Prudence over Power

The Portrayal of Barbarians in Herodotus' *Histories*

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Introduction

> Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσέος ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, **μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα,** ἀκλεᾶ γένηται, τά τε ἄλλα καὶ <δὴ καὶ> δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.
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> 'This is the display of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that things done by men may not be lost with time, **and that not great and marvelous deeds, some displayed by the Greeks, some by the barbarians, lose their glory,** including among others for what reason they waged war on each other.'[1]

Herodotus' *Histories*, dealing with the origins and the proceedings of the Persian Wars, begins with the author's declaration of purpose: to record the 'great and marvelous deeds' (ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά) of both Greeks (τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι) and barbarians (τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα), preserving their memory for all time. The author is particularly concerned with the causes that drove them to war with one another. Thus, it appears that Herodotus distinguishes between Greeks on the one hand and 'barbarians' – as the Greeks themselves termed foreigners – on the other.[2] From 18th century well into 20th century scholarly research, Herodotus' portrayal of foreigners has been interpreted by many as rooted in a polar contrast.[3] The barbarian, and particularly the Persian, would represent the opposite of what a Greek is ideally supposed to be: whereas Greece stood for democracy and reason, the barbarian represented tyranny and irrationality.[4] Consider Murray (1980: 268): 'The subject [the Persian Wars] in Greek eyes was the most important event of their past, the vindication of the freedom of the city-state against oriental despotism.' Indeed, such a stereotypical, binary opposition between Greek and barbarian identity, contrasting the freedom of the *polis* with barbaric tyranny, is known from contemporary Attic tragedy and art.[5]

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[1] Her.*Hist.*1.0. Translations of passages from Herodotus in this thesis are my own.

[2] The term βάρβαρος was originally used to non-Greek-speaking peoples. However, after the Persian Wars, it gained connotations of brutality and rudeness; see LSJ, s.v. βάρβαρος.

[3] See Isaak (2004: 257-259) for a comprehensive history of the notion of the binary opposition Greek/barbarian in Herodotus, from the French philosopher Condorcet (1743-1794) well into 20th century scholarly research.

[4] Cf. Hall (1989: 102): 'The battles of the wars against Persia were assimilated to the mythical archetypes of the Amazonomachy and Centauromachy, and began to appear alongside them in the self-confident art of fifth-century Athens as symbols of the victory of democracy, reason, and Greek culture over tyranny, irrationality, and barbarism.'

[5] See Hall (1989), who argues that the polarization of barbarian and Hellene became a popular rhetorical *topos* in tragedy and art, with the barbarian as the generic opponent to Greek civilization. Hall (1989: 57): 'Aeschylus' Persae, which celebrates the victories over Persia, is the earliest testimony to the absolute polarization in Greek thought of Hellene and barbarian, which had emerged at some point in response to the increasing threat posed to the Greek-speaking world by the immense Persian empire.'

However, since the status of ethnic identity in Herodotus gained traction at the turn of the millennium,[6] scholars have contended over the past two decades that this notion of a stereotypical binary opposition underpinning Herodotus' portrayal of barbarians is untenable.[7] Indeed, Herodotus recognizes in the proem that there had been 'great and marvellous deeds' by both Greeks *and* Persians. As Isaak (2004: 262) notes, it is one of the major aims of Herodotus' enterprise to record barbarians' feats no less than those by Greeks. Moreover, throughout the *Histories*, some barbarians voice ideals of rational deliberation against a monarch's expansionist plans. For example, we will see that the Lydian king Croesus reminds the Persian king Cyrus that human fortune is mutable and fate must not be tarted.[8] The Persian Artabanus also urges his king to reconsider – if not abandon – a war on Greece:

> σὺ ὦν μὴ βουλεύεο ἐς κίνδυνον μηδένα τοιοῦτον ἀπικέσθαι μηδεμιῆς ἀνάγκης ἐούσης, ἀλλὰ ἐμοὶ πείθεο· (…) αὖτις δέ, ὅταν τοι δοκῇ, προσκεψάμενος ἐπὶ σεωυτοῦ προαγόρευε τά τοι δοκέει εἶναι ἄριστα. τὸ γὰρ εὖ βουλεύεσθαι κέρδος μέγιστον εὑρίσκω ἐόν·
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> 'You, then, must not plan to run into such danger, when there is no need, but must listen to me; (…) and again, when it seems good to you, after you have considered the matter by yourself, declare what seems to be best to you. For I find taking good council to be the greatest gain.'[9]

As becomes clear from this example, certain "Greek" ideals, such as favouring rationalism over emotionalism, are not limited to a Greek context, but also exist in a Persian setting. It is worth noting that Croesus, later in his life, assumes a role akin to that of a spokesperson for the Athenian Solon. In this capacity, he may be viewed as partially Hellenised. This, however, does not apply to Artabanus. Thus, it seems that Herodotus' portrayal of barbarians does not always adhere to the stereotypical polar opposition between Greeks and barbarians, such as we see in contemporary Attic tragedy and art. However, the fact that the *Histories* do not consistently support these ethnic clichés, does not automatically indicate there *is* no essential contrast between Greek and barbaric identities in the *Histories.* Indeed, I argue that there is an essential contrast between Greek and barbaric identities, but rather than being founded on the notions of freedom and democracy against oriental tyranny, I argue that it is rooted in Herodotus' conception of the ideal Greek self, formulated in terms of prudence and moderation. As we will see, this study, then, approaches the question of the relationship between the Greek and the barbarian in Herodotus from the perspectives of cultural reflexivity and rhetoric: from the perspective of cultural reflexivity in the sense that the *Histories* show what it means to be a barbarian, and as a natural consequence, reflect on Greek identity. Rhetoric on the other hand shows that this ideal Greek identity doesn't always correspond with the historical reality.

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[6] Figueira (2020: 1) explains: 'This reorientation of scholarly interest [towards ethnicity and ethnology] has in large part been driven by experiential factors arising from our life circumstances in "Western" post-industrial societies', among others, the rise of identity politics in western democracies and the activities of emergent ethnic groups.'

[7] See, among others, Vasunia (2012) and Figueira & Soares (2020).

[8] *Hist.*1.207.2. Croesus tells Cyrus the following: κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπηίων ἐστὶ πρηγμάτων, περιφερόμενος δὲ οὐκ ἑᾷ αἰεὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς εὐτυχέειν, 'there is a cycle of man's affairs, which, in turning, does not allow the same people to prosper all the time'; and *Hist.* 1.207.3: ἐσσωθεὶς μὲν προσαπολλύεις πᾶσαν τὴν ἀρχήν· 'If you are defeated, you lose your whole empire also'.

[9] *Hist.* 7.10δ.2.

Thus, this thesis will concern itself with the question how the concepts of cultural reflexivity and rhetoric may shed new light on the relation between Greek and barbarian identity in the *Histories*.

The idea of Herodotus' claims on the basis of ethnic identity being either culturally reflexive or rhetorical, needs elaborating. First, scholars such as Vasunia (2012) and Figueira & Soares (2020) interpret Herodotus' portrayal of barbarians as the product of a Greek's self-reflection, originating in his experience as a citizen of Halicarnassus at cultural crossroads. Coming from Halicarnassus, a Greek city in Asia Minor, Herodotus would have found himself navigating different cultural speres in 'a city on the margins between two cultures',[10] straddling the Greek world and the Achaemenid Empire, while also remaining receptive to influences from Caria and other regions.[11] As Vasunia (2012: 185) puts it: 'Perhaps the diversity of Halicarnassus, as many have suggested, instilled in him the desire to learn about cultures and to understand the relationships between them.' Accordingly, Herodotus' portrayal of barbarians may be considered culturally reflexive in the sense that, in his persona of ethnographer and traveller, he is supposed to be reflecting upon his complex, dynamic position between various cultures. He notes where barbarian νόμοι, 'traditions', differ from the Greek, and how barbarians make sense of these in their own terms. Notably, the act of describing the 'other' also means describing the 'self'. Indeed, Hartog (1988: xxiii) argues: 'The *Histories* are a mirror into which the historian never ceased to peer as he pondered his own identity: he was the looker looked at, the questioner questioned, who always ended up by declaring his own status and credentials.' The perspective of cultural reflexivity thus views Herodotus' portrayal of barbarians as a Greeks' self-reflection on his position in between various cultures.

On the other hand, there are those scholars who claim that Herodotus' portrayal of barbarians is a construct, meant to further a rhetorical agenda.[12] Indeed, identity in the *Histories* would be actively 'designed' by the narrator, influenced by political or historical forces rather than arising organically from the ongoing process of reflection upon one's cultural position and identity. Herodotus' portrayal of barbarians, then, is supposed to serve as an instrument for commentary on the contemporary socio-political situation in Hellas. For instance, Stadter (1992: 808) argues that Herodotus' portrayal of the Persians would have encouraged a contemporary audience 'to infer that Athens had succeeded Persia as an imperial power', in order to criticise the imperialism of the Athenian ἀρχή and its subjects. As we will see in chapter three, however, Athens is not the only *polis* to engage in an imperialist policy.

This thesis, then, will consider two passages in the *Histories,* asking to what extent the portrayal of barbarians here is informed by cultural reflexivity and rhetoric through the method of close reading. The first of those barbarian portrayals under analysis is that of the Lydian king Croesus throughout the Lydian λόγος (1.6-94), the tale of Lydia and its kings. Three scenes will be of particular interest: Croesus' introduction (1.6 & 1.26-28), the meeting between the Athenian sage Solon and Croesus (1.29-33) and Croesus in captivity (1.86-91). The case of Croesus is of particular interest to this study, because he occupies a unique position in the *Histories* in two ways. First, we will see that the experiences of Croesus are inextricably linked to the central theme of the *Histories* as outlined in the concluding lines of the proem (1.5.4):

[10] See Goldhill (2002: 11); Gould (1989: 5).
[11] See Vasunia (2012: 184).
[12] See, among others, Lateiner (1987: 100); (1989: 47-8); Stadter (1992); Gould (1989: 116- 20); Pritchett (1993: 328- 53).

> τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε, τὰ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμεῦ ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρά. τὴν ἀνθρωπηίην ὦν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τώυτῷ μένουσαν ἐπιμνήσομαι ἀμφοτέρων ὁμοίως.
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> 'For [states] that were big long ago, have for the most part become small, and big [states] in my time, were small before. Knowing therefore that no human fortune continues in the same situation, I shall mention both alike.'[13]

That human prosperity (τὴν ἀνθρωπηίην (…) εὐδαιμονίην) is but fragile and unstable, causing small states to become great, and great ones to become small. In like manner, Croesus experiences a dramatic reversal of fortune when Persia conquers Lydia and takes him prisoner. Moreover, the case of Croesus is particularly noteworthy because the king occupies a unique position among the barbarians depicted in the *Histories* as a figure 'on the cusp between East and West' – between the stereotypical Greek and barbaric.[14] To a certain extent, then, Croesus is the barbarian counterpart of Herodotus, in his capacity as someone who finds at cultural crossroads. Indeed, we will see that Croesus proves himself a figure of ambiguity and transformation, as he resists description in the easy formulation of a Greek/barbarian discourse: on the one hand he shows himself a philhellene by inviting Greek sages to his court, on the other hand we will see that he acts as the stereotypical oriental monarch in his interactions with the Athenian sage Solon. Nevertheless, the subsequent downfall of Lydia will lead him to revisit Solon's lessons once more and consider the implications of a theology where the gods bring about νέμησις, divine retribution, for exceeding arrogance.

Chapter two, in turn, will concern itself with the proceedings of a Persian council (*Hist.* 7.8–11). When Xerxes succeeds to the Persian throne upon the death of Darius, he is faced with the question whether or not to start a campaign against Greece, both to avenge the Athenians for the sack of the royal city of Sardes, and to expand Persian territory – a legacy from the earliest kings that the new Great King ought to continue.[15] To discuss the matter, Xerxes summons a privy council of Persian noblemen. However, since the narrator tells us that Xerxes is already resolute in his opinion to wage war on Greece,[16] it appears that an elaborate council scene in which the matter is discussed, is an unnecessary addition to the narrative. But on closer inspection, it is not. I will argue that this scene is essential to the *Histories* on the rhetorical level, as the combined speeches of Mardonius and Artabanus precisely articulate the functioning and the scope of Herodotus' rhetoric.

The third chapter, in turn, will make the shift from the text itself to its context by bringing in the position of Herodotus' narratees. Accordingly, the theoretical framework will comprise of narratology in addition to rhetoric, from the assumption that portraying 'barbaric' behaviour is relevant to the narratees because it holds up a mirror to them. Indeed, we will see that the *Histories* were composed in a politically turbulent time, with great tension between the major powers in Hellas.[17]

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[13] *Hist.*1.5.4.

[14] See Pelling (2006: 141) for the idea that Croesus resists description in the easy formulations of Greek/barbarian discourse.

[15] See note 3 in Chapter 2.

[16] Cf. *Hist.* 8α.2, where Xerxes says that the council serves to impart his war plans to the present noblemen: διὸ ὑμέας νῦν ἐγὼ συνέλεξα, ἵνα τὸ νοέω πρήσσειν ὑπερθέωμαι ὑμῖν. 'For this reason, I have now gathered you here, that I may impart to you what I intend to do.'

[17] See chapter 3, under 'The Socio-Historical Context'.

The First Peloponnesian War (460–445 BC) between Sparta and the Peloponnesian League on the one hand, and the Delian league Led by Athens on the other, had ended in the Thirty Year's Peace, a period with relatively few interventions between city states in which both sides maintained the main parts of their dominion.[18] However, the rising tensions of the period, and growing resentment between the power blocks would erupt into the Second Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE).[19] Thus, this chapter will explore to what extent the notion of Herodotus' claims as either culturally reflexive or as part of a rhetoric of 'otherness', ties into the contemporary socio-political situation in the Greek world.

In short, this thesis aims to propose a new theory on the portrayal of the Lydian king and the Persians in the *Histories*. It does this, not by approaching the subject from the perspective of the stereotypes current in contemporary tragedy and art, asking whether or not Herodotus' barbarians meet this stereotypical image, but by approaching the subject from the perspective of cultural reflexivity and rhetorics. As we have seen Hartog (1988) argue, the portrait of non-Greeks in Herodotus will prove to function as a mirror in more ways than one. Not only does it always reflect back on Herodotus, as a Greek's reflecting on his position between different cultural spheres, the position of the narratees will tell us that this mirror is also held up to the Greeks themselves: a mirror that reflects what is happening in contemporary Greek politics and society – and tells the Greeks how to turn this tide.

[18] See Schmitz (n.d.).
[19] Idem.

Chapter 1: The Portrayal of king Croesus of Lydia

The tale of the Lydian king Croesus serves as the first case study within this examination of Herodotus' portrayal of barbarians. Indeed, following the introductory account of the kidnappings of women from a semi-mythical past (*Hist*. 1.1–5), Herodotus display of inquiry (ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις) *really* begins with the history of Croesus, whom he identifies as the first figure from a more tangible past to have committed 'unjust deeds' (ἀδίκων ἔργων) against the Greeks.[20] Moreover, he is the first example of the motif, stated in the introduction of the *Histories*, that big states become small, for human fortune is but a slippery thing.[21] This chapter, then, will explore the portrayal of Croesus by the narrator through close reading, from the perspectives of cultural reflexivity and rhetorics. Three scenes will be of particular interest: Croesus' introduction directly after the proem and at the start of his λόγος (1.6 & 1.26-28), Croesus' meeting with the Athenian sage Solon (1.29-33) and Croesus taken captive by the Persians (1.86-91). We will find that the king's flawed understanding of Solon's lessons, shows that he is not really capable of Solon's εὐδαιμονίη. On the contrary, as we will see, it is implied to be something a Greek *should* be capable of.

Croesus' first characterization

At the beginning of Croesus' tale, the Lydian king finds himself on the cusp between East and West, not just in geographical terms, but also in his ambiguous relation to the Greeks – both in a political and in a cultural sense, as we will see. Directly following the proem, Croesus is introduced as such:

> Κροῖσος ἦν Λυδὸς μὲν γένος, παῖς δὲ Ἀλυάττεω, τύραννος δὲ ἐθνέων τῶν ἐντός Ἅλυος ποταμοῦ, ὃς ῥέων ἀπὸ μεσαμβρίης μεταξὺ Συρίων τε καὶ Παφλαγόνων ἐξιεῖ πρὸς βορέην ἄνεμον ἐς τὸν Εὔξεινον καλεόμενον πόντον.
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> 'Croesus was a Lydian, son of Alyattes, and the sovereign of the peoples on this side of the river Halys, which flows from the south between Syria and Paphlagonia and empties towards the north in what is called the Euxine sea.'[22]

We may note the presence of the narrator in the description τύραννος δὲ ἐθνέων τῶν **ἐντός** Ἅλυος ποταμοῦ, 'the sovereign of the peoples **on this side** of the river Halys': we are looking through a Greek's eyes. As concerns the geography of Lydia, this kingdom finds itself 'on the cusp between East and West' – between the Greek and the barbaric.[23] Although Lydia was fundamentally a non-Greek, barbarian kingdom, as the Asian state nearest to Hellas, its customs closely resembled those of the Greeks, Herodotus writes, with one exception: they prostitute their daughters (*Hist.* 1.94.1). In addition to the kingdom of Lydia, we may also call Croesus *himself* 'on the cusp between East and West'.

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[20] *Hist.*1.5.3.
[21] *Hist.* 1.5.4.
[22] *Hist.*1.6.1. Note that Croesus has not been mentioned by name any earlier in the *Histories*. However, rather than formulating a presentational sentence beginning with ἦν, Herodotus immediately promotes the new participant to the function of topic – perhaps indicating that his audience is already familiar with the figure of Croesus (See CGCG 60.30).
[23] See Pelling (2006: 141) for the idea that Croesus and his kingdom Lydia resists description in the easy formulations of Greek/barbarian discourse.

In the first place, because he is both a friend and an enemy of the Greeks: Croesus subjected the Ionians, Aeolians and the Dorians in Asia Minor, while maintaining ties of friendship with Sparta.[24] This duality extends to the cultural realm, because the king shows himself a philhellene,[25] yet dismisses Greek learning as soon as it conflicts with his own cultural values and beliefs.

As Croesus finds himself between the Greek and the barbaric in more ways than one, we may view him as a mirror image of Herodotus himself. As we saw in the introduction, Herodotus found himself in Halicarnassus in between various cultural spheres. However, there is an important difference between both figures: whereas Herodotus' background likely installed in him the desire to learn the νόμοι of others, and record how they make sense of these in their own terms, we will see in his interactions with Solon that Croesus only appreciates the views of others when they are in line with this. From the perspective of cultural reflexivity, then, this initial portrait of Croesus also communicates an image of the Greek self that is open-minded, and uses its position at cultural crossroads to learn from – and about – others.

Solon and Croesus

The subsequent passage on Solon and Croesus is worth discussing in detail, because it can be interpreted both in terms of cultural reflexivity and rhetoric: in terms of reflexivity, Solon's lessons indicate what the Greek lifestyle should ideally be; in terms of rhetoric, the narratees are invited to consider that many Greeks, in fact, do not behave as such.

A theory of happiness

Shortly before the narrator recalls the encounter between Croesus and the Athenian sage Solon, we learn that Croesus expands Lydian territory at the cost of the Greek πόλεις in Asia Minor (*Hist.* 1.26-28). The successful attack on the Ephesus represents the first of the 'unjust deeds' (ἀδίκων ἔργων) against the Greeks, which Herodotus mentioned in the last lines of the proem.[26] Subsequently, Croesus made war on the Ionian and Aeolian cities 'in turn' (ἐν μέρεϊ), upon different pretexts (αἰτίας): graver (μέζονας) charges where he could find them, but sometimes rather 'petty' (φαῦλα) allegations.[27] The word φαῦλα, 'petty, trifling', certainly makes clear that Croesus is not to be excused by the narrator.[28] But he does not change his expansionist agenda until one of the Seven Sages of Greece, be it Bias of Priene or Pittacus of Mytilene, meets the ruler in Sardes and successfully dissuades him from an attack on the island Greeks in Asia Minor.[29] The appearance of this sage foreshadows that of another: Solon of Athens pays the king a visit.

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[24] *Hist.*1.6.2.

[25] *Hist.* 1.29.1: ἀπικνέονται ἐς Σάρδις ἀκμαζούσας πλούτῳ ἄλλοι τε οἱ πάντες ἑκ τῆς Ελλάδος σοφισταί, οἳ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον ἐτύγχανον ἐόντες, ὡς ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἀπικνέοιτο, καὶ δὴ καὶ Σόλων ἀνὴρ Ἀθηναῖος, 'All sages from Hellas, who happened to be living at that time, came to Sardis, abound in wealth, one after another, and in particular Solon the Athenian.'

[26] *Hist.*1.5.3. Though the Ephesians made an appeal to Artemis, we have no indication that this led to a suspension of hostilities on Croesus' part. Thus, 'a faint sense of impiety is allowed to shade our first impression of the king', cf. Arieti (1995: 40).

[27] *Hist.*1.26.3.

[28] See Arieti (1995: 40).

[29] *Hist.* 1.27. Bias/Pittacus notes that, if Croesus continues building his ships, the islanders are much too eager to face him at sea where their naval experience has the upper hand. Croesus recognizes that this would be a less than ideal situation for the Lydian cause.

And though Croesus was very pleased (κάρτα (…) ἠσθῆναι) with Bias'/Pittacus' reasoning,[30] he will not take kindly to what Solon has to say.

When Solon arrives in Sardes, Croesus shows him 'that all is great and prosperous' (πάντα ἑόντα μεγάλα τε καὶ ὄλβια) in the treasury,[31] because he desires (ἵμερος) to know from him, in his capacity as a wise man who has travelled far 'in the pursuit of wisdom' (φιλοσοφέων), whom he thinks the most ὄλβιος.[32] This word can mean 'happy' or 'blessed' in a general sense, or 'rich', 'wealthy' in a narrow sense.[33] Because Croesus expects to be crowned the most ὄλβιος on the basis of his wealth, he is amazed (ἀποθωμάσας) at Solon answering 'Tellus the Athenian'.[34] From Solon's explanation, it follows that he understands ὄλβιος in the general sense of 'happy', 'blessed'. Indeed, the Greek argues first that Tellus' *polis* was prosperous, then that the man had a beautiful and good family (καλοί τε κάγαθοί), and had enough money to be self-sufficient. Moreover, he died most gloriously (τελευτὴ τοῦ βίου λαμπροτάτη) in battle for his *polis*.[35] As Arieti (1995: 49) puts it: 'none of the elements [of steady good fortune] are extraordinary in itself, but the presence of them *all* is exceedingly rare.' Above all, the point seems to be that Tellus lived a long, full life, being able to produce offspring and to do great deeds. Thus, this ὄλβιος doesn't need more money than to simply get by, instead prioritizing a moderate lifestyle closely tied to the *polis'* welfare.

Though Croesus expects to be crowned the second most ὄλβιος now, this place is granted to Cleobis and Biton, the brothers who drew a carriage with their mother for fourty-five stades, to attend the festival of Hera and passed thereafter (1.30.3-4.). In contrast to Tellus' life of moderate life of consistent good fortune, ending in an honourable death, Cleobis' and Biton's virtues lie in personal prowess and filial duty, however, their life was less 'complete' than Tellus': they died young and didn't get the change to create a family and watch their children grow old, when Tellus did.

As may be expected, Croesus is angered (σπερχθείς) at Solon's answer and indignant that the Greek would not even match him with common men (ἰδιωτέων ἀνδρῶν) when it comes to εὐδαιμονίη, 'happiness'.[36] Preferring the term εὐδαιμονίη to ὄλβιος now, it appears that Croesus has modified his initial question, shifting to a theory of happiness which encompasses much more than mere riches. Indeed, Solon's εὐδαιμονίη, rooted in a long, steady life of good fortune, minding one's own affairs, roles and limits, contrasts strongly with Croesus' situation. Though extraordinarily wealthy, the Lydian does not have any other feats to his name: of his two sons one is deaf and dumb, the other dies in a hunting accident.[37] Moreover, whereas Tellus' and Cleobis' and Biton's lives as closely tied to life in the πόλις – with Tellus' enjoying his city being prosperous and dying in service to it, and Cleobis and Biton performing their duty to the local cult of Hera – Croesus stands at the head of a monarchy. The implication seems to be that Solon's εὐδαιμονίη functions best in the *polis.*

[30] *Hist.*1.27.5.
[31] *Hist.*1.30.1.
[32] *Hist.*1.30.2.
[33] See LSJ, s.v. ὄλβιος.
[34] *Hist.*1.30.4.
[35] Ibid.
[36]*Hist.* 1.32.1.
[37] See *Hist.* 1.34-45 for the story of Croesus' sons Atys and Adrastos.

The mutability of human fortune

Croesus' irritation now prompts a didactic sermon from Solon, starting and ending with the gods: 'all that is divine', τὸ θεῖον πᾶν, is φθονερόν, 'envious' and ταραχῶδες, 'troublesome' to men, so that he may see and suffer many things he dislikes.[38] This idea is already present in Homer, with Zeus giving people a mixed lot, both the good and the bad, or a baneful lot, only bad fortune.[39] Additionally, one may discern the exact same notion in the last lines of the proem:

> τὴν ἀνθρωπηίην ὦν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τώυτῷ μένουσαν (…)
> 'Knowing therefore that no human fortune continues in the same place (…)'[40]

Thus, not one day in life is like the other, and 'the whole of man is but chance' (συμφορή).[41] One can be 'succesful' (εὐτυχής) in life, when having as many elements of good fortune as possible in the vein of Tellus. However, Croesus' mistakes a part for the whole: wealth is but a component of εὐδαιμονίη, so that a person of moderate means who is 'succesful' in life, εὐτυχής, (and thereby strong, good-looking, and what's more) is more blessed than the rich who only has his wealth going for him. Though one can be 'succesful' (εὐτυχής) in life, one may only be called ὄλβιος when this life has ended well; that is: at the time of death he has experienced no reversal of fortune, but still has a great number of the elements of εὐδαιμονίη about him (1.33). The idea that one cannot be called ὄλβιος until death, because human fortune is inherently unstable and the gods are both 'envious' and 'troublesome' – hints at a philosophy where people themselves may invite the envy of the gods through transgressive behaviour. Although Solon does not state this outright, it becomes clear from a later passage in the *Histories*, where the Greeks are trying to convince the Locrians and Focians to join the fight against the Persian invader:

> οὐ γὰρ θεὸν εἶναι τὸν ἐπιόντα ἐπὶ τὴν Ελλάδα ἀλλ' ἄνθρωπον, εἶναι δὲ θνητὸν οὐδένα οὐδὲ ἔσεσθαι τῷ κακὸν ἐξ ἀρχῆς γινομένῳ οὐ συνηνείχθη, **τοῖσι δὲ μεγίστοισι αὐτῶν μέγιστα·**
>
> 'For he [Xerxes] who marches against Greece is not a god, but a man, and there is no mortal, nor will there ever be, whom does not befall any evil from birth, **and the greatest evils befall the greatest among them;'**[42]

Since the most prosperous may invade their own downfall, Solon seems to indirectly urge Croesus on to adjust his arrogant mindset. The notion that the Lydian thinks in a way that contributes to his own destruction, is expressed by the narrator himself at the beginning of the subsequent episode on Croesus' sons:

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[38] *Hist.*1.32.1-2.
[39] See Hom.*Il.*4.527-533.
[40] *Hist.* 1.5.4.
[41] *Hist.*1.32.4: πᾶν ἐστὶ ἄνθρωπος συμφορή.
[42] *Hist.* 7.203.2.

> μετὰ δὲ Σόλωνα οἰχόμενον ἔλαβέ ἑκ θεοῦ νέμεσις μεγάλη Κροῖσον, ὡς εἰκάσαι, ὅτι ἑνόμισε ἑωυτὸν εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἁπάντων ὀλβιώτατον.
>
> 'After Solon's departure, a great righteous anger from the god befell Croesus, presumably because he thought that he was the most blessed of all people.'[43]

Whether Croesus' arrogance and his dismissal of Solon as a 'great fool' (κάρτα (…) ἀμαθέα) qualifies as ὕβρις is disputed.[44] However, it is clear that the narrator thinks this may have been the cause of the god's νέμεσις, which then brought about the death of his son.

Indeed, this view of Solon's is not limited to the tale of Solon' and Croesus' meeting, nor is Solon the only character articulating it. Earlier on, we have seen the narrator give voice to this idea at the end of the proem and at the start of the episode on Croesus' sons. It is a motif that is repeated through the *Histories* and, as will be argued in chapter three, is an important component of the rhetorics of the work. Apart from the tale of Croesus, this motif is immediately productive in the tale of Gyges and Kandaules…

> χρόνου δὲ οὐ πολλοῦ διελθόντος, **χρῆν γὰρ Κανδαύλῃ γενέσθαι κακῶς**, ἔλεγε πρὸς τὸν Γύγην τοιάδε·
>
> 'After a short while, **since it had to end badly for Kandaules**, he spoke the following to Gyges:'[45]

… and it is employed later on by the Greeks to convince the Locrians and Focians to fight at Thermopylae against Xerxes:

> οὐ γὰρ θεὸν εἶναι τὸν ἐπιόντα ἐπὶ τὴν Ελλάδα ἀλλ' ἄνθρωπον, **εἶναι δὲ θνητὸν οὐδένα οὐδὲ ἔσεσθαι τῷ κακὸν ἐξ ἀρχῆς γινομένῳ οὐ συνηνείχθη**, τοῖσι δὲ μεγίστοισι αὐτῶν μέγιστα·
>
> 'For he [Xerxes] who marches against Greece is not a god, but a man, **and there is no mortal, nor will there ever be, whom does not befall any evil from birth,** the greatest evils befall the greatest among them;'[46]

Thus, Solon is articulating a theme that runs throughout the *Histories*. Whereas this chapter is focused on the portrayal of Croesus, chapter three will broaden the perspective to encompass the whole of the *Histories*. The significance of this theme and Croesus as its representative, will then be considered in further detail.

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[43] *Hist.*1.34.1.
[44] Whether Croesus' behaviour can be labelled as *hybris* depends on the scholar's definition of the concept. And since the meaning is rather ambiguous, the theses are plenty. Cairns (1996: 18-19) claims that 'the signs of *hybris* are all there', but Gould (1989: 80) disagrees, as does Fischer (2002: 218), who notes that Croesus lacks the necessary intent to insult.
[45] *Hist.* 1.8.2.
[46] *Hist.* 7.203.2.

Croesus Transformed?

So far, we have seen that Croesus is very dismissive of Solon's message. Not only does Solon's concept of εὐδαιμονίη contradict his core values and beliefs, it also appears to be tied to the *polis* and function best in it – in contrast to Croesus' position as a monarch. As mentioned earlier as well, the case of Croesus is particularly interesting because he is the example of the motif as stated in the proem: that great state become small, because human fortune is mutable. Indeed, Croesus experiences a reversal of fortunes when his kingdom is threatened by Persia. He now realizes that Solon was right after all, and he becomes a "second Solon", so to say, to Cyrus – educating the Persian king in turn on the mutability of human fortune.[47] However, there are hints in the text that Croesus' transformation is not quite complete: that he struggles to fully comprehend Solon's lessons – or is simply not willing to, as it conflicts with his pride.

When Croesus has been captured and placed on a pyre by the Persian king Cyrus, he recalls Solon's words as if echoed 'with the deity's approval' (σὺν θεῷ): that 'no living man is blessed (ὄλβιον)'.[48] Yet for Croesus' almost epiphanic revelation, it appears that the Lydian is still not quite able to grasp the full scope of the sage's words and bring it into practice.[49] First, Croesus' previous obsession with wealth is not something so easily discarded. In fact, wealth continues to be a primary focus for him. This can be seen in his statement on the pyre that he would prefer all tyrants talking with Solon, over great wealth (1.86.4). Indeed, Kurke (1999: 160) argues that 'Croesus puts Solon's wisdom in the marketplace'. Even though I agree with Pelling (2006:158) that he is in truth *preferring* the sage's wisdom to wealth, it is, as Pelling (2006: 157) notes, a telling fact that in this critical moment money is what comes to Croesus' mind. In addition, Croesus later advises the Persian king not to let his soldiers plunder the conquered city, because they are essentially carrying off the king's possessions: ἀλλὰ φέρουσί τε καὶ ἄγουσι τὰ σά, 'but they are ravishing and carrying off what is yours' (1.89.3). Once again, property and wealth are at the forefront of his thoughts, in contrast to Solon's civic thinking.

A second indication that Croesus struggles to adopt Solon's philosophy can be found in his brief account on the pyre of his encounter with Solon. Rather than being a faithful representation of Solon's didactic intent, it reveals Croesus' lingering feeling of humiliation. Indeed, Croesus recalls before Cyrus how he had shown Solon 'all his prosperous state' (πάντα τὸν ἐωυτοῦ ὄλβον).[50] Once again, the king uses the word ὄλβος, 'happiness', 'bliss', even though this this term had been substituted by εὐδαιμονίη during his interaction with the Greek – signifying that wealth does in fact not equal happiness. In choosing the term ὄλβος over a more neutral word like θησαυρός, 'treasury', it is implied that riches, in his eyes, are still a solid base for ὄλβος. This contradicts his own reasoning at the beginning of this passage:

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[47] Cf. *Hist.* 1.207, where Croesus advises Cyrus on the war with the Massagetae. He tells Croesus 'that there is a cycle of man's affairs, which, in turning, does not allow the same people to prosper all the time', ὡς κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπηίων ἐστὶ πρηγμάτων, περιφερόμενος δὲ οὐκ ἐᾷ αἰεὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς εὐτυχέειν.

[48] Cf. *Hist.*1.86.3: τὸ μηδένα εἶναι τῶν ζωόντων ὄλβιον; In other words, no human is prosperous during his lifetime. Aristotle notes that this is only one way to interpret Solon's words (cf. Arist.*Eth.Nic.*1100a10–17.). The other, which Solon himself seems to suggest, being that a human *can* be called prosperous, but only in retrospect after death. Indeed, the Greek argues that we must look at the whole of one's life to judge if someone is ὄλβιος or not (cf. *Hist.* 1.32.9).

[49] See Kurke (1999: 157-59) for the 'epiphanic' qualities of this scene.

[50] *Hist.* 1.86.5.

that no man is 'blessed' (ὄλβιος) in life.[51] In addition, Croesus mentions that Solon proceeded to 'make light of it [his wealth]' (ἀποφλαυρίσειε).[52] As noted earlier, this statement appears to be the mere echo of hurt pride, because rather than 'making light of it', it is clear that the Greek had intended his speech as a didactic sermon, urging Croesus to alter his worldview. Thus, even though Croesus correctly recalls earlier in the pyre scene that no man may be called ὄλβιος in life (1.86.3), he fails to acknowledge how this philosophy relates to his own case. By contrast, his "pupil" Cyrus seems to understand Solon's philosophy instantly on a more profound level than Croesus. Indeed, in response to his prisoner, Cyrus instantly 'repented' (μεταγνόντα) placing him on the pyre:

> ἐννώσαντα ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐὼν ἄλλον ἄνθρωπον, γενόμενον ἐωυτοῦ εὐδαιμονίῃ οὐκ ἐλάσσω, ζῶντα πυρὶ διδοίη, πρός τε τούτοισι δείσαντα τὴν τίσιν καὶ ἐπιλεξάμενον ὡς οὐδὲν εἴη τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι ἀσφαλέως ἔχον
>
> 'He realized that he, being a man himself, was burning alive another man, who had fared no lesser in fortune (εὐδαιμονίῃ) than him, and, adding to that, he feared retribution (τίσιν) and it came to his mind that there was no stability in human affairs.'[53]

Indeed, Cyrus touches upon Solon's key concept of the mutability of human fortune, which leads to the insight that what he is doing to Croesus, a man once as fortunate as himself, may just as well happen to him. Seeing himself in place of his prisoner leads Cyrus to repent his purpose, while also fearing retribution (τίσιν) from the divine – the kind of νέμεσις we saw in the story of Cyrus' sons. But thinking of Croesus in terms of εὐδαιμονίη implies that Cyrus' understanding of Solon's philosophy is lacking as well, as a man cannot have εὐδαιμονίη in life, but at most be called εὐτυχής.[54] Yet, as stated, Croesus does not even qualify as εὐτυχής: he only possesses one component part of happiness, wealth.

In a later scene, when Croesus advises Cyrus on war with the Massagetae, we see how their imperfect understanding of Solonian philosophy plays out in practice (*Hist.* 1.207). Following Persia's territorial expansion, the discussion now centres around whether the Persians should attack the neighbouring Massagetae, a Scythian people, on their territory or on Persian soil. Croesus, hoping to shield Cyrus from making the same mistakes, uses the metaphor of a when to show that fortune usually doesn't last;[55] that Cyrus should not take any risks, because 'if you are defeated, you lose your whole empire also'.[56] Yet despite this insight, he advises Cyrus to cross into enemy territory and take to battle there (*Hist.* 1.207.6). Following Solon's train of thought that human fortune is brittle and that transgressive behaviour may invite divine νέμεσις, one would naturally expect Croesus to recognize the dangers of the campaign and heed his limits. Yet we are left wondering whether Croesus' stance in the matter is a consequence of his imperfect understanding, or a pragmatic choice – the best one can do in an environment that does not really allow for alternate voices.

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[51] *Hist.*1.86.3.
[52] *Hist.*1.86.5.
[53] *Hist.* 1.86.6.
[54] *Hist.* 1.32.
[55] *Hist.*1.207.2: κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπηίων ἐστὶ πρηγμάτων, περιφερόμενος δὲ οὐκ ἑᾷ αἰεὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς εὐτυχέειν, 'there is a cycle of man's affairs, which, in turning, does not allow the same people to prosper all the time'.
[56] *Hist.* 1.207.3: ἐσσωθεὶς μὲν προσαπολλύεις πᾶσαν τὴν ἀρχήν·

Moreover, the fact that Cyrus needs a reminder of Solonian philosophy means that it hasn't quite altered his views yet, or he is not willing to listen, as it contradicts with the Persian 'tradition', νόμος, of imperialism: the idea that Persia must always expand, and that this enterprise is led by the divine, as we will see in the next chapter.[57] In short, Herodotus' interpretation of the pyre scene and the later discussion on the Massagetae seems to highlight the difficulties involved in adopting a different worldview and in bringing these ideals into practice, highlighting how one's νόμοι may conflict with those of someone else.

The Philosophy of the *Polis*

How do cultural reflexivity and rhetorics play out in this passage? It is hard to separate the two. Rather, there is some overlap, because the image of self that is constructed through cultural reflexivity, is vital to understanding the rhetoric of the passage. With Herodotus describing the difficulty that both Croesus and Cyrus face in implementing Solon's lessons, it appears that εὐδαιμονίη in the vein of Tellus is not something they are really capable of. One the one hand it conflicts with their value system, which seems at least partially culturally conditioned. First, Croesus finds it difficult to grasp that wealth in itself is not sufficient for εὐδαιμονίη. Indeed, Herodotus tells us of the Lydians' valuation of money: that they were the first to coin and use gold and silver currency, and the first to sell by retail (1.94.1). Second, as concerns Cyrus, when it comes to the battle with the Massagetae, the Persian νόμος of imperialism wins from Solon's voice of prudence. In terms of cultural reflexivity, then, Croesus' and Cyrus' faulty practice of Solon's ideas indicates that this philosophy is in principle tied to the *polis*. This is where it functions best, not in a monarchy, since in a monarchy, the voice of power, of expansion, tends to win from the one propagating prudence. However, it is implicit that in the *polis* this should be reversed: that Solon's lifestyle should ideally be practiced. On the rhetorical level, then, the narratee is invited to realize that, in reality, many Greeks do not adhere to Solon's values of moderation and prudence. At the same time, the case of Croesus invites the reader to consider the implications of these Greeks dismissing this wisdom: will this damage the *polis* as it did Croesus' kingdom? The next chapter's analysis of the Persian council scene in book 7 will add to our understanding of the exact scope of this rhetoric.

[57] See *Hist.*7.8A.1, where Xerxes explains that the Persian νόμος, of imperialism is led by the divine: ἀλλὰ θεός τε οὕτω ἄγει, 'a god guides us thus'.

Chapter 2: The Persian council scene

Having analysed the portrayal of the Lydian king Croesus in book one, I turn to the second case study: the council of Persian noblemen in book seven (*Hist.* 7.8–11). This section will once again explore from the perspective of cultural reflexivity and rhetoric how non-Greeks are depicted in the *Histories*, in this context: the Persians. The passage begins when Xerxes succeeds to the Achaemenid throne upon the death of Darius. Facing the question whether or not to start a new campaign against Greece, the king is at last persuaded by his cousin, Mardonius, to undertake a war on Greece.[58] Not only does Mardonius claim that the Athenians must be punished for the sack of Sardes,[59] he also claims that Persia will acquire imperial greatness and imperial advantage through the war, and gain a beautiful and fertile region, Europe, 'among humans only worthy of a monarch to possess'.[60] At this stage, Xerxes is set on an expedition and summons a privy council to inform the Persian noblemen of his intentions. This chapter, then, argues through a close reading that the council scene is pivotal for understanding the rhetoric that permeates the *Histories*.

The rhetorical significance of the council scene

That the Persian council scene is essential to the *Histories* on the rhetorical level, directed at contemporary narratees, may be deduced from two phenomena. First, given that Xerxes is already committed to a military campaign at this stage, the inclusion of an extensive council scene debating the matter seems superfluous to the narrative. However, Herodotus *does* initially present the assembly as a forum for Xerxes to hear the opinions of the present noblemen.

> Ξέρξης δὲ μετὰ Αἰγύπτου ἅλωσιν ὡς ἔμελλε ἐς χεῖρας ἄξεσθαι τὸ στράτευμα τὸ ἐπὶ τὰς Ἀθήνας, σύλλογον ἐπίκλητον Περσέων τῶν ἀρίστων ἐποιέετο, ἵνα γνώμας τε πύθηταί σφεων καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν πᾶσι εἴπῃ τὰ θέλει.
>
> 'After the conquest of Egypt, since he meant to take upon himself the expedition against Athens, Xerxes held a privy council of the noblest Persians, so that he might learn their opinions and himself declare his will before all.'[61]

Thus, the narrator states that Xerxes wants to declare *his* will (τὰ θέλει) as well as hear *their* opinions (γνώμας (…) σφεων). Immerwahr (1956: 274) concludes on the basis of this line that the question whether or not the Persians should take to war, is still under discussion.

[58] At first, the new Great King did not want to march against Hellas right upon ascension, because his military forces were deployed against Egypt at the time, to punish a past revolt, see *Hist.* 7.5.1.
[59] In 498 BCE, an allied Greek army – including Athenians – launched an attack on Persian satrapal capital of Sardes and destroyed it, cf. *The New Pauly*, s.v. 'Ionian Revolt.'
[60] *Hist.* 7.5.3: βασιλέϊ τε μούνῳ θνητῶν ἀξίη ἐκτῆσθαι. In addition to Mardonius' arguments, the Aleuadae of Thessaly and the Peisistratids of Athens pledge their support to serve their own interest (*Hist.* 7.6.2).
[61] *Hist.*7.8.

However, Xerxes' later remarks and dismissive response to constructive criticism indicate otherwise, as we will see.[62] Indeed, At a later moment, the king communicates to the present noblemen that he has in fact already decided on war.

> διὸ ὑμέας νῦν ἐγὼ συνέλεξα, ἵνα τὸ νοέω πρήσσειν ὑπερθέωμαι ὑμῖν.
>
> 'For this reason, I have now gathered you here, that I may impart to you what I intend to do.'[63]

The monarch's will must be done (ποιητέα). Nonetheless, Xerxes seemingly attributes to the opinions of others a decisive authority:

> ποιητέα μέν νυν ταῦτά ἐστι οὕτω· ἵνα δὲ μὴ ἰδιοβουλέειν ὑμῖν δοκέω, τίθημι τὸ πρῆγμα ές μέσον, γνώμην κελεύων ὑμέων τὸν βουλόμενον ἀποφαίνεσθαι.
>
> 'Now, these things must be done thus; but, so that you do not think that I take my own way, I place the matter in (your) middle, and order whomever of you will, to declare his opinion.'[64]

Thus, even though Xerxes has indeed made up his mind, he constructs the façade of an open debate, presenting the war plan as not yet final. This façade breaks down definitively when the king responds with fury to the opposing argument of his uncle Artabanus, as we will see in a moment.[65] Thus, the kings' alleged intention to hear the opinions of others is not compatible with his later statements that 'these things must be done thus',[66] nor is it compatible with the very proceedings of the council itself, as I have mentioned Xerxes' fury towards an opposing speech. One may wonder, then, what the purpose of the assembly is, if not for Xerxes to receive any advice on the matter from the present noblemen. We may logically deduce some benefits Xerxes could have had in summoning the council. First, Xerxes could have summoned the council and presented it as an open debate to gain support for his plans among the Persian noblemen, by pretending to regard their opinions highly. Secondly, the assembly could serve to strengthen his *ethos* as the proper successor to Darius and the Persian throne, destined to further the Persian tradition of territorial expansion. This is particularly relevant given that Darius' succession, resulting in Xerxes' ascension, was not uncontested.[67] Lastly, Xerxes seizes the opportunity to encourage each of the nobles to provide the best equipped army (7.8δ).

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[62] See Xerxes' reaction to his uncle Artabanus' speech in 7.11, also discussed in this chapter under the heading 'A voice of power and a voice of prudence.'
[63] *Hist.* 8α.2.
[64] *Hist.*7.8δ.2.
[65] See note 5.
[66] *Hist.*7.8δ.2: ποιητέα μέν νυν ταῦτά ἐστι οὕτω.
[67] See *Hist.* 7.2-3 which mentions the rivalry between Darius sons with his previous wife, Gobryas' daughter, and his sons with his current wife, Atossa, daughter of Cyrus. As the eldest of Atossa's sons, Cyrus is crowned king for the reason that Darius begot him when he was already king, whereas he wasn't king yet when his other sons with Gobryas' daughter were born.

Nonetheless, I argue there is more to this scene than Xerxes' trying to gain support for his plans and present himself as a legitimate successor. To the extent that the scene functions on the level of the secondary narrator (Herodotus) and his narratees (Herodotus' audience), I argue that, in terms of cultural reflexivity, the portrayal of the Persians in this scene represents what the Greeks ought to avoid, and that thereby the opposite, Herodotus' idealized image of the Greek self is revealed. However, as we will see in Mardonius' speech responding to Xerxes, this ideal does not match the historical situation. In rhetorical terms, then, the Greeks are invited to realize the dangers of unchecked expansionism, as in Persian context, and, instead, to aim for a discourse of prudence, as articulated by Solon in the first book and by Artabanus in this scene. The choice of the narrator to discuss the scene in such detail is thus tied up with its rhetorical function.

Moreover, the fact that this scene sends a message to contemporary narratees, may be deduced from the fact that Xerxes' privy council does not only hide behind the façade of an open debate, it hides behind the façade of a *Greek* debate as well, as it explicitly refers to the proceedings of the Athenian ἐκκλησία. First of all, How and Wells (1927: 539) argue that Xerxes' 'assembly', σύλλογον, is deemed 'specially summoned', ἐπίκλητον, like the Athenian ἐκκλησίαι, 'assemblies', are σύγκλητοι, 'specially summoned'. This connection is reinforced by several phrases that are reminiscent of the mantras of Greek, especially democratic, debate. In particular, Rood (1999: 158) notes that the phrases 'I place the matter in (your) middle', τίθημι τὸ πρῆγμα ἐς μέσον, 'whoever wishes', τὸν βουλόμενον, and 'to declare his opinion', γνώμην (…) ἀποφαίνεσθαι, are familiar from Attic decrees. As Herodotus' audience may have noted of these references, it appears that the scene, which takes place in Persian context some sixty years before the final unitary text of the *Histories*,[68] is meant to speak to – and hold relevance for – a contemporary Greek audience. By analysing the responses to Xerxes' opening speech we will see that the fact that the council is framed by the narrator as a Greek assembly in the vein of the ἐκκλησία, contrasts with the way it actually plays out: with the monarch not tolerating any opposing views in true tyrannical fashion – a tension that has been duly noted in literature.[69] In considering Xerxes' opening speech and the two responses to it, we will shed light on the rhetoric of the scene.

A νόμος of territorial expansion

To begin, the way Persian tradition is portrayed in Xerxes' opening speech of the council, may imply an idealized Greek image of self that is the very opposite of the Persian. Xerxes opens the council by stating that he inherited from the previous monarchs a 'tradition', νόμος, of expansionism, and is destined to at least rival the territorial expansion of his royal predecessor (7.8). This imperialist program is thought to be led by the divine: 'a god guides us thus.'[70] Moreover, it is assumed that Persia will expand to reach the very edge of the earth, so that Xerxes, at the head of this rightful course of Persian history, is king on earth as Zeus is king in heaven:[71]

[68] See chapter 3 for the dating of the Histories.
[69] This tension is also noted by Immerwahr (1956: 274), (1966: 128) and Pelling (2006: 108-9).
[70] *Hist.*7.8α.1: ἀλλὰ θεός τε οὕτω ἄγει.
[71] See How and Wells (1927: 540) for the identification of Xerxes with Zeus.

γῆν τὴν Περσίδα ἀποδέξομεν τῷ Διὸς αἰθέρι ὁμουρέουσαν

'We will make Persian territory border on Zeus' heaven.'[72]

This idea of a king as god on earth, destined to further the nation's imperialist tradition seems particular to a Persian context. Not only were Greek leaders expected to inspire rather than command by divine right, a tradition of imperialism also stands in stark contrast with Solonian philosophy as seen in chapter one, which highlights divine retribution for arrogance.[73] Accordingly, we may view this element in Xerxes' opening speech as culturally reflexive, as Herodotus pointing out where and how barbarian νόμοι differ from his image of self – an interest shaped by the fact that he found himself in Halicarnassus at cultural crossroads, prompting self-reflection.[74] In the next section, we will consider the two replies to Xerxes: Mardonius affirming Xerxes' decision and Artabanus speaking against it. I will become clear that this image of self in the vein of Solon, a discourse of prudence, contrasts with the fifth century historical situation of growing political tensions between Greek *poleis*.

A voice of power and a voice of prudence

Xerxes' opening speech now prompts two responses which are very different in nature. First, the king's cousin, Mardonius, seeks to reinforce the war plan by fostering a narrative of Persian geographical, military and monetary superiority over the Greeks, in addition to the idea that the Greeks must be punished for the sack for Sardes (*Hist.* 7.9). However, the larger part of his argument is dedicated to framing the Hellenes as the negative counterparts of the greater Persians: whereas the Persians are known for their wealth, the Greeks have but little;[75] whereas the Persian military tactics are superior, the Greeks wage war 'in their wrongheadedness and folly'.[76] The latter is argued on two bases. First, Mardonius notes that he was able to march as far as Macedonia and just about to Athens itself without any Greek resistance as commander under Darius – conveniently leaving out the subsequent losses of the war (*Hist.* 7.9α.2). Secondly, he ridicules the Greeks for choosing to fight on level ground, leading to a maximum of deaths, and for resolving disputes among themselves through fighting rather than through heralds and messengers (*Hist*. 7.9β.2). This is a salient point, since Mardonius' remark here appears to be an implicit reproach from the narrator towards contemporary readers. As we will see in chapter three, I assume that Herodotus gave oral demonstrations of his expertise (ἐπιδείξεις) prior to writing down a unified text in the 20s of the fifth century BCE.

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[72] *Hist.*7.8C.1.

[73] Cf. *Hist.*1.34.1, where it is implied that Croesus is punished for his arrogance: μετὰ δὲ Σόλωνα οἰχόμενον ἔλαβέ ἑκ θεοῦ νέμεσις μεγάλη Κροῖσον, ὡς εἰκάσαι, ὅτι ἑνόμισε ἑωυτὸν εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἁπάντων ὀλβιώτατον. 'After Solon's departure, a great righteous anger from the god befell Croesus, presumably because he thought that he was the most blessed of all people.'

[74]Halicarnassus is described as 'a city on the margins between two cultures' by Goldhill (2002: 11), straddling the Greek world and the Achaemenid Empire. Yet it also remains receptive to influences from Caria and other regions (cf. Vasunia (2012: 184)).[74]

[75] *Hist.* 7.9α.1: τῶν ἐπιστάμεθα μὲν τὴν μάχην, ἐπιστάμεθα δὲ τὴν δύναμιν ἐοῦσαν ἀσθενέα· 'we know their way of battle, and we know that their wealth is little;'

[76] *Hist.* 7.9β.2: ὑπό τε ἀγνωμοσύνης καὶ σκαιότητος.

Accordingly, the composition of the *Histories* – though it is a matter of debate to what extent these ἐπιδείξεις resemble the written text – spans several decades, with great tension between the major powers in Hellas.[77] The First Peloponnesian War (460–445 BC) between Sparta and the Peloponnesian League on the one hand, and the Delian league Led by Athens on the other, had ended in the Thirty Year's Peace. In this peace treaty of 446 between Athens and Sparta, the two power blocks agreed to recognize each other's alliance networks, and to allow neutral states the freedom to choose.[78] As evident, this did not achieve lasting de-escalation: the rising tensions of the period, and growing resentment between the power blocks would erupt into the Second Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE). This Thirty Year's Peace was a period with relatively few interventions between city states in which both sides maintained the main parts of their dominion.[79] From a Greek perspective, this is more the exception than the rule: throughout Greek history wars between rival *poleis* have been virtually ever-present.[80] From a Persians' perspective, however, this is not a normal state of affairs: Mardonius views it as foolish that Greek that speak the same language go to war with each other, as though a kind of civil war. In a period of rising tensions between the major powers in Hellas, Mardonius' remark that…

> τρόπῳ τοίνυν οὐ χρηστῷ Ἕλληνες διαχρεώμενοι
>
> 'The Greeks, then, have a useless manner [of warfare].' [81]

… may be Herodotus telling his audience that intra-Hellenic warfare is indeed foolish, that it brings about many death and is *not* a natural state of affairs. In an ironic role reversal, it takes a barbarian who adheres to a νόμος of imperialism himself, to communicate to the Greeks the ridiculousness of their own warfare. Lastly, Mardonius rounds off his argument by encouraging the present noblemen to take initiative and be bold – and thereby support the expedition to Greece:

> ἔστω δ' ὧν μηδὲν ἀπείρητον· αὐτόματον γὰρ οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ πείρης πάντα ἀνθρώποισι φιλέει γίνεσθαι.
>
> 'Nothing, then, must remain unattempted; for nothing comes of itself, but everything comes to man by experience.'[82]

This advice stands in stark contrast to that of the next speaker, Xerxes' uncle Artabanus, who urges the king to not take risks but to reconsider, if not abandon, the enterprise:

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[77] See chapter 3, under 'The Socio-Historical Context'.
[78] See Schmitz (n.d.).
[79] Idem.
[80] Hansen (2005) characterizes warfare as a constant part of Greek life and identity, with peace periods often being brief interludes.
[81] *Hist.* 7.9β.
[82] *Hist.* 7.9γ.

σὺ ὦν μὴ βουλεύεο ἐς κίνδυνον μηδένα τοιοῦτον ἀπικέσθαι μηδεμιῆς ἀνάγκης ἐούσης, ἀλλὰ ἐμοὶ πείθεο· αὖτις δέ, ὅταν τοι δοκῇ, προσκεψάμενος ἐπὶ σεωυτοῦ προαγόρευε τά τοι δοκέει εἶναι ἄριστα. τὸ γὰρ εὖ βουλεύεσθαι κέρδος μέγιστον εὑρίσκω ἐόν·

'You, then, must not plan to run into such danger, when there is no need, but must listen to me; (…) and again, when it seems good to you, after you have considered the matter by yourself, declare what seems to be best to you. For I find taking good council to be the greatest gain.'[83]

Though Artabanus had been the only nobleman to declare his opposing view, it appears from the crowd's reaction that he was not the only one of this opinion. Indeed, the narrator states that Mardonius 'built upon' (ἐπιλεήνας) Xerxes' original arguments – and the very fact that this is necessary seems to imply a lack of support for the king's plans.[84] However, with the exception of Artabanus, none of these present noblemen dared to speak against it (*Hist.* 9.7.10). Indeed, Artabanus' advice opposes Mardonius' and is rooted in a very different ideology: Mardonius' and Xerxes' speeches foster the narrative of Persian superiority and power, but Artabanus' in rooted in a discourse of prudence in the vein of Solon. The latter highlights the view of the gods as 'envious', φθονερόν, and 'troublesome', and ταραχῶδες, turbulent in destroying even the greatest of men, and particularly *because* they are great.[85]

ὀρᾷς τὰ ὑπερέχοντα ζῷα ὡς κεραυνοῖ ὁ θεὸς οὐδὲ ἐᾷ φαντάζεσθαι, τὰ δὲ σμικρὰ οὐδέν μιν κνίζει (…) φιλέει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὰ ὑπερέχοντα πάντα κολούειν.

'You see how the god strikes with his thunderbolts those creatures who excel and he does not allow them to show off, but the small creatures do not vex him (…) for the god loves to put down all that tries to surpass him.'[86]

Once again, the audience is reminded of the main theme of the *Histories* as set out in the proem and exemplified in the figure of Croesus: the mutability of human fortune,[87] in addition to the idea that the arrogant behaviour of the most prosperous people, directly invites divine νέμεσις.[88] Indeed, Artabanus warns Xerxes for the dangers of excessive confidence and pride in the campaign just as Solon had with Croesus.

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[83] *Hist.* 7.10δ.2.
[84] *Hist.*7.10.1: ἐπιλεήνας, litt. 'smoothed over', i.e. 'made plausible'.
[85] For the common Greek view of the envy of the gods, see Hist.1.32.1-2, as well as How & Wells (1927: 542).
[86] *Hist.*7.10ε.
[87] *Hist.* 1.5.4: τὴν ἀνθρωπηίην ὦν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τώυτῷ μένουσαν ἐπιμνήσομαι ἀμφοτέρων ὁμοίως. Knowing therefore that no human fortune continues in the same situation, I shall mention both alike.'
[88] Cf. *Hist.*1.34.1, where the narrator acknowledges the possibility that Croesus' arrogance caused the death of his son through divine νέμεσις: μετὰ δὲ Σόλωνα οἰχόμενον ἔλαβέ ἑκ θεοῦ νέμεσις μεγάλη Κροῖσον, ὡς εἰκάσαι, ὅτι ἑνόμισε ἑωυτὸν εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἁπάντων ὀλβιώτατον, 'After Solon's departure, a great righteous anger from the god befell Croesus, presumably because he thought that he was the most blessed of all people.'

In contrast to Mardonius, he does present the Greeks military as a force to be reckoned with, and takes previous experiences under Darius as a risk-indicator for a new campaign.[89] Thus, we can discern two voices in the debate: a discourse of power voiced by Xerxes and Mardonius, with one passage as though it were Herodotus' direct voice, speaking to the contemporary audience, and a discourse of prudence articulated by Artabanus and Solon.

Prudence over power

In short, in terms of cultural reflexivity, the council scene shows a Greek audience what Greek politics ought to be like – namely, the counterpart of a νόμος of imperialism: a policy based on prudence and moderation. At the same time, Mardonius' remark on war between different *poleis* indicates that such a policy is really not the historical reality. The scene demonstrates that in Persian context, both a discourse of power, represented by Xerxes and Mardonius, and a discourse of prudence, represented by Artabanus are present – yet the discourse of prudence does not get a chance to make an impact on the dominant narrative. It is implied that in the Greek context, even though the discourse of prudence is supposed to prevail, a discourse of power is starting to dominate. The Greeks thus find themselves at crossroads to move either in the direction of power of that of prudence – and, in rhetorical terms, Herodotus is urging his contemporaries to choose the latter. The scene represents what the Greeks ought to avoid, but are increasingly becoming: a state where imperialism takes precedence – a barbaric nation. The next chapter will relate these findings to the socio-historical context of the histories, and will integrate the findings of chapter one with those of chapter two.

[89] *Hist.* 7.10α2-3: Artabanus recalls that he advised Darius against an invasion of Scythia, but the latter refused. The bridge over the Hellespont was almost destroyed before the kings return. Now he reminds Xerxes of the dangers of an expedition against men 'far better even than the Scythians, said to be the best both at sea and on land' (πολλὸν ἔτι ἀμείνονας ἢ Σκύθας, οἳ κατὰ θάλασσάν τε ἄριστοι καὶ κατὰ γῆν λέγονται εἶναι).

Chapter 3: Integrating perspectives

As outlined in the introduction, this study aims to shed new light on the discussion of a Greek/barbarian antithesis in Herodotus, by introducing the frameworks of cultural reflexivity and rhetorical analysis. This chapter aims to combine the findings of chapter one and two into a coherent theory on the portrayal of barbarians in the *Histories*. As will become clear, to grasp the full scope of the rhetoric of the passages under discussion, it is imperative to consider the socio-historical context of Herodotus' work as well. It appears, then, that there *is* a Greek/barbarian antithesis which we may interpret rhetorically. Indeed, Herodotus' portrayal of barbarians sends a clear message to the contemporary Hellenic world to choose prudence over power.

Crafting the ideal self of prudence

As noted in the introduction and the subsequent chapters, Herodotus is reflecting in his portrayal of barbarians on his own position as a Greek between various cultural spheres. This is in line with his background as a citizen of Halicarnassus, a nexus of cross-cultural interaction.[90] Indeed, processes of assimilation, hybridity and biculturalism lie at the heart of Herodotus' impetus to confront the 'other'.[91] But, as previously discussed, the act of describing the 'other' also means describing the 'self'. In chapter one, it was observed that Croesus contrasts with Solon in his monetary mindset. Whereas self-sufficiency is but a component in Solon's philosophy of prudence and moderation, from Croesus' perspective, economic expansion seems to be the defining factor for εὐδαιμονίη.[92] We saw that the Persians, in turn, have a νόμος of imperialism – a divinely led enterprise in which the new Great King must imitate or emulate his predecessor (*Hist.* 7.8) – that contrasts with εὐδαιμονίη in the vein of Tellus: intrinsically connected to the *polis* and relishing in relative simplicity. It appears that Herodotus' royal barbarian generally contrasts with an image of 'self' as the civic vision of prudence formulated by Solon: someone in the vein of Tellus, who has all good things about him, but nothing in excess, who serves the *polis* and the family unit, and steers clears of arrogance – for human fortune is a rather slippery thing, and all too arrogant behavior may invite one's downfall through divine νέμεσις.[93] However, in the case of Cyrus, when the matter of a war against the Massagetae is under discussion, this civic ideal of εὐδαιμονίη is overruled by Cyrus' discourse of power, focused on power gain through territorial expansion. It appears that Croesus and Cyrus are not really capable of bringing Solonian ideals into practice, in part because they conflict with νόμοι that are culturally conditioned. Indeed, we saw in chapter one that Herodotus more often connects economics and the Lydian people: they were the first to coin and use gold and silver currency, and the first to sell by retail (1.94.1). Moreover, the Persians have a νόμος that requires them to continuously look for new territory to occupy (7.8).

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[90] Halicarnassus is described as 'a city on the margins between two cultures' by Goldhill (2002: 11), straddling the Greek world and the Achaemenid Empire. Yet it also remains receptive to influences from Caria and other regions (cf. Vasunia (2012: 184)).[90]

[91] See Figueira (2020: 5) for this idea that Herodotus as well as his interlocutors are fundamentally conditioned by processes of assimilation, hybridity and biculturalism.

[92] Croesus initially expects to be crowned the most ὄλβιος on the basis of his wealth (*Hist.*1.30.2.). Later, on the pyre, he recalls how Solon 'made light of this wealth' (ἀποφλαυρίσειε), implying that it is not appreciated as it should be (*Hist.*1.86.5.). Moreover, he successfully advises Cyrus to not let his soldiers plunder the conquered city, which is in effect the king's possession (*Hist.* 1.89.3).

[93] See chapter one, under 'Solon and Croesus'.

However, the Persian council scene demonstrates that Herodotus' barbarians also differ among themselves and that these νόμοι are not supported by all. Consider Artabanus' response to Xerxes, urging him to reconsider his war plans and consider the risks of the enterprise. Nevertheless, the council scene also makes clear that, in Herodotus' barbarian context, the discourse of power prevails over the discourse of prudence. It follows that on the level of politics and society there is a Greek-barbarian antithesis: whereas in barbarian context the discourse of power has the upper hand, it is implied that in the Greek world this ought to be the discourse of prudence, following Solonian philosophy.[94] From the perspective of cultural reflexivity, this is the ideal image of 'self', rooted in the ideals of prudence and moderation. On the rhetorical level, the narratee is invited to realize that this self-conception is a construct, not the historical reality. To grasp the full scope of this rhetoric, however, it is essential to consider first the socio-historical background of the *Histories* and its narratees, Herodotus' audience and readership.

The socio-historical context

It is generally assumed in modern scholarship that, at a time when literature was often researched, composed and circulated by oral rather than written means, Herodotus gave oral demonstrations of his expertise (ἐπιδείξεις) prior to the composition of a unified text, primarily intended for reading.[95] I follow Stadtler (1992: 783) in the assumption that these performances took place from at least the 440s until the 420s BCE in diverse settings across Greece: in different cities and on different occasions.[96] Indeed, there is some ancient anecdotal evidence for Herodotus presenting his work orally at the Olympic Games.[97] However, the *Kompositions-Frage* remains a point of contention, as Moles (2002: 34) summarizes: 'How *organic* is this text? How 'oral' in outlook and style is his writing? How independent is he? Does he ever fabricate?' And, most crucially, does Herodotus implicitly reflect on political developments from 479/8 BCE, after the second Persian invasion, to contemporary times? Indeed, I argue that the rhetoric of the *Histories* would have been particularly applicable to the political developments in the Hellenic world of the 440s to the 420s. However, because Herodotus' audience and readership were highly diverse, both in terms of date, geography, social position and intellectual level, it is important to recognize that the *Histories* would not have met a single response. Accordingly, this study will not try to reconstruct the individual associations of such a homogenous audience: it aims to demonstrate that Herodotus is sending a message which resonates with societal concerns across a vast array of Greek *poleis* in the mentioned decades.

These decades span the years leading up to the Peloponnesian War and the war itself (431-404 BCE). As stated in chapter two, the years leading up to the war, the 440s, may be characterized as a period of tense and fragile peace.

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[94] See chapter 2, under 'The Philosophy of the *Polis*'.

[95] See Oliver (2025: iii) regarding the influence of oral performance on the final unitary text. Kurke (1999: 31) highlights the intricate literary qualities of the *Histories*, which is also the point of departure for this study: 'The ideological workings of the Histories can only be teased out of a careful reading of its shifts, slippages, and ironic refractions.'

[96] Given that the dating of the *Histories* is not *just* a matter of controversy, but prompted an immense body of literature, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to argue this dating. However, the rhetoric of the *Histories* will hold for any date in the second half of the fifth century BCE. An impression of the vast array of literature: How and Wells (1928: 448); Smart (1977: 251-2); Gould (1989: 18); Pelling (2000: 154-5).

[97] E.g., Lucian, *Herodotus 1* (on Herodotus performing at the Olympic Games); Cf. Pohlenz (1937:208).

Indeed, in the peace treaty of 446 between Athens and Sparta following the First Peloponnesian War (460–445 BCE), the two power blocks agreed to recognize each other's alliance networks, and to allow neutral states the freedom to choose.[98] On the one hand, the Delian League, begun in 478 BCE as a standing alliance of free members who made themselves available to the leader Athens, had transformed by the 440s to serve Athenian dominance and imperialism; even though it left its members nominal freedom, Athens exercised power over a large number of cities in a way previously unknown.[99] In turn, Sparta saw its influence threatened and tried to toughen its grip over the Peloponnese by reinforcing its system of alliances.[100] Accordingly, the tension in the Hellenic world was palpable, with growing resentment between the major powers of Athens and Sparta. Although the situation was highly strained, such periods of relative calm with minimal interventions between city-states were exceptions rather than the norm in Greek history, where conflict between rival *poleis* was nearly constant. Indeed, Mardonius responds to this very fact when he claims that the Greeks are always fighting among themselves 'in their wrongheadedness and folly'.[101] The rising tensions of the 440s subsequently culminated in the Peloponnesian war, for which Thucydides named the underlying causes: the expansion of Athens' sphere of political influence, the city's vast rearmament and the fear of conflict which this provoked in Sparta (Thuc. 1,23,5.6). In the midst of the conflict, other major powers of the Hellenic world, such as Thebes, Corinth an Corcyra also sought to extend their influence by exploiting local conflicts.[102] At this time of rising tensions, intra-Hellenic conflict and imperial expansion by the major power blocks, Herodotus' writing about expansion and war is a political act in itself. Moreover, it appears that the narrator is directly commenting on the futility of Greek warfare in the persona of Mardonius, as we have seen in chapter two. For their great diversity, his Greek audience would have shared in this experience of *poleis* competing against one another, seeking to extend their influence or secure a certain independence. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the ideal audience would have had associations of contemporary politics in hearing or reading Herodotus' ἱστορίη. In fact, in the Persian council scene, Herodotus connects the present and the past explicitly by framing the council as the Greek ἐκκλησία. How, then, is the narratee to interpret the tension between the historical reality and Herodotus' civic ideal, as articulated through Solon?

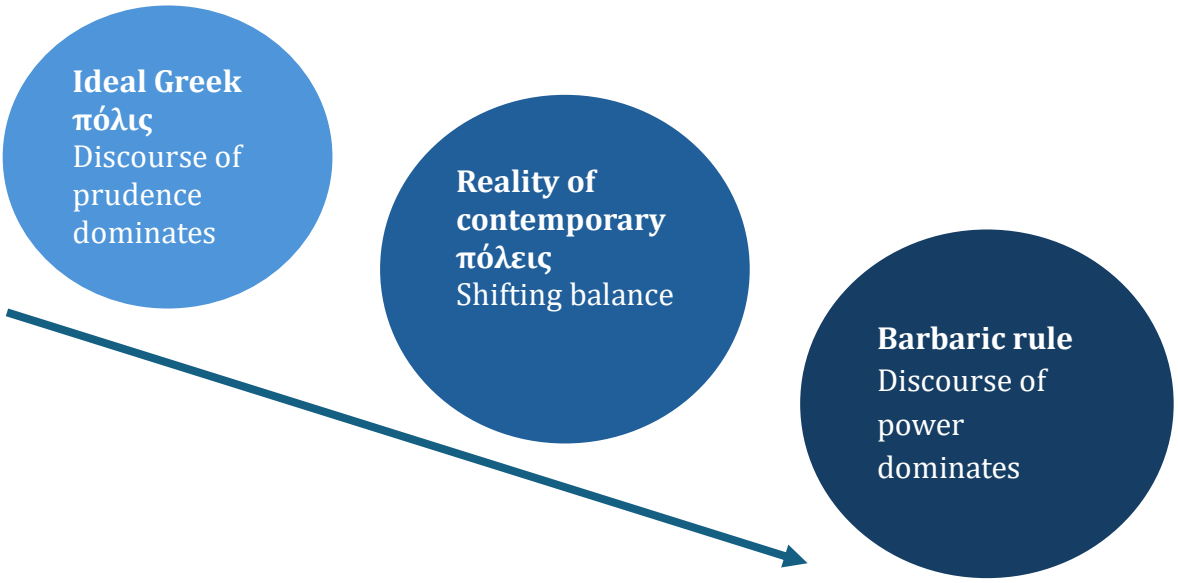
A shifting balance

The tension between this idealized self-conception and the historical reality of the Greeks underpins a rhetoric that permeates the *Histories*. In the Persian council scene, we saw that the discourse of power in the vein of Xerxes and Mardonius wins from the discourse of prudence in the vein of Artabanus and Solon. Though both voices are present, the narrative focused on acquiring more power through territorial expansion dominates. By contrast, as discussed in the previous section on cultural relativism, Herodotus' ideal self is that formulated by Solon, but ever present from the proem onwards: a vision of prudence. However, the subsequent analysis of the historical reality of Herodotus' narratees has indicated that the reality does not match this ideal:

[98] See Schmitz (n.d.).
[99] See Rhodes (n.d.).
[100] See Schmitz (n.d.): in the peace treaty of 446 between Athens and Sparta, the two power blocks agreed to recognize each other's alliance networks, and to allow neutral states the freedom to choose. As evident, this did not achieve lasting de-escalation.
[101] *Hist*. 7.9β.2: ὑπό τε ἀγνωμοσύνης καὶ σκαιότητος.
[102] See Stadtler (1992: 784).

whereas the discourse of prudence should prevail in a Greek context, it is the discourse of power that is starting to dominate and that materializes in an imperialist program. The Persian council scene, then, modeled after a Greek council like the ἐκκλησία, represents the negative counterpart of the Greek council, its potential failing. The scene represents what the Greeks ought to avoid, but are increasingly becoming: a state where imperialism takes precedence – a barbaric nation. Indeed, the Greeks are becoming the enemy in more ways than one. In the first place, they are becoming like the Persians they are fighting, a society where the discourse of power prevails. Secondly, the Greeks are becoming their own worst enemy. Indeed, it is implied that Solon's wisdom functions best in the *polis*, because Croesus and Cyrus show great difficulty in understanding this worldview, while the *polis* provides the essential framework for Tellus' happiness. It is thereby also implied that the *polis* is *supposed to* adhere to Solonian ideals. Accordingly, the Greeks are sabotaging their own society and politics in allowing the discourse of power to be valued over that of prudence. The following graphic shows the system of political degradation that is implied in the *Histories* to be taking place in the contemporary Hellenic world.

Fig. 1: Political degradation in the *Histories*



Wisdom in the vein of Solon

The *Histories* thus invite the narratee to view the political developments in Hellas as counteractive to its natural and ideal political state. The critical question, then, is how to counter this development. We learned from the example of Croesus that fortune is mutable, causing great states to become small, and that arrogance may invite divine νέμεσις, leading to a downfall.[103] It has been demonstrated in chapter one that Croesus finds himself on the cusp between East and West in a number of ways. It now appears that the Greeks also find themselves on the cusp between east and west, with the balance between discourses waning.

[103] See chapter one, near the end of 'Solon and Croesus'.

Indeed, they ought to do what Croesus did not, to prevent the same fate: to heed Solon's advice and abandon a search for power in favour of a more equal, calm life. As the following graph suggests, taking Solon's guidance will result in the discourse of prudence prevailing, which, in turn, creates a νόμος of moderate living rather than a νόμος of imperialism on the societal level.

Fig. 2: The birth of νομοί

νόμος of imperialism	**νόμος of moderate living**
Result of… a dominant discourse of power	Result of… a dominant discourse of prudence
Result of… exceeding arrogance	Result of… Solonian wisdom, heeding arrogance
(Exemplified by Xerxes and Mardonius)	(Exemplified by Artabanus and Solon)

So far, I have continuously spoken of 'Solon's' or 'Solonian' wisdom, as the figure of Solon articulates in greater detail the foundational and programmatic ideas that are taken up, repeated and developed throughout the following books of the *Histories*. However, Solon is not the sole figure in the *Histories* to articulate this message. As seen in the first chapter, the mutability of human fortune is voiced by the narrator both in the final lines of the proem,[104] and as a motif at the start of the tale of Gyges and Kandaules.[105] Additionally, in book seven, the Greeks articulate both this idea that a life of highs must necessarily contain valleys, and that the most prosperous are destined to fall the hardest.[106] Thus, though Solon is soon gone from the stage of the *Histories*, his message resonates throughout the length of the work and is just as much 'Herodotean' as it is 'Solonian'. But Solon has a few qualities about him that may have made him a particularly compelling choice as Herodotus' spokesperson.[107] As the narrator remarks, Solon is the renowned lawgiver of Athens. who left the city to travel for ten year, so that his laws would not be altered in his absence (1.29). Accordingly, he is often referred to in the ἐκκλησία as a model of the "good old days".[108] Moreover, he is the lawgiver of Athens, the state that seems most inclined to discard Solon's lessons. Lastly, Solon is both traveler and teacher, as is Herodotus. Indeed, we have noted in chapter 1 that his ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις is based on personal inquiries and observations made during his travels.

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[104] *Hist.* 1.5.4: τὴν ἀνθρωπηίην ὦν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τώυτῷ μένουσαν ἐπιμνήσομαι ἀμφοτέρων ὁμοίως, 'knowing therefore that no human fortune continues in the same situation, I shall mention both alike.'

[105] *Hist.* 1.8.2: χρόνου δὲ οὐ πολλοῦ διελθόντος, χρῆν γὰρ Κανδαύλῃ γενέσθαι κακῶς, ἔλεγε πρὸς τὸν Γύγην τοιάδε· 'After a short while, since it had to end badly for Kandaules, he spoke the following to Gyges;'

[106] *Hist.* 7.203.2: οὐ γὰρ θεὸν εἶναι τὸν ἐπιόντα ἐπὶ τὴν Ελλάδα ἀλλ' ἄνθρωπον, εἶναι δὲ θνητὸν οὐδένα οὐδὲ ἕσεσθαι τῷ κακὸν ἐξ ἀρχῆς γινομένῳ οὑ συνηνείχθη, τοῖσι δὲ μεγίστοισι αὐτῶν μέγιστα· 'For he [Xerxes] who marches against Greece is not a god, but a man, and there is no mortal, nor will there ever be, whom does not befall any evil from birth, the greatest evils befall the greatest among them;'

[107] Note that, according to the tradition, Croesus was visited by nearly all Greek sages (See Diog. Laert.1.1.40). So what made Solon the most fitting?

[108] Cf. Aeschines 1.

As relates to Herodotus' and Solon's educating the audience, Hollman (2015: 108) notes that: 'One might see Herodotus as the same kind of warner figure as Solon, who is determined not to flatter and to tell the truth as he sees it, giving praise where due, but just and unbridled criticism too.'

Thus, we have seen that the *Histories* are in part a product of the process of assimilation, hybridity and biculturalism of Herodotus' day, with the narrator reflecting on his position as a Greek between different cultural realms. However, the tension between the narrator's self-conception as a Greek and the historical reality of the narratees constitutes the rhetorical core of the work: the warning to avoid transforming into the 'other' – where the discourse of power prevails – by heeding Solon's advice: to live a life of moderation and prudence in the knowledge that the divine is 'envious', φθονερόν, and 'troublesome', ταραχῶδες. The absolute final scene of the *Histories* brings the narrative to a telling conclusion in an ironic role reversal (9. 122): when the Persian king Cyrus is confronted with the question whether or not to invade other countries, he decides against it.

> φιλέειν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν μαλακῶν χώρων μαλακοὺς ἄνδρας γίνεσθαι.
>
> 'because soft men tend to come from soft lands.'[109]

Indeed, in Cyrus' opinion, these lands would soften the Persians so that, instead of being the rulers, they will be ruled (9.122.3). The irony lies in the fact that a barbarian abandons his expansionist plans in favour of a politics of prudence, while the Greek world is increasingly engaging in the discourse of power. Cyrus shows that, at last, prudence wins from power – as Herodotus tells us it should be.

[109] *Hist.* 9.122.3.

Conclusion

This thesis started with the question how the concepts of cultural reflexivity and rhetoric may shed new light on the relation between Greek and barbarian identity in the *Histories.* The frameworks of cultural reflexivity and rhetoric have shown that there is an antithesis between Greek and barbarian identity in the *Histories,* but only on the level of ideology: that is, between the portrayal of barbarians in the *Histories* and Herodotus' *ideal* self-conception as a Greek. In terms of cultural reflexivity, Herodotus is reflecting on his position as a Greek at cultural crossroads coming from the multiethnic city of Halicarnassus. The act of describing the other, then, also implies describing the ideal self: whereas in barbarian context a discourse of power prevails, this ought to be a discourse of prudence in the vein of Solon for the Greeks. In rhetorical terms, the narratee is invited to contemplate that the historical reality differs from this ideal. Indeed, we have seen that the 440s were a period of fragile, tense peace between Athens and Sparta, trying to maintain their sphere of influence in a time of growing resentment between both power blocks. When this culminated in the Peloponnesian War, *poleis* such as Thebes, Corinth an Corcyra also sought to extend their influence by exploiting local conflicts. Thus, the period in which the *Histories* were composed was a period of shifting balance: with the discourse of power, of imperialism, increasingly starting to dominate at the cost of a discourse of prudence. The example of Croesus, then, poses a warning to a Greek audience: living a life of arrogance like Croesus', rather than a calm life of moderation like Tellus', may bring about the νέμεσις of the gods. Indeed, the imperialist Greek states may risk their *polis'* downfall, as did Croesus, the embodiment of the motif introduced in the proem.

> τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε, τὰ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμεῦ ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρά. τὴν ἀνθρωπηίην ὦν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τώυτῷ μένουσαν ἐπιμνήσομαι ἀμφοτέρων ὁμοίως.
>
> 'For [states] that were big long ago, have for the most part become small, and big [states] in my time, were small before. Knowing therefore that no human fortune continues in the same situation, I shall mention both alike.'[110]

To let the discourse of prudence dominate again, the Greeks would have to return to a life like that of Tellus: a life of nothing in excess, but a live of moderateness and self-sufficiency, closely tied to the *polis'* welfare. Thus, it has been demonstrated that the portrayal of barbarian poses a warning to the contemporary Greek world on what they ideally ought to avoid, but are increasingly becoming: a nation where a discourse of power prevails over a discourse of prudence – a barbaric state.

[110] *Hist.*1.5.4.

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