is so senseless as to choose of his own will war rather peace, since in peace the sons bury their fathers, but in war the fathers bury their sons. But it was pleasing, I suppose, to the divine powers that these things should come to pass thus."

88

[1] So he spoke, and Cyrus loosed his bonds and caused him to sit near himself and paid to him much regard, and he marvelled both himself and all who were about him at the sight of Croesus. And Croesus wrapt in thought was silent; [2] but after a time, turning round and seeing the Persians plundering the city of the Lydians, he said: "O king, must I say to you that which I chance to have in my thought, or must I keep silent in this my present fortune?" Then Cyrus bade him say boldly whatsoever he desired; and he asked him saying: [3] "What is the business that this great multitude of men is doing with so much eagerness?" and he said: "They are plundering your city and carrying away your wealth." And Croesus answered: "Neither is it my city that they are plundering nor my wealth which they are carrying away; for I have no longer any property in these things: but it is your wealth that they are carrying and driving away."

89

[1] And Cyrus was concerned by that which Croesus had said, and he caused all the rest to withdraw and asked Croesus what he discerned for his advantage as regards that which was being done; and he said: "Since the gods gave me to you as a slave, I think it right if I discern anything more than others to signify it to you. [2] The Persians, who are by nature hubristic, are without wealth: if therefore you suffer them to carry off in plunder great wealth and to take possession of it, then it is to be looked for that you wilt experience this result, you must expect namely that whosoever gets possession of the largest share will make insurrection against you. Now therefore, if that which I say is pleasing to you, do this: [3] Set spearmen of your guard to watch at all the gates, and let these take away the things, and say to the men who were bearing them out of the city that they must first be tithed for Zeus: and thus you on the one hand will not be hated by them for taking away the things by force, and they on the other will willingly let the things go, acknowledging within themselves that you are doing that which is just."
[1] Hearing this, Cyrus was above measure pleased, because he thought that Croesus advised well; and he commended him much and enjoined the spearmen of his guard to perform that which Croesus had advised: and after that he spoke to Croesus thus: "Croesus, since you are prepared, like a king as you are, to do good deeds and speak good words, therefore ask me for a gift, whatsoever you desire to be given you immediately." [2] And he said: "Master, you will most do me a pleasure if you permit me to send to the god of the Greeks, whom I honoured most of all gods, these fetters, and to ask him whether it is accounted by him right to deceive those who do well to him." Then Cyrus asked him what accusation he made against the god, that he thus requested; [3] and Croesus repeated to him all that had been in his mind, and the answers of the Oracles, and especially the votive offerings, and how he had been incited by the prophecy to march upon the Persians: and thus speaking he came back again to the request that it might be permitted to him to make this reproach against the god. And Cyrus laughed and said: "Not this only shall you obtain from me, Croesus, but also whatsoever you may desire of me at any time." [4] Hearing this Croesus sent certain of the Lydians to Delphi, enjoining them to lay the fetters upon the threshold of the temple and to ask the god whether he felt no shame that he had incited Croesus by his prophecies to march upon the Persians, persuading him that he should bring to an end the empire of Cyrus, seeing that these were the first-fruits of spoil which he had won from it, at the same time displaying the fetters. This they were to ask, and moreover also whether it was thought right by the gods of the Greeks to practice ingratitude.

[1] When the Lydians came and repeated that which they were enjoined to say, it is related that the Pythian prophetess spoke as follows: "The fated destiny it is impossible even for a god to escape. And Croesus paid the debt due for the sin of his fifth ancestor, who being one of the spearmen of the Heracleidae followed the treacherous device of a woman, and having slain his master took possession of his royal dignity, which belonged not to him of right. [2] And although Loxias83 eagerly desired that the calamity of Sardis might come upon the sons of Croesus and not

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83 Loxias (Λοξίας) is an epithet for Apollo associated with his role at Delphi. It is a derivation of logos, meaning the ambiguous speaker.
upon Croesus himself, but he was not able to alter destiny;\textsuperscript{84} [3] but he was able to put off the
taking of Sardis by three years; and let Croesus be assured that he was taken prisoner later by these
years than the fated time: moreover secondly, he assisted him when he was about to be burnt. [4] And as to the oracle which was given, Croesus finds fault with good ground: for Loxias told him
beforehand that if he should march upon the Persians he should destroy a great empire: and he
upon hearing this, if he wished to take counsel well, ought to have sent and asked further whether
the god meant his own empire or that of Cyrus: but as he did not comprehend that which was
uttered and did not ask again, let him pronounce himself to be the cause of that which followed.
[5] To him also when he consulted the Oracle for the last time Loxias said that which he said
concerning a mule; but this also he failed to comprehend: for Cyrus was in fact this mule, seeing
that he was born of parents who were of two different nations, his mother being of nobler descent
and his father of less noble: [6] for she was a Median woman, daughter of Astyages, king of the
Medes, but he was a Persian, one of a nation subject to the Medes, and being inferior in all respects
he was the husband of one who was his royal mistress." Thus the Pythian prophetess replied to the
Lydians, and they brought the answer back to Sardis and repeated it to Croesus; and he, when he
heard it, acknowledged that the fault was his own and not that of the god.

With regard then to the empire of Croesus and the first conquest of Ionia, it happened thus.

\begin{quote}
The next few chapters, 92 - 94, conclude the Lydian Logos with a geographic and
ethnographic survey of Lydia.

The Persika, or Persian Logos, takes up the remainder of Book One: Chapters 96 - 122.
From this point the narrative is, for the most part, chronological. In the Persika we learn of the
fall of Assyria and rise of the Median Empire; the overthrow of Media by Cyrus, and the
establishment of the Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great to his death in 530 BC.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{84} MacCaulay and Godley (1920) both offer translations which suggest that Apollo appealed to the Fates, or
Destinies, but the Greek is clear: οὐκ οἶδα τε ἔγινετο παραγαγεῖν μοίρας. The import is that the fate of Croesus was
out of the hands of the gods, subject to a higher level of divine law.
Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War
The Richard Crawley Translation (1903)

Edited with notes and commentary by E. E. Garvin © 2014

Book One

1. Thucydides, an Athenian, wrote the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, beginning at the moment that it broke out, and believing that it would be a great war and more worthy of relation than any that had preceded it. This belief was not without its grounds. The preparations of both the combatants were in every department in the last state of perfection; and he could see the rest of the Greek peoples taking sides in the quarrel; those who delayed doing so at once having it in contemplation. [2] Indeed this was the greatest movement yet known in history, not only of the Greeks, but of a large part of the barbarian world - I had almost said of mankind. [3] For though the events of remote antiquity, and even those that more immediately preceded the war, could not from lapse of time be clearly ascertained, yet the evidence which an inquiry carried as far back as was practicable leads me to trust, points to the conclusion that there was nothing on a great scale, either in war or in other matters.

85 It is important to distinguish that ζυγέγραψε τὸν πόλεμον has but one verb, wrote, and one direct object, the war. It is incorrect to translate 'wrote the history of the war.'
2.

[1] For instance, it is evident that what is now called Hellas had in ancient times no settled population; on the contrary, migrations were of frequent occurrence, the several tribes readily abandoning their homes under the pressure of superior numbers. [2] Without commerce, without freedom of communication either by land or sea, cultivating no more of their territory than the exigencies of life required, destitute of capital, never planting their land (for they could not tell when an invader might not come and take it all away, and when he did come they had no walls to stop him), thinking that the necessities of daily sustenance could be supplied at one place as well as another, they cared little for shifting their habitation, and consequently neither built large cities nor attained to any other form of greatness. [3] The richest soils were always most subject to this change of masters; such as the district now called Thessaly, Boeotia, most of the Peloponnese, Arcadia excepted, and the most fertile parts of the rest of Hellas. [4] The goodness of the land favoured the aggrandizement of particular individuals, and thus created faction (στάσις) which proved a fertile source of ruin. It also invited invasion. [5] Accordingly Attica, from the poverty of its soil enjoying from a very remote period freedom from faction, never changed its inhabitants. [6] And here is no inconsiderable exemplification of my assertion that the migrations were the cause of there being no correspondent growth in other parts. The most powerful victims of war or faction from the rest of Hellas took refuge with the Athenians as a safe retreat; and at an early period, becoming naturalized, swelled the already large population of the city to such a

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86 Crawley, as with other translators, has "the country now called Hellas" but the word choice may lead to misunderstanding: Greece, or Hellas as is the proper name, was never a 'country' in the modern sense of a Nation State. The Hellas referred to in the text is, specifically, the Greek peninsula, but by the time T. wrote, the Greek world extended from the western Mediterranean to the eastern Black Sea region.

87 Thucydides is immediately establishing one of his major themes: factional strife, stasis, which will become his explanation for the failure of Athens.

88 Literally, Attica was "not torn by factional strife."

89 The Athenians claimed to be autochthonous, 'born of the soil.'

90 Thucydides is here very careful to separate the concepts of war and strife: war (polemos) is violence brought from without while strife (stasis) is conflict within. Both events caused the most powerful (hoi dunatotatoi) to migrate to Athens.

91 The return of the Heraclidae and their conquest of the Peloponnese, or the Dorian invasions, brought aristocratic refugees from that region to Athens. There is a rich tradition of legend having to do with these movements, but most pertinent to the story at hand is that the most prominent political families of the time, the Philaedae and the Alcmaonidae, were both descendants of these migrants.
height that Attica became at last too small to hold them, and they had to send out colonies to Ionia.\footnote{Again, establishing a theme: Athens now rules the Ionian Greeks because she has an ancestral right as Metropolis.}

3. Origins of the Hellenic Gens

[1] There is also another circumstance that contributes not a little to my conviction of the weakness of ancient times: Before the Trojan war there is no indication of any common action in Hellas, [2] nor indeed of the universal prevalence of the name; on the contrary, before the time of Hellen, son of Deucalion, no such appellation existed, but the region went by the names of the different tribes, in particular of the Pelasgian. It was not till Hellen and his sons grew strong in Phthiotis, and were invited as allies into the other cities, that one by one they gradually acquired from the connection the name of Hellenes;\footnote{Deucalion and Pyrrha were chosen by Zeus to survive the flood that Zeus sent to destroy mankind. Their son was Hellen and his sons were Dorus (patronym of the Doric tribe), Aeolus (patronym of the Aeolic tribe) and Xuthus, whose son was Ion (patronym of the Ionic tribe).} though a long time elapsed before that name could fasten itself upon all. [3] The best proof of this is furnished by Homer. Born long after the Trojan War, he nowhere calls all of them by that name, nor indeed any of them except the followers of Achilles from Phthiotis, who were the original Hellenes: in his poems they are called Danaans, Argives, and Achaeans. He does not even use the term Barbarian, probably because the Hellenes had not yet been marked off from the rest of the world by one distinctive appellation. [4] It appears therefore that the several Hellenic communities, comprising not only those who first acquired the name, city by city, as they came to understand each other\footnote{That is, as they acquired the Greek language.}, but also those who assumed it afterwards as the name of the whole people, were before the Trojan war prevented by their want of strength and the absence of mutual intercourse from displaying any collective action. Indeed, they could not unite for this expedition till they had gained increased familiarity with the sea.

4 Minos

And the first person known to us by tradition as having established a navy is Minos.\footnote{A mythical figure, though T. is not referring to that Minos who was son of Europa but his grandson. This is the Minos of legend who kept the Minotaur in the Labyrinth and had defeated the Athenians in war. See Apollodorus iii.1.2-3.} He made himself master of what is now called the Hellenic sea,\footnote{The Aegean.} and ruled over the Cyclades,\footnote{The chain of islands which sweep across the southern Aegean from Attica to Rhodes are the Cyclades Islands.} into most of which he sent the first colonies, expelling the Carians and appointing his own sons.
governors; and thus did his best to put down piracy in those waters, a necessary step to secure the revenues for his own use.

5 Piracy

[1] For in early times the Hellenes and the barbarians of the coast and islands, as communication by sea became more common, were tempted to turn to piracy, under the conduct of their most powerful men; the motives being to serve their own profit and to support the needy. They would fall upon a town unprotected by walls, and consisting of a mere collection of villages, and would plunder it; indeed, this came to be the main source of their livelihood, no disgrace being yet attached to such an achievement, but even some glory. [2] An illustration of this is furnished by the honour with which some of the inhabitants of the continent still regard a successful marauder, and by the question we find the old poets everywhere representing the people as asking of voyagers - "Are they pirates?" - as if those who are asked the question would have no idea of disclaiming the imputation, or their interrogators of reproaching them for it. [3] The same rapine prevailed also by land. And even at the present day many of Hellas still follow the old fashion, the Ozolian Locrians for instance, the Aetolians, the Acarnanians, and that region of the continent; and the custom of carrying arms is still kept up among these continentals, from the old piratical habits.

6

The whole of Greece used once to carry arms, their habitations being unprotected and their communication with each other unsafe; indeed, to wear arms was as much a part of everyday life with them as with the barbarians. [2] And the fact that the people in these parts of Greece are still living in the old way points to a time when the same mode of life was once equally common to all. [3] The Athenians were the first to lay aside their weapons, and to adopt an easier and more luxurious mode of life; indeed, it is only lately that their rich old men left off the luxury of wearing undergarments of linen, and fastening a knot of their hair with a tie of golden grasshoppers, a fashion which spread to their Ionian kindred and long prevailed among the old men there. [4] On the contrary, a modest style of dressing, more in conformity with modern ideas, was first adopted by the Lacedaemonians, the rich doing their best to assimilate their way of life to that of the common people. [5] They also set the example of contending naked, publicly stripping and anointing themselves with oil in their gymnastic exercises. Formerly, even in the Olympic contests, the athletes who contended wore belts across their middles; and it is but a few years since that the
practice ceased. To this day among some of the barbarians, especially in Asia, when prizes for boxing and wrestling are offered, belts are worn by the combatants. [6] And there are many other points in which a likeness might be shown between the life of the Greek world of old and the barbarian of to-day.

7

[1] With respect to their towns, later on, at an era of increased facilities of navigation and a greater supply of capital, we find the shores becoming the site of walled towns, and the peninsulas being occupied for the purposes of commerce and defence against a neighbour. But the old towns, on account of the great prevalence of piracy, were built away from the sea, whether on the islands or the continent, and still remain in their old sites. For the pirates used to plunder one another, and indeed all coast populations, whether seafaring or not.

8

[1] The islanders, too, were great pirates. These islanders were Carians and Phoenicians, by whom most of the islands were colonized, as was proved by the following fact. During the purification of Delos by Athens in this war all the graves in the island were taken up, and it was found that above half their inmates were Carians:98 they were identified by the fashion of the arms buried with them, and by the method of interment, which was the same as the Carians still follow. [2] But as soon as Minos had formed his navy, communication by sea became easier, as he colonized most of the islands, and thus expelled the malefactors. [3] The coast population now began to apply themselves more closely to the acquisition of wealth, and their life became more settled; some even began to build themselves walls on the strength of their newly acquired riches. For the love of gain would reconcile the weaker to the dominion of the stronger, and the possession of capital enabled the more powerful to reduce the smaller towns to subjection. [4] And it was at a somewhat later stage of this development that they went on the expedition against Troy.99

9 Agamemnon

[1] What enabled Agamemnon to raise the armament was more, in my opinion, his superiority in strength, than the oaths of Tyndareus, which bound the suitors to follow him. [2] Indeed, the account given by those Peloponnesians who have been the recipients of the most

98 In November of 426 BC. See below iii.104.
99 Chapter 8 is Thucydides' first methodological demonstration. Events of the very distant past cannot be known with certainty, but the careful application of observation and deduction to the available data can produce conclusions of probability.
credible tradition is this: First of all Pelops, arriving among a needy population from Asia with
vast wealth, acquired such power that, stranger though he was, the country was called after him; and
this power fortune saw fit materially to increase in the hands of his descendants. Eurystheus
had been killed in Attica by the Heraclidae. Atreus was his mother's brother; and to the hands of
his relation, who had left his father on account of the death of Chrysippus, Eurystheus, when he
set out on his expedition, had committed Mycenae and the government. As time went on and
Eurystheus did not return, Atreus complied with the wishes of the Mycenaeans, who were
influenced by fear of the Heraclidae; besides, his power seemed considerable, and he had not
neglected to court the favour of the populace and assumed the sceptre of Mycenae and the rest of
the dominions of Eurystheus. And so the power of the descendants of Pelops came to be greater
than that of the descendants of Perseus.

[3] To all this Agamemnon succeeded. He had also a navy far stronger than his
contemporaries, so that, in my opinion, fear was quite as strong an element as love in the formation
of the confederate expedition. The strength of his navy is shown by the fact that his own was the
largest contingent, and that of the Arcadians was furnished by him; this at least is what Homer
says, if his testimony can be trusted. [4] Besides, in his account of the transmission of the sceptre,
he calls him "Of many an island, and of all Argos king." Now Agamemnon's was a continental
power; and he could not have been master of any except the adjacent islands (and these would not
be many), but through the possession of a fleet. And from this expedition we may infer the
character of earlier enterprises.

10.

[1] Now Mycenae may have been a small place, and many of the towns of that age may
appear comparatively insignificant, but no exact observer would therefore feel justified in rejecting
the estimate given by the poets and by tradition of the magnitude of the armament. [2] For I
suppose if Sparta were to become desolate, and the temples and the foundations of the public
buildings were left, that as time went on there would be a strong disposition with posterity to refuse
to accept her fame as a true exponent of her power. And yet they occupy two-fifths of Peloponnese

100 The Peloponnese is named for Pelops, the son of Tantalus, king of Phrygia. He married Hippodamia, the
daughter of the king of Pisa (Elis), and his son, Atreus, was the father of Agamemnon.
101 Perseus, the founder of Mycenae, and Andromeda had a son, Sthenelus, who succeeded Perseus as king.
Sthenelus married Nicipe, the daughter of Pelops and Hippodamia, and therefore sister of Atreus and Thystes.
Sthenelus and Nicipe had a son, Eurystheus who, as king of Mycenae, was the bane of Heracles.
102 *Iliad* ii.108.
and lead the whole,\textsuperscript{103} not to speak of their numerous allies without. Still, as the city is neither built in a compact form nor adorned with magnificent temples and public edifices, but composed of villages after the old fashion of Hellas, there would be an impression of inadequacy.\textsuperscript{104} Whereas, if Athens were to suffer the same misfortune, I suppose that any inference from the appearance presented to the eye would make her power to have been twice as great as it is.

[2] We have therefore no right to be sceptical, nor to content ourselves with an inspection of a town to the exclusion of a consideration of its power; but we may safely conclude that the armament in question surpassed all before it, as it fell short of modern efforts; if we can here also accept the testimony of Homer's poems, in which, without allowing for the exaggeration which a poet would feel himself licensed to employ, we can see that it was far from equalling ours. [4] He has represented it as consisting of twelve hundred vessels; the Boeotian complement of each ship being a hundred and twenty men,\textsuperscript{105} that of the ships of Philoctetes fifty.\textsuperscript{106} By this, I conceive, he meant to convey the maximum and the minimum complement: at any rate, he does not specify the amount of any others in his catalogue of the ships. That they were all rowers as well as warriors we see from his account of the ships of Philoctetes, in which all the men at the oars are bowmen. Now it is improbable that there was room in the ships for many other than the kings, officers and fighting men; especially as they had to cross the open sea with munitions of war, in ships, moreover, that had no decks, but were equipped in the old piratical fashion.\textsuperscript{107} [5] So that if we strike the average of the largest and smallest ships, the number of those who sailed will appear inconsiderable, representing, as they did, the whole force of Hellas.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{103} Something of an exaggeration. Sparta governed Laconia and Messenia directly, the former virtually a slave state. Arcadia was mostly allied with Sparta as was Corinth, but Argos was fiercely independent, as was Elis and Achaea.

\textsuperscript{104} That is why our ancient sources rarely refer to Sparta or the Spartans. Sparta was merely the central 'village' in the collection more often referred to as Lacedaemon, which itself is inside Laconia.

\textsuperscript{105} Iliad ii.509-10

\textsuperscript{106} Iliad ii.719-20

\textsuperscript{107} In Thucydides' time, a military force would include carpenters, smiths, cooks and an assemblage of other 'support' staff. In Homeric times, the galleys were open, with no decks.

\textsuperscript{108} If this is the best that Thucydides can do to demonstrate his methods we should be skeptical as readers: He begins his argument with one of the most common and most heinous of errors: "It seems clear to me..." (δηλ ῶν ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ) establishing the argument on an assumption; that these numbers represent high and low figures. It proceeds with a second error; assuming that there was anything close to an equal distribution - as in 600 ships with 120 men and 600 ships with 50 men - which is the only distribution that would allow an average to be calculated. He concludes with another assumption, this time of likelihood: (οὐκ εἰκὸς). The formula, then, is: since I believe that A is true (based on incomplete data), therefore B is likely true (but not proven) and, therefore, C is true. Not much of a syllogism.
11.

[1] And this was due not so much to scarcity of men as of money. Difficulty of subsistence made the invaders reduce the numbers of the army to a point at which it might live on the country during the prosecution of the war. Even after the victory they obtained on their arrival - and a victory there must have been, or the fortifications of the naval camp could never have been built - there is no indication of their whole force having been employed; on the contrary, they seem to have turned to cultivation of the Chersonese and to piracy from want of supplies. This was what really enabled the Trojans to keep the field for ten years against them; the dispersion of the enemy making them always a match for the detachment left behind. [2] If they had brought plenty of supplies with them, and had persevered in the war without scattering for piracy and agriculture, they would have easily defeated the Trojans in the field, since they could hold their own against them with the division on service. In short, if they had stuck to the siege, the capture of Troy would have cost them less time and less trouble. But as want of money proved the weakness of earlier expeditions, so from the same cause even the one in question, more famous than its predecessors, may be pronounced on the evidence of what it effected to have been inferior to its renown and to the current opinion about it formed under the tuition of the poets. 110

12

[1] Even after the Trojan War, Greece was still engaged in removing and settling, and thus could not attain to the quiet which must precede growth. [2] The late return of the Greeks from Ilium caused many revolutions, and factions ensued almost everywhere; and it was the citizens thus driven into exile who founded the cities. [3] Sixty years after the capture of Ilium, the modern Boeotians were driven out of Arne by the Thessalians, and settled in the present Boeotia, the former Cadmeis; though there was a division of them there before, some of whom joined the expedition to Ilium. Twenty years later, the Dorians and the Heraclidæ became masters of the Peloponnese; 111

109 Ilíad vii. 435 - 41.

110 T. is accomplishing two things here: One, he is further demonstrating method, showing his audience how the logic of analysis works in military affairs: Two, drawing an analogy. To what is difficult to say. He could be suggesting that the Spartans could have succeeded in the siege of Athens early in the war if only they had been better funded and supplied; or he could be saying that Athens would have done better in the war had they not been distracted by the maintenance of the Empire.

111 The archaeological record shows a complete collapse of the civilization now called Mycenaean, the civilization of the legendary Bronze Age heroes, after ca. 1100 BC. It does not, however, give us any better an explanation that Thucydides and other Greek authors have proposed: That the descendants of Heracles, the Heraclidae, returned three generations after the death of Heracles to reclaim their inheritance and conquer the Peloponnese.
[4] so that much had to be done and many years had to elapse before Greece could attain to a
durable tranquillity undisturbed by removals, and could begin to send out colonies, as Athens did
to Ionia and most of the islands, and the Peloponnesians to most of Italy and Sicily and some places
in the rest of Hellas. All these places were founded subsequently to the war with Troy.  

13

[1] But as the power of Hellas grew, and the acquisition of wealth became more an object,
the revenues of the states increasing, tyrannies were by their means established almost everywhere
- the old form of government being hereditary monarchy with definite prerogatives - and Hellas
began to fit out fleets and apply herself more closely to the sea. [2] It is said that the Corinthians
were the first to approach the modern style of naval architecture, and that Corinth was the first
place in Hellas where triremes were built; and we have Ameinocles, a Corinthian
shipwright, making four ships for the Samians. Dating from the end of this war, it is nearly three
hundred years ago that Ameinocles went to Samos. 

[4] Again, the earliest sea-fight in history was between the Corinthians and Coreyraeans; this
was about two hundred and sixty years ago, dating from the same time. [5] Planted on an isthmus,
Corinth had from time out of mind been a commercial emporium; as formerly almost all
communication between the Greeks within and without the Peloponnese was carried on overland,
and the Corinthian territory was the highway through which it travelled. She had consequently
great money resources, as is shown by the epithet "wealthy" bestowed by the old poets on the
place, and this enabled her, when traffic by sea became more common, to procure her navy and

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112 This concludes Thucydides' first logos, or argument, indicated by the Ring Composition. The themes introduced
at i.1 are restated and concluded at i.12, forming a 'ring.'
113 Thucydides has now moved from the Bronze Age, or Mycenaean period which ends ca 1100, to the Archaic
Period, which begins in 776 BC. The period between is the Dark Ages.
114 At Athens and elsewhere, the Mycenaean style monarchies were replaced by oligarchic and aristocratic
governing councils. The failure of this system led people in many states to support tyrants, popular leaders given
absolute authority to govern, in the hopes that they would govern well - that is, more in the interests of the
common people who gave them the power in the first place.
115 The trireme was a long deep draft galley with three (hence tri-reme) banks of oars and 200 rowers. There was an
upper deck to accommodate soldiers and a single square sail to assist when the wind was favorable.
116 Otherwise unattested. The reference in Pliny (Natural History 7.56) is derivative.
117 Thucydides first indication of relative chronology. By the modern calendar, the Peloponnesian War ended in
April of 404 BC. The first trireme, then, was about 700 BC.
118 Iliad ii.570. But that is the only occurrence.
put down piracy; and as she could offer a mart for both branches of the trade, she acquired for herself all the power which a large revenue affords.\textsuperscript{119}

[6] Subsequently the Ionians attained to great naval strength in the reign of Cyrus, the first king of the Persians, and of his son Cambyses,\textsuperscript{120} and while they were at war with the former commanded for a while the Ionian Sea.\textsuperscript{121} Polycrates also, the tyrant of Samos, had a powerful navy in the reign of Cambyses, with which he reduced many of the islands, and among them Rhenea, which he consecrated to the Delian Apollo.\textsuperscript{122} About this time also the Phocaeans, while they were founding Massalia,\textsuperscript{123} defeated the Carthaginians in a sea-fight.\textsuperscript{124}

14.

[1] These were the most powerful navies. And even these, although so many generations had elapsed since the Trojan War, seem to have been principally composed of the old penteconters and long-boats, and to have counted few triremes among their ranks. [2] Indeed it was only shortly before the Persian war, and the death of Darius\textsuperscript{125} the successor of Cambyses, that the Sicilian tyrants and the Corecyraeans acquired any large number of triremes. For after these there were no navies of any account in Hellas till the expedition of Xerxes; [3] Aegina, Athens, and others may have possessed a few vessels, but they were principally penteconters. It was quite at the end of this period that the war with Aegina and the prospect of the barbarian invasion enabled Themistocles to persuade the Athenians to build the fleet with which they fought at Salamis; and even these vessels had not complete decks.

15

[1] The navies, then, of the Greeks during the period we have traversed were what I have described. All their insignificance did not prevent their being an element of the greatest power to those who cultivated them, alike in revenue and in dominion. They were the means by which the islands were reached and reduced, those of the smallest area falling the easiest prey. [2] Wars by

\begin{footnotes}
\item[119] The safest and shortest route from the Aegean (and the East) to Italy and Sicily was over the Isthmus of Corinth, through the Gulf of Corinth, up past Corecyra and then over to the Italian peninsula. The route made Corinth a shipping hub, and a rival of Corecyra.
\item[120] Cambyses, so of Cyrus, was King of Persia from 530 to 522 BC. In 525 he invaded and conquered Egypt.
\item[121] See Herodotus i.141 - 176. Cyrus acquired the Ionian Greeks when he conquered the Lydian kingdom of Croesus in 547 BC, but the Ionians attempted a rebellion, which was quickly put down by Cyrus.
\item[122] For the career of Polycrates see Herodotus iii.39 - 60; 120 - 149.
\item[123] Modern Marseille, France. For Phocaean navigation of the western Mediterranean, see Herodotus i.163 - 67
\item[124] The Battle of Alalia, Corsica, is what T. is likely referring to. See the Herodotus reference above.
\item[125] Not the son of Cambyses, but an usurper who ruled Persian from 522 to 486 BC.
\end{footnotes}
land there were none, none at least by which power was acquired; we have the usual border contests, but of distant expeditions with conquest for object we hear nothing among the Greeks. There was no union of subject cities round a great state, no spontaneous combination of equals for confederate expeditions; what fighting there was consisted merely of local warfare between rival neighbours. [3] The nearest approach to a coalition took place in the old war between Chalcis and Eretria; this was a quarrel in which the rest of the Hellenic name did to some extent take sides.

16

[1] Various, too, were the obstacles which the national growth encountered in various localities. The power of the Ionians was advancing with rapid strides, when it came into collision with Persia, under King Cyrus, who, after having dethroned Croesus and overrun everything between the Halys and the sea, stopped not till he had reduced the cities of the coast; the islands being only left to be subdued by Darius and the Phoenician navy.

17.

[1] Again, wherever there were tyrants, their habit of providing simply for themselves, of looking solely to their personal comfort and family aggrandizement, made safety the great aim of their policy, and prevented anything great proceeding from them; though they would each have their affairs with their immediate neighbours. All this is only true of the mother country, for in Sicily they attained to very great power. Thus for a long time everywhere in Greece do we find causes which make the states alike incapable of combination for great ends, or of any vigorous action of their own.

18.

[1] But at last a time came when the tyrants of Athens and the far older tyrannies of the rest of Hellas were, with the exception of those in Sicily, once and for all put down by the Spartans, for this city, though after the settlement of the Dorian, its present inhabitants, it suffered from factions for an unparalleled length of time, still at a very early period obtained good laws, and enjoyed a freedom from tyrants which was unbroken; it has possessed the same form of

126 The Lelantine War, about which little is known. See Herodotus v.99. Speculations about the date of this war range between 710 and 705 BC.
127 The Spartans did assist in the removal of Hippias, the son of Peisistratus and tyrant of Athens, in 510 BC, but only because they were tricked by Cleisthenes to do so.
government for more than four hundred years, reckoning to the end of the late war, and has thus been in a position to arrange the affairs of the other states.

Not many years after the deposition of the tyrants, the battle of Marathon was fought between the Medes and the Athenians. Ten years afterwards, the barbarian returned with the armada for the subjugation of Hellas. In the face of this great danger, the command of the confederate Greeks was assumed by the Lacedaemonians in virtue of their superior power; and the Athenians, having made up their minds to abandon their city, broke up their homes, threw themselves into their ships, and became a naval people.

This coalition, after repulsing the Barbarian, soon afterwards split into two sections, which included the Greeks who had revolted from the King, as well as those who had aided him in the war. At the end of the one stood Athens, at the head of the other Sparta, one the first naval, the other the first military power in Hellas. For a short time the league held together, till the Lacedaemonians and Athenians quarrelled and made war upon each other with their allies, a duel into which all the Hellenes sooner or later were drawn, though some might at first remain neutral. So that the whole period from the Median war to this, with some peaceful intervals, was spent by each power in war, either with its rival, or with its own revolted allies, and consequently afforded them constant practice in military matters, and that experience which is learnt in the school of danger.

19. [1] The policy of Lacedaemon was not to exact tribute from her allies, but merely to secure their subservience to her interests by establishing oligarchies among them; Athens, on the contrary, had by degrees deprived her allies of their ships, and imposed instead contributions in money on

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128 The reference here is to the reforms of Lycurgus, the semi-mythical Spartan lawgiver. Thucydides is suggesting 800 BC for his reforms and Plutarch (Lycurgus 1.4) agrees. Herodotus (i.65-66) has more detail but an earlier date.

129 A constitutional monarchy with two kings, a board of Ephors, a Gerousia (council of elders) all of which, save the kings, were elected.

130 In 490 BC Darius sent an invasion force under Datis which landed, and was defeated, at Marathon.

131 In 480 BC Xerxes, son of Darius, personally led an invasion which captured all of northern and central Greece before being defeated at Salamis in the fall of 480.

132 This is a reference to Thebes and other, lesser, states that had submitted to Xerxes in 481. It might also be a reference to the Ionian Greeks who, as Persian subjects, had served under Xerxes in the invasion. Thucydides rarely misses an opportunity to remind us that most of Athens’ subjects had been subjects of the Persians and, before that, of the Lydians.

133 The First Peloponnesian War (460 – 445 B.C.). Thucydides' summation here is horribly misleading. Sparta voluntarily withdrew from the coalition in 478 leaving Athens the undisputed leader of what would become the Delian League.
all except Chios and Lesbos. And the power of either Sparta or Athens at the beginning of this war was greater than the combined power of Athens and Sparta during the time of the coalition.

20. The Tyranicides

[1] So much is what I have discovered about earlier times, although I grant that there will be a difficulty in believing every particular detail. The way that most men deal with traditions, even traditions of their own country, is to receive them all alike as they are delivered, without applying any critical test whatever. [2] For example, the general Athenian public fancy that Hipparchus was tyrant when he fell by the hands of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, not knowing that Hippias, the eldest of the sons of Peisistratus, was really supreme, and that Hipparchus and Thessalus were his brothers; and that Harmodius and Aristogeiton suspecting, on the very day, nay at the very moment fixed on for the deed, that information had been conveyed to Hippias by their accomplices, concluded that he had been warned, and did not attack him, yet, not liking to be apprehended and risk their lives for nothing, fell upon Hipparchus near the Leocorium,134 and slew him as he was arranging the Panathenaic procession.135

[3] There are many other unfounded ideas current among the rest of the Greeks, even on matters of contemporary history, which have not been obscured by time. For instance, there is the notion that the Lacedaemonian kings have two votes each,136 the fact being that they have only one; and that there is a company of Pitane, there being simply no such thing.137 So little pains do the vulgar138 take in the investigation of truth, accepting readily the first story that comes to hand.

21.

[1] On the whole, however, the conclusions I have drawn from the proofs quoted may, I believe, safely be relied on. Assuredly they will not be disturbed either by the lays of a poet

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134 Leos was one of the eponymous heroes of Attica - for whom the deme Leontis is named. Legend has it that he sacrificed his daughters to avert a famine in Attica. There is frequent mention of this legend but little in the way of detail. See Pausanias i.5.2.
135 Harmodius and Aristogeiton were brothers who led a failed plot to kill Hippias, who was then tyrant of Athens. They killed Hipparchus instead and, when caught, were executed. After Hippias was finally deposed, the Athenians celebrated Harmodious and Aristogeiton as heroes. For a more detailed account see Herodotus vi. 54 - 59; Ath. Pol. 18.
136 It is often assumed that Thucydides is referring to a passage in Herodotus (vi.57), but Herodotus only says that two votes are cast in proxy when the kings are not present.
137 Herodotus ix.53 says that it was the commander of the Pitane battalion who refused to withdraw to Plataea during the battle of that name in 479 BC.
138 Again, it is often thought that this passage is a slight to Herodotus. But the term "the vulgar" (τοῖς πολλοῖς) is a regular and unambiguous reference to the common people, distinguished from the elite. If Thucydides had not already defined his audience by the style of language he uses, he has now made it clear: "You masses of the uneducated lower classes need not read my book!"
displaying the exaggeration of his craft, or by the compositions of the chroniclers\textsuperscript{139} that are attractive at truth's expense; the subjects they treat of being out of the reach of evidence, and time having robbed most of them of value by enthroning them in the region of legend. Turning from these, we can rest satisfied with having proceeded upon the clearest data, and having arrived at conclusions as exact as can be expected in matters of such antiquity. [2] To come to this war: despite the known disposition of the actors in a struggle to overrate its importance, and when it is over to return to their admiration of earlier events, yet an examination of the facts will show that it was much greater than the wars which preceded it.

22.

[1] With reference to the speeches in this history, some were delivered before the war began, others while it was going on; some I heard myself, others I got from various quarters; it was in all cases difficult to carry them word for word in one's memory, so my habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said.\textsuperscript{140} [2] And with reference to the narrative of events, far from permitting myself to derive it from the first source that came to hand, I did not even trust my own impressions, but it rests partly on what I saw myself, partly on what others saw for me, the accuracy of the report being always tried by the most severe and detailed tests possible. [3] My conclusions have cost me some labour from the want of coincidence between accounts of the same occurrences by different eye-witnesses, arising sometimes from imperfect memory, sometimes from undue partiality for one side or the other. [4] The absence of romance in my history will, I fear, detract somewhat from its interest; but if it be judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it, I shall be content. In fine, I have written my work, not as an essay which is to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time.

\textsuperscript{139} The logographoi (λογογράφοι). No sooner was historical prose narrative invented than the practitioners competed to find terms to describe their own very good undertakings and to describe the incompetence of their predecessors. Herodotus (ii.143; v.36.2, 125.1) calls Hecataeus a logopoios (λογοποίος), a maker of stories, as opposed to an investigator, as Herodotus was. Thucydides here disparages the storytellers and attempts, in his opening statement, to define a new term: ξυγγράφειν, always careful to avoid the word historia.

\textsuperscript{140} Just after criticizing his predecessors for pandering to style at the expense of accuracy, Thucydides admits to fabricating his own very stylish and showy speeches.
Thucydides begins his narrative of the war from Chapter 22. The war began in March of 431 with the attempted capture of Plataea by Theban forces.

The Peloponnesian army, led by Archidamus of Sparta, invaded Attica in May of 431 but were unable to draw the Athenians out of the city to battle. Nevertheless, there were skirmishes and the siege of Potidaea was in full force.

In the winter of 432/30 the Athenians honoured the dead:

Pericles Funeral Oration ii. 34 - 46

34

[1] In the same winter the Athenians gave a funeral at the public cost to those who had first fallen in this war. It was a custom of their ancestors, and the manner of it is as follows: [2] Three days before the ceremony, the bones of the dead are laid out in a tent which has been erected; and their friends bring to their relatives such offerings as they please. [3] In the funeral procession cypress coffins are borne in cars, one for each tribe; the bones of the deceased being placed in the coffin of their tribe. Among these is carried one empty bier decked for the missing, that is, for those whose bodies could not be recovered. [4] Any citizen or stranger who pleases, joins in the procession: and the female relatives are there to wail at the burial. [5] The dead are laid in the public sepulchre in the most beautiful suburb of the city, in which those who fall in war are always buried; with the exception of those slain at Marathon, who for their singular and extraordinary valour were interred on the spot where they fell. [6] After the bodies have been laid in the earth, a man chosen by the state, of approved wisdom and eminent reputation, pronounces over them an appropriate panegyric; after which all retire. [7] Such is the manner of the burying; and throughout the whole of the war, whenever the occasion arose, the established custom was observed. [8] Meanwhile these were the first that had fallen, and Pericles, son of Xanthippus, was chosen to pronounce their eulogy. When the proper time arrived, he advanced from the sepulchre to an elevated platform in order to be heard by as many of the crowd as possible, and spoke as follows:
[1] "Most of my predecessors in this place have commended him who made this speech part of the law, telling us that it is well that it should be delivered at the burial of those who fall in battle. For myself, I should have thought that the worth which had displayed itself in deeds would be sufficiently rewarded by honours also shown by deeds; such as you now see in this funeral prepared at the people's cost. And I could have wished that the reputations of many brave men were not to be imperilled in the mouth of a single individual, to stand or fall according as he spoke well or ill. [2] For it is difficult to speak properly upon a subject where it is even difficult to convince your hearers that you are speaking the truth. On the one hand, the friend who is familiar with every fact of the story may think that some point has not been set forth with that fullness which he wishes and knows it to deserve; on the other, he who is a stranger to the matter may be led by envy to suspect exaggeration if he hears anything above his own nature. For men can endure to hear others praised only so long as they can severally persuade themselves of their own ability to equal the actions recounted: when this point is passed, envy comes in and with it incredulity.141 [3] However, since our ancestors have stamped this custom with their approval, it becomes my duty to obey the law and to try to satisfy your several wishes and opinions as best I may.

[1] "I shall begin with our ancestors: it is both just and proper that they should have the honour of the first mention on an occasion like the present. They dwelt in the country without break in the succession from generation to generation, and handed it down free to the present time by their valour. [2] And if our more remote ancestors deserve praise, much more do our own fathers, who added to their inheritance the empire which we now possess, and spared no pains to be able to leave their acquisitions to us of the present generation. [3] Lastly, there are few parts of our dominions that have not been augmented by those of us here, who are still more or less in the vigour of life; while the mother country has been furnished by us with everything that can enable her to depend on her own resources whether for war or for peace. [4] That part of our history which tells of the military achievements which gave us our several possessions, or of the ready valour with which either we or our fathers stemmed the tide of Greek or foreign aggression, is a theme too familiar to my hearers for me to dilate on, and I shall therefore pass it by. But what was the

141 A statement that could only be made in a political climate where the legends of the heroes of old, the Iliad etc., had already be subject to sceptical scrutiny.
road by which we reached our position, what the form of government under which our greatness
grew, what the national habits out of which it sprang; these are questions which I may try to solve
before I proceed to my panegyric upon these men; since I think this to be a subject upon which on
the present occasion a speaker may properly dwell, and to which the whole assemblage, whether
citizens or foreigners, may listen with advantage.

37

[1] "Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighbouring states; we are rather a pattern
to others than imitators ourselves. Its administration favours the many instead of the few; this is
why it is called a democracy. If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private
differences; if no social standing, advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class
considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way, if a
man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition. [2] The freedom
which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, far from exercising a
jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbour for
doing what he likes, or even to indulge in those injurious looks which cannot fail to be offensive,
although they inflict no positive penalty. [3] But all this ease in our private relations does not make
us lawless as citizens. Against this fear is our chief safeguard, teaching us to obey the magistrates
and the laws, particularly such as regard the protection of the injured, whether they are actually on
the statute book, or belong to that code which, although unwritten, yet cannot be broken without
acknowledged disgrace.

38

[1] "Further, we provide plenty of means for the mind to refresh itself from business. We
celebrate games and sacrifices all the year round, and the elegance of our private establishments
forms a daily source of pleasure and helps to banish melancholy; [2] while the magnitude of our
city draws the produce of the world into our harbour, so that to the Athenian the fruits of other
countries are as familiar a luxury as those of his own.

39

[1] "If we turn to our military policy, there also we differ from our antagonists. We throw
open our city to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners from any opportunity of
learning or observing, although the eyes of an enemy may occasionally profit by our liberality;
trusting less in system and policy than to the native spirit of our citizens; while in education, where
our rivals from their very cradles by a painful discipline seek after manliness, at Athens we live exactly as we please, and yet are just as ready to encounter every legitimate danger. [2] In proof of this it may be noticed that the Lacedaemonians do not invade our country alone, but bring with them all their confederates; while we Athenians advance unsupported into the territory of a neighbour, and fighting upon a foreign soil usually vanquish with ease men who are defending their homes. [3] Our united force was never yet encountered by any enemy, because we have at once to attend to our navy and to dispatch our citizens by land upon a hundred different services; so that, wherever they engage with some such fraction of our strength, a success against a detachment is magnified into a victory over the nation, and a defeat into a reverse suffered at the hands of our entire people. [4] And yet if with habits not of labour but of ease, and courage not of art but of nature, we are still willing to encounter danger, we have the double advantage of escaping the experience of hardships in anticipation and of facing them in the hour of need as fearlessly as those who are never free from them.

40

[1] "Nor are these the only points in which our city is worthy of admiration. We cultivate refinement without extravagance and knowledge without effeminacy; wealth we employ more for use than for show, and place the real disgrace of poverty not in owning to the fact but in declining the struggle against it. [2] Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; for, unlike any other nation, regarding him who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but as useless, we Athenians are able to judge at all events if we cannot originate, and, instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all.142 [3] Again, in our enterprises we present the singular spectacle of daring and deliberation, each carried to its highest point, and both united in the same persons; although usually decision is the fruit of ignorance, hesitation of reflection. But the palm of courage will surely be adjudged most justly to those who best know the difference between hardship and pleasure and yet are never tempted to shrink from danger. [4] In generosity we are equally singular, acquiring our friends by conferring, not by receiving, favours. Yet, of course, the doer of the favour is the firmer friend of the two, in order by continued kindness to

142 A meeting of the Ecclesia (the main legislative body) required a quorum of 6000. The court system also required 6000 citizens serving jury duty. Athens was a participatory political system.
keep the recipient in his debt; while the debtor feels less keenly from the very consciousness that
the return he makes will be a payment, not a free gift. [5] And it is only the Athenians, who, fearless
of consequences, confer their benefits not from calculations of expediency, but in the confidence
of liberality.

41

[1] "In short, I say that as a city we are the school of all Greece, while I doubt if the world
can produce a man who, where he has only himself to depend upon, is equal to so many
emergencies, and graced by so happy a versatility, as the Athenian. [2] And that this is no mere
boast thrown out for the occasion, but plain matter of fact, the power of the state acquired by these
habits proves. [3] For Athens alone of her contemporaries is found when tested to be greater than
her reputation, and alone gives no occasion to her assailants to blush at the antagonist by whom
they have been worsted, or to her subjects to question her title by merit to rule. [4] Rather, the
admiration of the present and succeeding ages will be ours, since we have not left our power
without witness, but have shown it by mighty proofs; we will need no Homer to sing our praises,
nor any other poet whose verses might charm for the moment but whose version of events will be
discredited by the truth. 143 We have forced every sea and land to be the highway of our daring, and
everywhere, whether for evil or for good, have left imperishable monuments behind us. [5] Such
is the Athens for which these men, in the assertion of their resolve not to lose her, nobly fought
and died; and well may every one of their survivors be ready to suffer in her cause.

42

[1] "Indeed if I have dwelt at some length upon the character of our country, it has been to
show that our stake in the struggle is not the same as theirs who have no such blessings to lose,
and also that the panegyric of the men over whom I am now speaking might be by definite proofs
established. [2] That panegyric is now in a great measure complete; for the Athens that I have
celebrated is only what the heroism of these and their like have made her, men whose fame, unlike
that of most Greeks, will be found to be only commensurate with their deserts. And if a test of
worth be wanted, it is to be found in their closing scene, and this not only in cases in which it set
the final seal upon their merit, but also in those in which it gave the first intimation of their having
any. [3] For there is justice in the claim that steadfastness in his country's battles should be as a

143 A declaration of profound impiety and secularism! Thucydides is here denouncing the poets, all of whom claim
divine inspiration.
cloak to cover a man's other imperfections; since the good action has blotted out the bad, and his merit as a citizen more than outweighed his demerits as an individual. But none of these allowed either wealth with its prospect of future enjoyment to unnerve his spirit, or poverty with its hope of a day of freedom and riches to tempt him to shrink from danger. No, holding that vengeance upon their enemies was more to be desired than any personal blessings, and reckoning this to be the most glorious of hazards, they joyfully determined to accept the risk, to make sure of their vengeance, and to let their wishes wait; and while committing to hope the uncertainty of final success, in the business before them they thought fit to act boldly and trust in themselves. Thus choosing to die resisting, rather than to live submitting, they fled only from dishonour, but met danger face to face, and after one brief moment, while at the summit of their fortune, escaped, not from their fear, but from their glory.

43

[1] "So these men died like Athenians. You, their survivors, must determine to have as unfaltering a resolution in the field, though you may pray that it may have a happier issue. And not contented with ideas derived only from words of the advantages which are bound up with the defence of your country, though these would furnish a valuable text to a speaker even before an audience so alive to them as the present, you must yourselves realize the power of Athens, and feed your eyes upon her from day to day, till love of her fills your hearts; and then, when all her greatness shall break upon you, you must reflect that it was by courage, sense of duty, and a keen feeling of honour in action that men were enabled to win all this, and that no personal failure in an enterprise could make them consent to deprive their country of their valour, but they laid it at her feet as the most glorious contribution that they could offer. [2] For this offering of their lives made in common by them all they each of them individually received that renown which never grows old, and for a sepulchre, not so much that in which their bones have been deposited, but that noblest of shrines wherein their glory is laid up to be eternally remembered upon every occasion on which deed or story shall call for its commemoration. [3] For heroes have the whole earth for their tomb; and in lands far from their own, where the column with its epitaph declares it, there is enshrined in every breast a record unwritten with no tablet to preserve it, except that of the heart. [4] These take as your model and, judging happiness to be the fruit of freedom and freedom of valour, never

144 Second secular declaration: you will be judged by your service to the state rather than by the prescriptions of the gods.
decline the dangers of war. [5] For it is not the miserable that would most justly be unsparing of their lives; these have nothing to hope for: it is rather they to whom continued life may bring reverses as yet unknown, and to whom a fall, if it came, would be most tremendous in its consequences. [6] And surely, to a man of spirit, the degradation of cowardice must be immeasurably more grievous than the unfelt death which strikes him in the midst of his strength and patriotism!

44

[1] "Comfort, therefore, not condolence, is what I have to offer to the parents of the dead who may be here. Numberless are the chances to which, as they know, the life of man is subject; but fortunate indeed are they who draw for their lot a death so glorious as that which has caused your mourning, and to whom life has been so exactly measured as to terminate in the happiness in which it has been passed. [2] Still I know that this is a hard saying, especially when those are in question of whom you will constantly be reminded by seeing in the homes of others blessings of which once you also boasted: for grief is felt not so much for the want of what we have never known, as for the loss of that to which we have been long accustomed. [3] Yet you who are still of an age to beget children must bear up in the hope of having others in their stead; not only will they help you to forget those whom you have lost, but will be to the state at once a reinforcement and a security; for never can a fair or just policy be expected of the citizen who does not, like his fellows, bring to the decision the interests and apprehensions of a father. [4] While those of you who have passed your prime must congratulate yourselves with the thought that the best part of your life was fortunate, and that the brief span that remains will be cheered by the fame of the departed. For it is only the love of honour that never grows old; and honour it is, not gain, as some would have it, that rejoices the heart of age and helplessness.

45

[1] "Turning to the sons or brothers of the dead, I see an arduous struggle before you. When a man is gone, all are wont to praise him, and should your merit be ever so transcendent, you will still find it difficult not merely to overtake, but even to approach their renown. The living have envy to contend with, while those who are no longer in our path are honoured with a goodwill into which rivalry does not enter. [2] On the other hand, if I must say anything on the subject of female excellence to those of you who will now be in widowhood, it will be all comprised in this brief
exhortation. Great will be your glory in not falling short of your natural character; and greatest will be hers who is least talked of among the men, whether for good or for bad.

46

[1] "My task is now finished. I have performed it to the best of my ability, and in word, at least, the requirements of the law are now satisfied. If deeds be in question, those who are here interred have received part of their honours already, and for the rest, their children will be brought up till manhood at the public expense: the state thus offers a valuable prize, as the garland of victory in this race of valour, for the reward both of those who have fallen and their survivors. And where the rewards for merit are greatest, there are found the best citizens.

[2] "And now that you have brought to a close your lamentations for your relatives, you may depart."

The Melian Dialogue v.84 - 111

84

[1] The next summer Alcibiades sailed with twenty ships to Argos and seized the suspected persons still left of the Lacedaemonian faction to the number of three hundred, whom the Athenians forthwith lodged in the neighbouring islands of their empire. The Athenians also made an expedition against the isle of Melos with thirty ships of their own, six Chian, and two Lesbian vessels, sixteen hundred heavy infantry, three hundred archers, and twenty mounted archers from Athens, and about fifteen hundred heavy infantry from the allies and the islanders.

[2] The Melians are a colony of Lacedaemon that would not submit to the Athenians like the other islanders, and at first remained neutral and took no part in the struggle, but afterwards upon the Athenians using violence and plundering their territory, assumed an attitude of open hostility. [3] Cleomedes, son of Lycomedes, and Tisias, son of Tisimachus, the generals, encamping in their territory with the above armament, before doing any harm to their land, sent envoys to negotiate. These the Melians did not bring them before the people, but bade them state the object of their mission to the magistrates and the few; upon which the Athenian envoys spoke as follows:

145 Early July, 416 BC.
85

[1] “Since the negotiations are not to go on before the people, in order that we may not be
able to speak straight on without interruption, and deceive the ears of the multitude by seductive
arguments which would pass without refutation (for we know that this is the meaning of our being
brought before the few), what if you who sit there were to pursue a method more cautious still?
Make no set speech yourselves, but take us up at whatever you do not like, and settle that before
going any farther. And first tell us if this proposition of ours suits you.”

86

[1] The Melian commissioners answered: “To the fairness of quietly instructing each other
as you propose there is nothing to object; but your military preparations are too far advanced to
agree with what you say, as we see you are come to be judges in your own cause, and that all we
can reasonably expect from this negotiation is war, if we prove to have right on our side and refuse
to submit, and in the contrary case, slavery.”

87

[1] Athenians: “If you have met to argue from suspicions about the future, or for anything
else than to consult for the safety of your state upon the facts that you see before you, we should
just stop; otherwise we will go on.”

88

[1] Melians: “It is natural and excusable for men in our position to turn more ways than one
both in thought and utterance. However, the question in this conference is, as you say, the safety
of our country; and the discussion, if you please, can proceed in the way which you propose.”

89

[1] Athenians: For ourselves, we shall not trouble you with specious pretences - either of
how we have a right to our empire because we overthrew the Mede, or are now attacking you
because of wrong that you have done us - and make a long speech which would not be believed;
and in return we hope that you, instead of thinking to influence us by saying that you did not join

146 The apparent subtext here is that the Athenians have asked to speak before the Melian assembly, but the request
was refused. The Athenians are, here, meeting with a small group of Melian representatives. Oratorical
presentations before an assembly rarely had time limits and the speaker was not be interrupted. A speech in
rebuttal could be presented afterward.
147 Instead of debate style speeches, the Athenians propose the refutation style, very similar to the style of debate
employed in the Socratic Dialogues.
the Lacedaemonians, although their colonists, or that you have done us no wrong, will aim at what is feasible, holding in view the real sentiments of us both; since you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.\(^{148}\)

90

[1] Melians: As we think, at any rate, it is expedient - we speak as we are obliged, since you enjoin us to let right alone and talk only of interest - that you should not destroy what is our common protection, the privilege of being allowed in danger to invoke what is fair and right, and even to profit by arguments not strictly valid if they can be got to pass current. And you are as much interested in this as any, as your fall would be a signal for the heaviest vengeance and an example for the world to meditate upon.

91

[91] Athenians: The end of our empire, if end it should, does not frighten us: A rival empire like Lacedaemon, even if Lacedaemon was our real antagonist, is not so terrible to the vanquished as subjects who by themselves attack and overpower their rulers. This, however, is a risk that we are content to take. [2] We will now proceed to show you that we are come here in the interest of our empire, and that we shall say what we are now going to say, for the preservation of your country; as we would fain exercise that empire over you without trouble, and see you preserved for the good of us both.

92

[1] Melians: And how, pray, could it turn out as good for us to serve as for you to rule?

93

[1] Athenians: Because you would have the advantage of submitting before suffering the worst, and we should gain by not destroying you.

94

[1] Melians: So that you would not consent to our being neutral, friends instead of enemies, but allies of neither side.

\(^{148}\) This is the basic tenet of the modern ‘realpolitik’ philosophy: ignore all pretense to idealism, justice, claims of right or wrong and act purely according to self-interest. In other words, always do what seems most profitable in each individual situation.
[1] Athenians: No; for your hostility cannot so much hurt us as your friendship will be an argument to our subjects of our weakness, and your enmity of our power.

[1] Melians: Is that your subjects' idea of equity, to put those who have nothing to do with you in the same category with peoples that are most of them your own colonists, and some conquered rebels?

[1] Athenians: As far as right goes they think one has as much of it as the other, and that if any maintain their independence it is because they are strong, and that if we do not molest them it is because we are afraid; so that besides extending our empire we should gain in security by your subjection; the fact that you are islanders and weaker than others rendering it all the more important that you should not succeed in baffling the masters of the sea.

[1] Melians: But do you consider that there is no security in the policy which we indicate? For here again if you debar us from talking about justice and invite us to obey your interest, we also must explain ours, and try to persuade you, if the two happen to coincide. How can you avoid making enemies of all existing neutrals who shall look at this case and take from it that one day or another you will attack them? And what is this but to make greater the enemies that you have already, and to force others to become so who would otherwise have never thought of it?

[1] Athenians: Why, the fact is that continentals generally give us but little alarm; the liberty which they enjoy will long prevent their taking precautions against us; it is rather islanders like yourselves, outside our empire, and subjects smarting under the yoke, who would be the most likely to take a rash step and lead themselves and us into obvious danger.

[1] Melians: Well then, if you risk so much to retain your empire, and your subjects to get rid of it, it were surely great baseness and cowardice in us who are still free not to try everything that can be tried, before submitting to your yoke.
101
[1] Athenians: Not if you are well advised, the contest not being an equal one, with honour as the prize and shame as the penalty, but a question of self-preservation and of not resisting those who are far stronger than you are.

102
[1] Melians: But we know that the fortune of war is sometimes more impartial than the disproportion of numbers might lead one to suppose; to submit is to give ourselves over to despair, while action still preserves for us a hope that we may stand erect.

103
[1] Athenians: Hope, danger's comforter, may be indulged in by those who have abundant resources, if not without loss at all events without ruin; but its nature is to be extravagant, and those who go so far as to put their all upon the venture see it in its true colours only when they are ruined; but so long as the discovery would enable them to guard against it, it is never found wanting. [2] Let not this be the case with you, who are weak and hang on a single turn of the scale; nor be like the vulgar, who, abandoning such security as human means may still afford, when visible hopes fail them in extremity, turn to invisible, to prophecies and oracles, and other such inventions that delude men with hopes to their destruction.

104
[1] Melians: You may be sure that we are as well aware as you of the difficulty of contending against your power and fortune, unless the terms be equal. But we trust that the gods may grant us fortune as good as yours, since we are just men fighting against unjust, and that what we want in power will be made up by the alliance of the Lacedaemonians, who are bound, if only for very shame, to come to the aid of their kindred. Our confidence, therefore, after all is not so utterly irrational.

105
[1] Athenians: When you speak of the favour of the gods, we may as fairly hope for that as you; neither our pretensions nor our conduct being in any way contrary to what men believe of the gods, or practise among themselves. [2] Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can. And it is not as if we were the first to make this law, or to act upon it when made: we found it existing before us, and shall leave it to exist for ever after us; all we do is to make use of it, knowing that you and everybody else, having
the same power as we have, would do the same as we do. Thus, as far as the gods are concerned, [3] we have no fear and no reason to fear that we shall be at a disadvantage. But when we come to your notion about the Lacedaemonians, which leads you to believe that shame will make them help you, here we bless your simplicity but do not envy your folly. [4] The Lacedaemonians, when their own interests or their country's laws are in question, are the most virtuous people; of their conduct towards others much might be said, but no clearer idea of it could be given than by shortly saying that of all the men we know they are most conspicuous in considering what is agreeable honourable, and what is expedient just. Such a way of thinking does not promise much for the safety which you now unreasonably count upon.

106.

[1] Melians: But it is for this very reason that we now trust to their respect for expediency to prevent them from betraying the Melians, their colonists, and thereby losing the confidence of their friends in Greece and helping their enemies.

107

[1] Athenians: Then you do not adopt the view that expediency goes with security, while justice and honour cannot be followed without danger; and danger the Lacedaemonians generally court as little as possible.

108

[1] Melians: But we believe that they would be more likely to face even danger for our sake, and with more confidence than for others, as our nearness to the Peloponnese makes it easier for them to act, and our common blood ensures our fidelity.

109

[1] Athenians: Yes, but what a potential ally trusts to is not the goodwill of those who ask his aid, but a decided superiority of power for action; and the Lacedaemonians look to this even more than others. At least, such is their distrust of their home resources that it is only with numerous allies that they attack a neighbour; now is it likely that while we are masters of the sea they will cross over to an island?

110

[1] Melians: But they would have others to send. The Cretan Sea is a wide one, and it is more difficult for those who command it to intercept others, than for those who wish to elude them to do so safely. [2] And should the Lacedaemonians miscarry in this, they would fall upon your land,
and upon those left of your allies whom Brasidas did not reach;\(^{149}\) and instead of places which are not yours, you will have to fight for your own country and your own confederacy.

111.

[1] Athenians: Some diversion of the kind you speak of you may one day experience, only to learn, as others have done, that the Athenians never once yet withdrew from a siege for fear of any. [2] But we are struck by the fact that, after saying you would consult for the safety of your country, in all this discussion you have mentioned nothing which men might trust in and think to be saved by. Your strongest arguments depend upon hope and the future, and your actual resources are too scanty, as compared with those arrayed against you, for you to come out victorious. You will therefore show great blindness of judgment, unless, after allowing us to retire, you can find some counsel more prudent than this. [3] You will surely not be caught by that idea of shame, which in dangers that are disgraceful, and at the same time too plain to be mistaken, proves so fatal to mankind; since in too many cases the very men that have their eyes perfectly open to what they are rushing into, let the thing called shame, by the mere influence of a seductive name, lead them on to a point at which they become so enslaved by the phrase as in fact to fall wilfully into hopeless disaster, [4] and incur shame more shameful as the companion of error, than when it comes as the result of misfortune. This, if you are well advised, you will guard against; and you will not think it dishonourable to submit to the greatest city in Greece, when it makes you the moderate offer of becoming its tributary ally, without ceasing to enjoy the country that belongs to you; nor when you have the choice given you between war and security, will you be so blinded as to choose the worse. And it is certain that those who do not yield to their equals, who keep terms with their superiors, and are moderate towards their inferiors, on the whole succeed best. [5] Think over the matter, therefore, after our withdrawal, and reflect once and again that it is for your country that you are consulting, that you have not more than one, and that upon this one deliberation depends its prosperity or ruin.

The Melians chose to resist. The Athenians attacked and besieged the city. The Melians held out for months, but in November or December of 416, the city fell. The Athenians executed all of the adult males and sold the women and children into slavery.

\(^{149}\) Referring to the capture of Amphipolis by the Spartan Brasidas in 424. See above iv.102-07.
The Spartans never so much as objected.