

HERODOTUS
HISTORIES

BOOK IX

EDITED BY
MICHAEL A. FLOWER

Franklin & Marshall College

AND
JOHN MARINCOLA

New York University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Cambridge University Press 2002

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2002

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typefaces Baskerville 10/12 pt and New Hellenic *System* L^AT_EX 2_ε [T_B]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Herodotus

[History. Book 9]

Herodotus. Book IX / edited by Michael A. Flower and John Marincola.

p. cm. — (Cambridge Greek and Latin classics)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 59368 9 ISBN 0 521 59650 5 (pbk.)

1. Plataea, Battle of, 479 BC. I. Flower, Michael A. II. Marincola, John.

III. Series.

PA4002 .A39 2002 2002017393

938'.03 — dc21

ISBN 0 521 59368 9 hardback

ISBN 0 521 59650 5 paperback

CONTENTS

<i>List of maps and figures</i>	page viii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xiii
Introduction	i
1 <i>Life and times</i>	1
2 <i>Narrative manner and technique</i>	4
3 <i>Characterisation</i>	9
4 <i>Historical methods and sources</i>	16
5 <i>The battles of Plataea and Mycale</i>	20
6 <i>Themes</i>	35
7 <i>Dialect</i>	44
8 <i>Manuscripts</i>	48
 ΗΡΟΔΟΤΟΥ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΩΝ Ι	 51
 Commentary	 101
Appendixes	315
A <i>Simonides' poem on Plataea</i>	315
B <i>Dedication of the seer Teisamenus?</i>	320
C <i>The 'Oath of Plataea'</i>	323
D <i>Battle Lines of the Greek and Persian armies at Plataea</i>	326
<i>Bibliography</i>	327
<i>Indexes</i>	346

MAPS

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| 1. Plataea | <i>page</i> 24 |
| 2. Samos and Mycale | 26 |
| 3. Battle of Mycale | 26 |

FIGURES

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Family tree of Pausanias | <i>page</i> 118 |
| 2. Diary of the Plataea campaign | 146 |

INTRODUCTION

1. LIFE AND TIMES

For Herodotus' life we are dependent on biographical data culled from various ancient sources, and the remarks he makes in his own work about his travels and explorations.¹ Of the former, the fullest treatment is to be found in the tenth-century Byzantine lexicon, the *Suda*,² but other details can be added from a variety of late sources. The following picture emerges. H. was born in Halicarnassus,³ the son of Lyxes and Dryo, and the nephew (or perhaps cousin) of the epic poet Panyassis. He was expelled from Halicarnassus by Lygdamis, its tyrant, and went into exile at Samos. He returned to help expel Lygdamis but the citizens then turned on him, and he was forced again to flee. In the course of his travels he came to Athens, where he made friends with Sophocles and participated in the foundation of the Athenian-led panhellenic colony of Thurii in southern Italy in 444/3.⁴ He died either there or in Macedonia. We hear also that he requested the patronage of the Corinthians and Thebans for his work, but they rebuffed him, and he turned to the Athenians, who were delighted by his work, and voted to award him ten talents, a small fortune.⁵ H. is said also to have performed his work at Olympia during the games, and to have had great success.⁶

The value of this type of biographical information is difficult to assess, but caution is in order, since it has been demonstrated, at least for poets and philosophers, that much of the ancient biographical tradition is simply

1 For H.'s life see Jacoby 1913: 213–80; HW 1.1–4; Myres 1953: 1–16; Brown 1988.

2 *Suda*, ss.vv. Ἡρόδοτος, Πανύσσις.

3 His native city took pride in his achievement, as can be seen from several later inscriptions: *SGO* 01/12/01 speaks of the 'sweet mouth of H.' (5), and the recently discovered poem on the renown of Halicarnassus (*SGO* 01/12/02) calls him 'the prose Homer of history' (τὸν πρῶτον ἐν ἱστορίαισιν Ὅμηρον, 43).

4 On H. and Sophocles see Plut. *Mor.* 785B; cf. further S. West 1999. The designation of H. as 'Thurian' seems to have been common in antiquity: Aristotle's edition of H. began Ἡροδοτοῦ Θουρίου. See further Jacoby 1913: 205–9; Brown 1983.

5 Plut. *Her. mal.* 864C–D (Thebans); 862A–B (Athenians). The Athenian reward dwarfs comparable grants made to other writers and artists, and has rightly been suspected: see Loomis 1998: 88–96.

6 Lucian, *Hdt.* 1.

inference and interpretation based on the writers' own texts.⁷ Given that H. was not a public figure, it is difficult to believe that much reliable information about him would have survived.⁸ It is correspondingly easy to imagine that the stories about H.'s rejection at Corinth and Thebes, and his acclamation at Athens, derive from the fact that the Corinthians and Thebans are portrayed less flatteringly in the history than the Athenians.

His birth was put at 484 by the ancients: although based on conjecture it is probably close to the mark.⁹ The date of his death is equally uncertain, and is in part based on the knowledge of later events that he shows in his text. It was long assumed, based on the supposed parody of 1.1–4 by Aristophanes' *Acharnians* of 425, that H.'s work must have been published by that date, and that he himself died shortly thereafter.¹⁰ Other scholars have argued that H. lived through the Archidamian War (431–421),¹¹ and died sometime between its end and 414.¹² Whatever the correct date, there is no reason to think that the *Histories* were incomplete at H.'s death.¹³

H.'s own work suggests that he travelled widely. He claims explicitly to have travelled in Egypt as far south as Elephantine (2.29), and says he saw a battlefield littered with skulls at Pelusium in the Egyptian delta (3.12). He visited sanctuaries in Phoenicia (2.44) and saw monuments in Palestine (2.106), and his remarks on the fertility of Babylon (1.193) imply autopsy. In the north he travelled in the Black Sea area (4.76–81), and in the west saw Dodona (2.55), Zacynthus (4.195), Metapontum in southern Italy (4.15),

7 On the biographical tradition see Lefkowitz 1981 (for poets) and Riginos 1976 (for Plato).

8 Cf. Gould 1989: 17: 'Documentary evidence for H.'s life will not have existed, and it is unlikely that anyone was concerned to record the facts until long after anyone who had known him was still alive.'

9 Gellius (15.23) says that H. was 53 years old when the Peloponnesian War began. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Thuc.* 25), however, puts H.'s birth 'a little before the Persian Wars'.

10 Ar. *Acharn.* 523ff.; the issue hangs on whether Aristophanes' words constitute a close verbal parallel to H.'s; for different interpretations see Fornara 1971b; Cobet 1977. Pelling 2000: 154–5 suggests that H. and Aristophanes may independently parody a popular explanation for how wars begin.

11 Fornara 1971b and 1981; the traditional date is defended by Cobet 1977, 1987, and Sansone 1985.

12 It is assumed that H. was dead by the end of 414 because he does not know of the Spartan fortification of Decelea in spring 413; see 73.2n.

13 See 122n.

and (possibly) Cyrene in north Africa (4.156).¹⁴ In mainland Greece he claims explicitly to have been in Thebes (5.59) and Sparta (3.55), and there can be little doubt that he visited Delphi and Athens.

Although one need not accept all the evidence of H.'s recitations at Olympia and Athens, it is nevertheless likely that his work became known to the public largely through recitations by the author. Oral performances on a great variety of subjects were common at all times in Greek culture, and 'wisdom contests', in which speakers vied for recognition and reward, are amply attested in H.'s time.¹⁵ Indeed, although his massive work, longer than either *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, would be inconceivable without writing,¹⁶ the society of H.'s time was largely oral, and much of his work would have been known from oral delivery.¹⁷

Perhaps most important for an understanding of the context of H.'s work is that he was researching and composing his history during the years of growing hostility between Sparta and Athens, which broke out into open war in 431. H. was chronicling the Persian Wars, but the Sparta and Athens of his own day never seem far from his thoughts. One sees this not only in his characterisation of Athens, Sparta, and Persia,¹⁸ but also in the ironic (sometimes tragic) distance between the wholesale suffering and destruction brought upon Greece in his own time by the two great Hellenic powers, and the glorious collaborative effort between them that only a generation before had repelled the greatest empire ever known.¹⁹ These years of hidden and open hostility throughout the Greek world form the essential backdrop to his history, and the frequent references to events after the Persian Wars call attention to the intra-Greek rivalry and enmity that was in such sharp contrast to the cooperation that had defeated the Persians.²⁰

¹⁴ Despite his travels, H. knew no language other than Greek: see Meyer 1892: 1.192–5. For more on sources, below §4.

¹⁵ See Lloyd 1987: 50–108; Thomas 2000: 1–27; on orality in general, see Thomas 1992; cf. below, n. 30.

¹⁶ Flory 1980.

¹⁷ Witness H.'s own characterisation of his work as 'a *display* of inquiry' (ἱστορίας ἀπόδειξις, *praef.*).

¹⁸ See below §3.

¹⁹ Fornara 1971 a is fundamental on this issue; cf. Raafaub 1987. For the influence of the Peloponnesian War see the notes on 26.2–7, 28.3, 54.1, 60, 72.2, 73.2, 90–104, 106.2–4; cf. below, n. 40.

²⁰ H. himself marks this continuity of suffering, when he laments that during the reigns of Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes, Greece suffered more evils than in the

2. NARRATIVE MANNER AND TECHNIQUE

H.'s narrative manner and technique are formed from several precedents.²¹ Among these is the influence of epic, and specifically of the Homeric narrator.²² Like Homer, H. is an 'external' narrator, i.e., one who does not participate in the events, and who, unlike his characters, knows how the story ends.²³ Unlike Homer, however, H. is not an omniscient narrator, and he often expresses uncertainty about events and characters,²⁴ especially in the ascription of motives to individuals.²⁵

H. is also, unlike Homer, an intrusive narrator, one who calls attention to himself in the act of narration, generally by using the first-person pronoun.²⁶ Such remarks are designed to guarantee the reliability of the narrator, most often centring on inquiry or reasoning.²⁷ In this H. resembles Pindar more than Homer: as the fashioner of the athlete's eternal *kleos*, Pindar plays a role akin to that of H. who also sees praise and the conferral of immortality as parts of his task.²⁸ The first person is prominent as well in the sophists and the medical writers of H.'s time,²⁹ and this similarity suggests that H. sees himself, like them, as part of the agonistic milieu of the fifth century, in which public displays of learning were judged and appreciated by a larger public.³⁰ Narrative intrusion is not limited, however, to the use of the first-person

previous twenty generations combined, some arising from the Persian Wars, others 'from the chief states themselves fighting over the leadership' (τῶν κορυφαίων περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς πολεμούντων, 6.98.2).

21 Important studies of Herodotean narrative include: Lang 1984; Beltrametti 1986; Darbo-Peschanski 1987; Dewald 1987; Payen 1990; Munson 1993a; Kuch 1995; Fowler 1996: 69–76; and de Jong 1999.

22 On the Homeric narrator see de Jong 1987; Richardson 1990.

23 The knowledge of the story's end by H. and his audience allows the author to bring out the irony and pathos of situations: see below, p. 8.

24 On Homer's omniscience, see P. Murray 1981; cf. de Jong 1987.

25 See, e.g., 5.2, 8.2 with nn.

26 Dewald 1987: 150 n.10 notes a total of 1,087 narrator interruptions in H.

27 Cf. in this Book, for example, 8.2, 16.1, 16.5, 32.2, 43.1–2, 64.1, 65.2, 68, 71.2, 84.1, 85.3, 113.2.

28 On Pindar's self-conscious narrative presence see Lefkowitz 1992: 1–71, 111–26; on its connection with H., Nagy 1990: 215–49.

29 It is particularly pronounced in *Airs*, *Waters*, *Places*; *On the Art*; and *On Breaths*; cf. Thomas 2000: 168–212.

30 On this milieu see Lloyd 1987: 83–108; Thomas 2000: 249–69.

pronoun or adjective. It can be seen wherever the narrator uses evaluative or analytic language.³¹

The role of the narrator, however, is but one aspect of narrative manner and structure. Other important features of narrative manner are focalisation, pace, and the structure of time. Focalisation, or point of view, is the orientation of the narrative, 'the centre of perception from which a story is presented'.³² The primary narrator is, in some sense, always the one who speaks, but the narrative often is oriented from the perceptions of different characters.³³ Focalisation can vary even within the same story: in 108–13, events are presented through the eyes of Xerxes (108–109.1, 110.3–111.2), of Amestris (110.1–2), and of Masistes (113.1). The technique features also in H.'s battle descriptions, as at Plataea, for example, where the viewpoint is that of the Greeks first (61.3–62.1), then of the Persians (62.2–63.2). The use of varying focalisation was thought by ancient critics to give vividness (*enargeia*) to the narrative, since the narrator makes the reader a participant in and viewer of what is happening, and he brings to life the psychological state of the characters.³⁴

Extremely important in the way narratives are structured is the issue of pace, that is, the relationship between story time (the events to be narrated) and discourse time (the particular way in which an author tells those events). The narrator may employ *summary*, a brief mention of action(s), which covers a great deal of story time but hardly any narrative time;³⁵ *scene*, in which story time and discourse time roughly coincide; and *pause*, where no movement of story time is involved.³⁶

Also important is H.'s treatment of time. Although H.'s work has an underlying linear structure based on Persian expansion and conquest (following the sequence Cyrus – Cambyses – Darius – Xerxes), the narrator

31 Gribble 1998: 47–9. Cf. 100.2 on divine intervention, and 19.1 on the characterisation of those who took the Greek side as the ones who chose 'the better things'.

32 Rood 1998: 12.

33 Cf. Genette's distinction (1988: 185–9) between 'who speaks?' and 'who sees?'.

34 For the ancient sources and discussion see Walker 1993. Rood 1998 *passim* shows how focalisation is closely connected with strategies of explanation.

35 Cf. 87.1, the twenty days of the siege of Thebes mentioned in half a sentence.

36 For examples of pause, cf. the stories of Teisamenus (33.1–35.2), Hegesistratus (37.1–38.1), and Euenius (92.2–95).

himself consistently interrupts this forward movement by treating events that occurred before the current actions in the narrative (*analepsis*) and ones that will take place after the current actions (*prolepsis*).³⁷ This technique, which H. inherited from Homer,³⁸ helps to situate the actions narrated in the larger framework of Greek history: the events of the Persian Wars come to be seen as having a past that stretches back through time, and an effect that will reach into the future. It is common to employ the term ‘digressions’ to describe the movements away from the main thrust of the narrative; the English term, however, connotes something of secondary importance, yet the material in these digressions is not subsidiary to H.’s ‘main’ topic; rather, it reinforces the themes found elsewhere, and often portrays in miniature matters treated elsewhere on a grand scale.³⁹

Certain analepses unite the Persian Wars with the heroic age, while many prolepses of events after 479 move the audience away from the united actions of the Persian Wars to the years of growing suspicion and hostility in the Greek world.⁴⁰ Such movements often have encoded within them implicit comments on the contemporary situation of the late fifth century. And the fact that H. ends the *Histories* with an analepsis that takes us back to a decision of the Persians at a crucial moment in their history suggests recurrent and universal truths, of which his history has been the illustration.⁴¹

Prolepses and analepses also contribute to *narrative retardation*: this technique, likewise well-known from Homer, provides a way of heightening the suspense and drawing out the importance of an incident or battle that forms a climax to the work. Just as Achilles cannot meet Hector as soon as he decides to return to the battle in *Iliad* 18, but must first be reconciled with

³⁷ Prolepses and analepses can be further classified as internal or external: the former indicates that the events referred to are treated elsewhere in the text, while the latter indicates material that is not treated in the text. All of H.’s references to the Peloponnesian War, therefore, are external prolepses.

³⁸ See de Jong 1999: 231–3. Analepses where a character is introduced are reminiscent of the way Homer gives the background of a warrior about to die: see Richardson 1990: 44–6.

³⁹ H. himself refers to these as προσθήκαι (4.30) or παρενθήκαι (7.171.1); on digressions in H. and their thematic importance see esp. Cobet 1971, Flory 1987.

⁴⁰ Especially striking here are the prolepsis and analepsis that surround the account of Sophanes of Decelea: 73.1–3 with nn. For other prolepses see 35.2, 37.4, 64.2, 73.3, 75, 105.

⁴¹ See 122n.

the Greeks and encounter a series of lesser foes,⁴² so too in H. the climactic battle of Plataea⁴³ is preceded by a variety of forms of narrative build-up: the debate over the left wing (26–27), the catalogues of forces (28–32), the life-stories of the seers (33–37), the Persian conference (41–43), the visit of Alexander (44–45), the attempt by the Spartans and Athenians to change wings (46–47), the Persian challenge to the Spartans (48), and the refusal of Amompharetus to move (53–57).⁴⁴

H., like many other ‘archaic’ writers, also employs *narrative delay*, that is, he postpones certain details of a story to a point at which they are most relevant. When Masistius, the Persian cavalry commander, is introduced, we are told that he is esteemed among the Persians (20), but only at his death, when H. notes the depth of the Persian grief, do we learn that he was second in renown only to Mardonius among the Persians and the King (24): the detail placed here explains why Persian grief was so profound. Similarly, the size of Artabazus’ force is revealed only when he is preparing for flight (66.1).⁴⁵

One particularly important aspect of H.’s narrative technique is his use of speeches, in which his work abounds: their very number and variety show H. an imitator of Homer and the product of a primarily oral society.⁴⁶ These speeches are in all likelihood H.’s own inventions, although it is possible that the more ‘public’ speeches may be based on traditions that H. heard. Some, such as that of the unnamed Persian at the Theban banquet, are suspect because they predict events or incorporate Herodotean themes.⁴⁷ Predictive speeches are often given to ‘warners’ or ‘wise advisors’, figures who appear with frequency in H.’s narrative, and who try to dissuade a character from actions that will bring disaster.⁴⁸ These speeches of wise

42 See Edwards 1991: 234, 286–7; Bremer 1987: 31–46.

43 The technique is also visible in the battles of Marathon, Thermopylae, and Salamis.

44 This is not to say that any of these incidents are invented by H. – on the contrary we may say that they were all part of the story – but rather to point out that the kind of narrative space he assigns to each of them, and his particular arrangement and elaboration of them, are what allow him to make a distinctive *narrative* of his own.

45 On narrative delay, see Fraenkel 1950: 111.805; Rood 1998: 28; cf. 20, 24, 66.2, and 72.1 nn. below.

46 On speeches in H. see Deffner 1933; Solmsen 1944; Steinger 1957; Waters 1966; Heni 1976; Hohti 1976; Lang 1984; Lateiner 1989: 19–21.

47 See 16.1–4n.

48 On the ‘wise advisor’ motif, see Bischoff 1932; Lattimore 1939. For wise-advisor speeches see 16, 41.2–3, 122.

advisors are especially effective and receive most of their power because they are employed by an external narrator, who, as we said above, already knows the end towards which his history is moving. By this means, H. creates an atmosphere of foreshadowing and suspense: as with predictive speeches in Homer,⁴⁹ so too in H. the audience derives pleasure from its appreciation of the irony or pathos of the situation. Thus even if the sentiments were thought by H. to have been spoken by those particular characters at those particular times, the language, the structure, their placement in the narrative, and indeed even the arguments are H.'s own, and in this sense they are 'his' speeches.⁵⁰

The prevalence of speech and dramatic irony in H. also owes much to tragedy.⁵¹ Certain episodes, in their use of recognition (*anagnorisis*) and reversal (*peripeteia*), are strikingly similar to certain scenes in tragedies, just as certain characters reveal qualities similar to those of the protagonists of tragedy: the stories of Candaules and Gyges, Croesus and Adrastus, the birth of Cyrus, and Polycrates and his ring all show H.'s indebtedness to the techniques and methods of dramatic structure and portrayal.⁵² Larger sections of the narrative also reveal an underlying tragic movement: that of Croesus' rise and fall covers much of Book 1, and the fates of Cambyses or Polycrates are played out at similar length.⁵³ The most extended treatment is given to Xerxes, who is a tragic character on the grand scale, occupying much of Books 7 to 9. Despite important differences, H.'s conception of Xerxes owes much to Aeschylus' portrait in the *Persians* of 472.⁵⁴ In Book 9, Xerxes' 'stand-in', Mardonius, fulfils the same function. He too is prideful and hybriatic, he experiences a reversal from prosperity to destruction, and

49 Particularly with the prophecies of Achilles' death or the destruction of Troy: see Edwards 1991: 7–10.

50 For an approach that sees greater historicity in H.'s speeches, cf. Fornara 1983: 162–6.

51 On H. and tragedy see Schmid/Stählin 1934: 569–72; Waters 1966; Chiasson 1982; Romm 1998: 68–72; S. West 1999.

52 On Croesus see Immerwahr 1966: 69–71; in general see van der Veen 1996.

53 Myres 1953: 137; Immerwahr 1956/57.

54 Aesch. *Pers.* 739–52, 759–86. There is one particularly important distinction between the tragedian and the historian: the former characterises Xerxes as an anomaly among the Persian kings, who abandoned the good judgement of his predecessors (see esp. 759–64, 781–6). H., on the other hand, much concerned with imperialism in general, makes Xerxes the follower and culminator of a series of transgressive acts already committed by Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius: see Saïd 1981; Evans 1991: 62–3. On the violation of limits see Lateiner 1989: 126–44.

he learns too late the truth of the warnings about Greek power that various advisors have given him.⁵⁵ The influence of tragedy is thus strongly felt by H., but as with other influences, it does not dominate, but rather is integrated into a new kind of narrative forged from existing genres.

In narrative manner, then, H. shows a sophisticated and complex deployment of techniques that not only arrest the attention of readers, but also involve them fully in the events narrated. Heir to the traditions of epic, epinician, and Ionian inquiry and display, H. yet moulded a new kind of discourse which in its variety and scope sought to present a comprehensive picture of what he calls in the preface 'great and noble actions'. So far as we can tell, it was he who invented historical narrative for the Greeks, and he bequeathed to his successors the means by which they could explicate as well as understand the complexity of human action in history.

3. CHARACTERISATION

Ancient literary critics considered H. the historian of character (ἦθος), Thucydides the historian of emotion or suffering (πάθος).⁵⁶ H. delineates character by both direct and indirect means: the former involves the use of explicit character sketches, while the latter avoids overt comment by the narrator and instead shows character as it is revealed in action.⁵⁷ In Book 9 the two major characters are Mardonius, the commander of the Persian forces, and Pausanias, regent for his cousin Pleistarchus and commander-in-chief of the Greek forces.

Mardonius is first introduced in 492, still a young man (6.43.1) and sent as commander by Darius to subdue Athens and Eretria.⁵⁸ His mission is marked by disaster: the fleet is destroyed in a storm and his men are attacked by the Thracian Brygi; Mardonius himself is even wounded (6.43–45). Although the expedition wins over Macedon and Thrace, they return to Persia not having accomplished their task, and the next year Darius replaces Mardonius (6.94.2). The crucial scene for establishing Mardonius' character is the great debate on whether to invade Greece (7.8–11). Motivated by the desire to be satrap of Greece (7.6.1), Mardonius urges Xerxes

⁵⁵ On Mardonius' character see below, §3.

⁵⁶ Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3 (ii. 382–4 Usher).

⁵⁷ For the distinction between 'direct' and 'indirect' characterisation see Bruns 1898, who, however, failed to appreciate H.'s abilities: see Fornara 1971 a: 66.

⁵⁸ On H.'s portrait of Mardonius see Evans 1991: 67–75; Romm 1998: 166–7, 196–7.

on by both praising the Persians' tradition of expansion and denigrating the bravery of the Greeks. He tendentiously misrepresents his expedition of 491, suggesting that no Greeks opposed him, and the Persians therefore have nothing to fear from such people (7.9). He thus plays a role opposite to that of wise advisor, and is chastised by Artabanus who rebukes him for his youth, rashness, and self-serving advice to the King (7.10, esp. 107).

For Xerxes' great expedition, Mardonius is one of the six commanders-in-chief of the land army (7.82). After the Persian defeat at Salamis, Mardonius (in fear, H. says, of being punished) suggests an immediate attack on the Peloponnese or, failing this, that Xerxes go back and leave him with a body of picked troops (8.100). Mardonius is given command over the Persians and their allies (8.107); during the winter of 480/79, he applies to the various oracles (8.133), and then makes an appeal to Athens to take the side of the Persians (8.136, 140). As Book 9 opens, he marches from winter quarters in Thessaly into Boeotia, and refuses the Boeotian appeal to remain at Thebes and use bribery to foment discord in the Greek cities; he is instead desirous of taking Athens a second time (3.1). Mardonius prefers to decide the issue with arms, not gold: when the advice is repeated to him again (41), he similarly dismisses it, interpreting it as a sign of cowardice. His impetuosity proves fatal, when he decides to ignore the omens that counsel delay, and instead crosses the Asopus to attack the Spartans (41.4).

Mardonius shares with the Persians in general a consistent inability to understand the Greek nature and character. As Xerxes had failed to grasp the Spartan way of fighting and their love of freedom (7.102–104), so too Mardonius does not see the true nature of the Greeks whom he is fighting until it is too late. He misunderstands the Athenian love of freedom, and he especially underestimates the Spartans. In the debate over whether to invade Greece, Mardonius had claimed that the mainland Greeks would be as weak as the Greeks of Asia whom the Persians held in subjugation (7.9α.1), and events at Plataea superficially seemed to confirm this prejudice. He thinks the Spartan attempt to change wings with the Athenians a sign of cowardice (48.1–4n.), and when Pausanias withdraws his troops for a better position, Mardonius thinks they are retreating and mocks them as cowards afraid to oppose real men (58). The words that recur in H.'s characterisation of him are 'folly' and 'intransigence'.⁵⁹

Yet at the crucial moment he performs well, fighting bravely throughout the battle, and serving as the heart and soul of his Persians. H.'s final image

⁵⁹ See 3.1, 41.4nn.

of him, surrounded by his men and fighting to the last from his white stallion (63), is heroic and memorable. Moreover, Mardonius' importance as a character has been brought out by the prophecies of his death, a Homeric technique that lends pathos to his imminent destruction.⁶⁰ Artabanus, with a Homeric reminiscence, warns that Mardonius will become a prey to birds and dogs (7.10θ.3), and Xerxes, in the aftermath of Thermopylae, says in jest that Mardonius will give restitution to the Greeks.⁶¹

Mardonius is thus a far from simple character in the *Histories*: passionate and energetic, he wished, H. says, either to bring Greece into subjection, or, failing that, 'to die nobly, running the risk for a great cause' (8.100.1). To a certain extent he bears a resemblance to Hector in the *Iliad*, who likewise is ignorant of the gods' will, yet performs great deeds on the losing side. The important difference is that Mardonius is guilty of moral failing in a way that Hector is not, for Mardonius is the agent of imperialism, a man who ignores the omens of the gods and attempts to bring whole nations into slavery.⁶²

Opposed to him for much of Book 9 is Pausanias, son of Cleombrotus.⁶³ Like Mardonius he is a young man, and, in a sense, also acting for a king, although in Pausanias' case it is as guardian and regent for his underage cousin Pleistarchus. The two mentions of Pausanias before Book 9, both external prolepses, note his dedication of a bronze crater at the Hellespont after the Greek victory (4.81) and his desire 'to be tyrant of Greece' and to marry the daughter of the Persian Megabates – although H. adds here a cautionary 'if indeed the story is true' (5.32). To appreciate H.'s portrayal of Pausanias, it is necessary to sketch Pausanias' later career, since H. assumed such knowledge in his audience and fashioned his portrait of Pausanias with these events in mind.⁶⁴

Thucydides (1.94–95, 128–34) provides the fullest report on Pausanias' activities after 479.⁶⁵ Pausanias was sent out in 478 as commander of the Greek forces, and this expedition won over most of Cyprus and expelled

60 Cf. the repeated prophecies of Achilles' death and the fall of Troy.

61 For the passage see 64.1n. The death of Masistius also prefigures that of Mardonius: Evans 1991: 69.

62 Cf. Immerwahr 1966: 289–90, who remarks that Mardonius 'shows initiative only when he goes against the gods'. For more on Mardonius and Hector see 41n.

63 On H.'s portrait of Pausanias see Fornara 1971a: 62–6; Hart 1982: 152ff.; Evans 1991: 80–6.

64 For the sources on the career of Pausanias after Plataea see Hill/Meiggs/Andrewes 1951: 358.

65 For a summary of the differences between H.'s and Thuc.'s accounts of Pausanias see Evans 1991: 83–4.

the Persians from Byzantium, but he then began to act arrogantly. When the Greeks dedicated the first fruits of their victory over the Persians, he supposedly inscribed their communal dedication at Delphi with only his own name, which the Spartans immediately erased, inscribing instead the cities who had participated in the war.⁶⁶ His behaviour became so overbearing that he provoked the Greeks, especially the Ionians, into asking the Athenians to take the command. The Spartans in the meantime recalled Pausanias because of reports that he was acting like a tyrant, and a suspicion that he was collaborating with the Persians. Thucydides even quotes a letter (certainly fictional) in which Pausanias offers to marry the King's daughter and to bring Sparta and Greece under the King's control (1.128.7). Pausanias also at this time took to wearing Median clothing whenever he left Byzantium, surrounding himself with a bodyguard of Medes and Egyptians when in Thrace, and having a Persian table set for himself (1.130). Nevertheless, on his return to Sparta, he was acquitted (1.95). Thereafter, acting as a private citizen, he made for the Hellespont, continued to intrigue with the Persians, and was again ordered home to Sparta. Though distrustful, the Spartans had no evidence against him, until they suborned an informer, and the ephors eavesdropped on the conversation. Before they could arrest him, however, he fled as a suppliant to the temple of the Goddess of the Brazen House (1.132–133). The ephors walled up the temple and starved him out, removing him from the sacred precinct just before he breathed his last (1.134–135).

Pausanias' later career was thus marred by charges of tyrannical behaviour and medism. We cannot enter here into the question of the truth of these stories, other than to note that some scholars consider them invented later, possibly by the Athenians. It is certainly significant that Pausanias was acquitted the first time he returned to Sparta and only with difficulty convicted the second.⁶⁷ More important for our purposes is the fact that H. himself indicates suspicions about the stories. The cautious remark, already mentioned, 'if indeed the story is true' (5.32) concerning the proposed marriage to a Persian's daughter can be put together with the remark (8.3.2) that the Athenians 'deprived the Lacedaemonians of the hegemony, bringing forward as a pretext (πρόφασιν) the insolent behaviour

⁶⁶ Thuc. 1.132.2 quotes the couplet: Ἑλλήνων ἀρχηγὸς ἐπεὶ στρατὸν ὤλεσε Μήδων | Παισσανίας Φοίβωι μνημ' ἀνέθηκε τόδε.

⁶⁷ See Cawkwell 1970; Rhodes 1970; Badian 1993a: 121–2, 1993b: 130–2; Hornblower 1983: 25.

of Pausanias'.⁶⁸ Now the question of H.'s beliefs here is important, for it colours our appreciation of his portrait of Pausanias: put simply, if H. believed that Pausanias went on to become a mediser and a would-be tyrant, then his characterisation of him in Book 9 must be suffused with irony;⁶⁹ if, on the other hand, H. did not accept the stories, then his characterisation of Pausanias was straightforwardly panegyric and (possibly) the expression of his belief in the innocence of the man.

Certainly the portrait of Pausanias to emerge from Book 9 is consistently favourable, although the manner is indirect. Pausanias' willingness to change wings with the Athenians indicates that he cares more for victory than the credit for that victory: his decision is based on strategic considerations (46–48).⁷⁰ He displays piety when he refuses to attack before the omens are favourable, and during the brutal onslaught by the Persian archers, he looks to the temple of Hera at the crucial moment and implores the goddess to send assistance: only when the omens prove favourable does he attack (61.3). After the battle, when the Theban medisers have been captured, he shows compassion and forgiveness to Attaginus' children (88.1 with n.). His character emerges most clearly, however, in three vignettes after the battle, where he shows respect for the suppliant, refuses to outrage the corpse of Mardonius, and disparages the folly of the Persians for attacking so poor a country as Greece. His ability to observe proper behaviour at the apex of his fortune – having just won 'the fairest victory of all those we know' (64.2) – contrasts sharply with other

⁶⁸ Munson 1993b: 47 n.43 minimises the importance of the addition in the former passage. The emphatic manner of expression, however, – εἰ δὴ ἀληθές γέ ἐστι ὁ λόγος – suggests exactly the opposite. Moreover, the fact that H. has placed these items far away from the glorious portrayal of Book 9 (what in narratology is called anachronic displacement) greatly reduces the effect of this story on our evaluation of Pausanias.

⁶⁹ Fornara 1971 a: 63–6; Gould 1989: 117–18. Fornara asserts that 'the recollection of Pausanias' greatness' could not have survived his disgrace (63) and that H.'s account of Pausanias was an 'imaginative recreation' (66). Fornara's view rests on the assumption that Pausanias was universally believed to have been a traitor and thus H. himself must have made up the favourable anecdotes which he tells about him (62–6). This is certainly to be misled by Thucydides' insistence on his guilt. Pausanias is more likely to have been a controversial figure (like Alcibiades later), and Thucydides' narrative of his fall is highly tendentious (as Fornara 1966 himself argues).

⁷⁰ For a different interpretation, arguing that Pausanias' fear contributes to a realistic portrait of him, see Evans 1991: 82.

examples of abusive and excessive behaviour in the *Histories*.⁷¹ We cannot know whether H. accepted the stories of Pausanias' later activities – although direct and indirect remarks suggest that he did not – but there is no doubt that in Book 9 Pausanias serves as the focal point for Greek values and self-definition.

H. characterises not only individuals but also whole peoples. In Book 9 the most important are Athenians, Spartans, Ionians, and Persians. The Ionians receive the least emphasis, and it seems clear that H. had little sympathy for them or their plight: they are weak, incapable of prolonged and concerted action, averse to hard work, and soft and effeminate.⁷² Although they have a few moments of glory – they fight bravely at the battle of Lade, for instance (6.14–15) – their usual role is to be the playthings of greater powers.

The Spartans are portrayed as surprisingly dilatory, fearful, and at times concerned only with their own safety. As the Book opens, they are feverishly building their wall across the Isthmus and putting the Athenians' request for assistance on hold (7–8), and they are moved to action only when they hear the advice of Chileus of Tegea (9). Pausanias and the Spartans also show fear of the Persians, as when Pausanias offers to change wings with the Athenians (46.1). And yet in the actual fighting their performances are extraordinary: at Thermopylae a man they stand up to face the vastly superior army of Persia (7.210–212, 223–226), and at Plataea they endure a punishing assault by the Persian archers until the omens are favourable, and then fight most bravely of all (9.71.1).

The Athenians, by contrast, are daring, aggressive, and unswervingly brave. H. extols their whole-hearted commitment to the anti-Persian cause and their self-sacrifice throughout the Persian invasion (7.139). To them H. gives the control of the outcome of the war: 'whichever side they joined was sure to prevail' (7.139.4). Pausanias likewise says explicitly that they had been most eager throughout the whole war (60.3). Yet these Athenians can also be self-serving, threatening before Salamis to abandon their homes and settle in Italy (8.62.2), or warning the Spartans that

71 Cf. 76–85 with nn. for the three incidents; for the contrast of Pausanias' behaviour with Xerxes', cf. 108–113n.; for the contrast with the Athenians, 116–120n.

72 See 106.2–4n. Cf. esp. 6.11, where the Phocaeen commander Dionysius calls the Ionians to freedom, and attempts to prepare them for battle; they undergo his strict discipline for only a week, and then refuse to train any longer. For their failure even to join in their liberation at Mycale, cf. 90.2–3n.

they will make peace with the King (9.11.2 with n.); more ominously, in their last actions after Mycale, they already begin to look like the aggressors of Thucydides' *Pentekontaetia*, attacking territory by themselves, enduring a long siege, and inflicting savage punishments when they are victorious.⁷³ The contrast that the Corinthians of Thucydides' history draw between Athenian resolute action and Spartan delay (1.68–71) is already present in H.'s history.

The Persians, as mentioned above, are the driving force of the history, portrayed throughout as aggressive and imperialistic. Their *nomos*, Xerxes says, is always to move forward and to add to their empire, and in so doing, they are prepared to attack the innocent as well as the guilty (7.8c–δ). Their actions in burning the shrines of the gods and heroes of the Greeks, and their attempt on the temple of Apollo at Delphi (8.35–39), show them to be impious and heedless of the customs of others. At the same time, they are portrayed as 'simple' people, who speak the truth (1.136.2). They are proud men and brave fighters, and they esteem courage (even in an enemy) more than any other nation.⁷⁴ In contrast to their allies, who are often faulted for cowardice,⁷⁵ the Persians at Marathon (6.113), Plataea and Mycale fight bravely and to the end. At Plataea in particular, they grapple in hand-to-hand combat with the Spartans, even though their equipment is greatly inferior (62.2–3). Just as Mardonius resembles Hector, so the Persians recall the Trojans in Homer. Both Trojans and Persians have many allies, all speaking a different language; both dress in gorgeous clothing; and both issue challenges to single combats (which they fail to win).⁷⁶ Like Homer, H. treats the 'enemy' with a certain amount of sympathy, equal in some ways to that given to the Greeks.⁷⁷ Yet at the same time, as with the Trojans of the *Iliad*, the Persians are, at least morally, the aggressors and must be

⁷³ See 116–120n.

⁷⁴ Cf. their treatment of the Greek Pytheas, who in attacking the Persians nearly died; the Persians dress his wounds so as to save his life and exhibit him admiringly to all (7.181).

⁷⁵ See 67–68nn.; cf. Mardonius' words to Xerxes after Salamis (8.100.4) that the Persian allies were involved in the disgrace, not the Persians themselves. The largely negative features of the barbarians are displaced onto the Persian allies: see 59.2n.

⁷⁶ On these characteristics of the Trojans see Griffin 1980: 4–5. E. Hall 1989: 19–30, however, shows that many of the supposed differences between Achaeans and Trojans do not really exist.

⁷⁷ Cf. Fornara 1983: 62; against exaggerated claims of Homeric objectivity, however, see de Jong 1987, esp. 221–9.

portrayed as such.⁷⁸ Their function therefore is two-fold: they provide a worthy opponent for the Greeks, and their defeat is in accord with the moral sentiments of the author and his audience, whose view of the war (and the world) demands that aggression and impiety be punished.

4. HISTORICAL METHODS AND SOURCES

H.'s historical method is a complex phenomenon, not easily reduced to a series of rules or a consistent and coherent set of choices.⁷⁹ The picture that emerges is rather one of disparate methods, and various and at times contradictory approaches to his sources. Unlike Thucydides, H. nowhere has a methodological chapter; in which he delineates a method that he claims to have followed consistently throughout his work. In addition, the disparate nature of material treated by H. – geography, ethnography, and historical actions – makes it unlikely that he used a single method. Oral tradition must have been the basis for much of H.'s 'historical' narrative. Important too would have been the author's *gnomē*, i.e., his conjecture, opinion, reasoning, or refutation. To explain motivations, for example, H. must often have had recourse to his own imagination, even if he based such things on the subsequent actions or remarks of the historical characters.⁸⁰ Indeed, the one universal principle espoused by H. is λέγειν τὰ λεγόμενα, 'to say what is said', i.e., to report oral tradition, although he is not obliged to believe everything that he reports (7.152.3). It seems clear, then, that for the historical narrative of the latter books (including Book 9), H. relied on the reports of participants, people who had been present or who had heard from those who had.⁸¹ If H. was born c. 484, he would have been in a position to interview men who were present and had fought in 479, such as Thersander of Orchomenus, whom he names as his source for a marvellous story before the battle of Plataea (16.1). On the other hand, H. almost certainly did not speak with members of the high command, since Pausanias, Aristides, and Xanthippus would have all been dead long before he began his researches.

As part of his emphasis on oral tradition, H. employs 'source-citations', usually couched in the form 'so-and-so say'. H. cites all the major Greek city-states, several minor ones, and numerous foreigners, including

⁷⁸ Pandaros' violation of the truce at *Il.* 4.85–147 puts the Trojans morally at fault: see Taplin 1992: 104–9.

⁷⁹ On H.'s historical method, see esp. Verdin 1971 and Lateiner 1989.

⁸⁰ On *gnomē* in H. see Corcella 1984: 57–91.

⁸¹ On autopsy in H. see Schepens 1980: 33–93.

Egyptians, Lydians, Persians, and Scythians.⁸² There are also anonymous 'priests' and, very rarely, named individuals.⁸³ Whether Greek or foreign, H. presents these accounts as living traditions, and the source citations thus serve both as the basis of H.'s narrative, and (simultaneously) its validation. They give variant versions of events, often for what must have been contentious (and living) issues;⁸⁴ they add details not previously known;⁸⁵ and they validate the unusual or the marvellous.⁸⁶ Although some recent scholarship has seriously called into question the veracity of H.'s source citations, most scholars still believe that these preserve at least some traces of contemporary tradition.⁸⁷

It was once fashionable to believe that previous written sources underlay much of H.'s narrative.⁸⁸ While it is likely that an occasional documentary source forms the basis of his account, as in the Persian satrapy list (3.89–96) or the catalogue of Persian forces (7.61–98),⁸⁹ much is uncertain beyond this. We know the names of several authors who wrote during the fifth century, some of whom may have treated Plataea and Mycale before H., although many scholars believe that with the exception of Hecataeus their works all appeared after H.'s history;⁹⁰ nor can we tell from their meagre

82 For a list and discussion of the source-citations see von Gutschmid 1893: 145–87; Jacoby 1913: 398–9, with Jacoby's discussion of the sources, 419–67; Fehling 1989 *passim*.

83 See 2.55 (Promeneia, Timarete, and Nicandra, priestesses at Dodona); 3.55.3 (Archias); 4.76.6 (Tymnes); and below, 16.1 (Thersander), with n.

84 On variant versions in H. see Groten 1963; Fehling 1989: 143–7; Lateiner 1989: 76–90; for the use of variant versions in ancient historians generally, see Marincola 1997: 280–6.

85 See 73.1n. 86 See 120.1n.

87 The matter is too complex to treat in detail here: for the most fundamental assault see Fehling 1989, esp. 12–86, who believes that H. follows unvarying rules in his citation of sources and that the citations themselves are fictitious; cf. Armayor 1977–8, 1978a–c, 1980, 1985, who emphasises the 'Greek' character of H.'s reports of foreign lands and peoples; cf. also S. West 1985, 1991. For a defence (although problematic) of H.'s work see Pritchett 1995; cf. the more nuanced studies of Murray 1987, Thomas 1989, esp. 165–72, 247–51; Evans 1991: 89–146; Luraghi 2001.

88 This had a respectable ancient pedigree, since Dion. Hal. *Thuc.* 5 gives the names of many writers whom he imagines to have been active before H. For a brief overview of the written sources debate see Fehling 1989: 1–5.

89 For these see Lewis 1985: 346–7, 357–60; but cf. Armayor 1978c, who argues that Greek tradition lies behind the catalogue of forces.

90 The authors are Charon of Lampsacus (*Persica*, *Hellenica*), Damastes of Sigeum (*On events in Greece*), Hellanicus of Lesbos (*Persica*), Dionysius of Miletus (*Persica*), and Aristophanes of Boeotia (*Boeotica*). For the standard view that all such historians are

fragments whether they even gave a detailed narrative of the Persian Wars. Even Hecataeus, who was certainly important for the earlier books, could have had little relevance for Book 9.

It is usually assumed that H. was greatly influenced by and dependent upon Athenian tradition, as well as that of the Samians, since each group figures prominently in the history. Yet we must beware of assuming that fullness of treatment is directly dependent on the availability of sources.⁹¹ The detail with which H. treats Mardonius' actions and intentions in Book 9, for example, might suggest a Persian source at or near the seat of power, but it is just as likely that H. imaginatively 'recreated' Mardonius' viewpoint from what his Greek sources had told him of the actions at Plataea. In any case, we cannot, in the absence of explicit citations, ascribe portions of the narrative to specific sources.⁹² That we cannot put a name or nationality to much of H.'s material is indeed frustrating, but it is also evidence that H. was not simply a collector of *logoi*, but rather a skilled narrative artist who fashioned existing traditions into a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Although prose accounts of Plataea before H. seem unlikely, the historian may have used poetic sources.⁹³ The publication in 1992 of papyrus fragments from Simonides of Ceos' elegiac narrative poem on the battle of Plataea has raised the question whether this poem in particular was a source for H.⁹⁴ Simonides was, in some sense, *the* Persian Wars poet, composing accounts of all the major battles: Artemisium (elegy and lyric); Thermopylae (lyric); Salamis (lyric, possibly an elegy); and Plataea. He also wrote epigrams and possibly an elegy on Marathon.⁹⁵ Whereas H. wrote Book 9

later than H., see Jacoby 1956: 16–64, who considered only Dionysius earlier than H. Jacoby's views have been questioned recently: see Fowler 1996, who argues that some of the so-called 'local' historians were known to H.; so too Marincola 1999.

91 As does Nyland 1992. See the excellent arguments of Rood 1998: 48–52 on this issue in Thuc., esp. 51: the 'assumption that sources, not thematic concerns, explain the shape of Thuc.'s narrative is dangerous.'

92 H.'s use of focalisation to give vividness to his narrative (above, §2) also complicates the search for individual sources.

93 Choerilus of Samos wrote an epic *Persica*, known only from a few meagre fragments (*PEG* FF 1–12; *SH* 314–23), but as he was a contemporary of Lysander (Plut. *Lys.* 18), his work could not have been available to H.

94 See Appendix A.

95 The length of these poems is unknown, but that on Plataea comprised at least 100 lines: cf. West 1993: 4. The testimonia are most conveniently found in Campbell's

between forty and sixty years later, Simonides' poem was evidently composed within a few years of the battle. Although mutilated and incomplete, the fragments are suggestive in broad terms of the themes and tendency of Simonides' poem. When and where Simonides' Plataea elegy was first performed is uncertain,⁹⁶ but the current consensus is that it was a panhellenic event within a few years after Plataea. Given the prominent praise of Pausanias (F 11.33–4) and the tradition that he was an acquaintance of Simonides,⁹⁷ it has even been suggested that the poem was commissioned by Pausanias himself. The poem was clearly encomiastic, making an explicit comparison with the Trojan War, and including a description of the death of Achilles. Credit for the victory at Plataea was not, as in H., limited to Athens, Sparta, and Tegea, but was extended to other states. Whereas in H. the Corinthians disobey Pausanias' orders (52) and miss the battle altogether (69), Simonides gives them a prominent role in the battle (FF 15–16). No doubt there were other differences as well. It might be tempting to explain this discrepancy by postulating that H. was misled by the anti-Corinthian prejudice of his Athenian sources.⁹⁸ However that may be, caution is in order since the relationship between the two accounts is difficult to disentangle, especially as the papyrus fragments (of which not a single line survives complete) have been cleverly (and at times brilliantly) restored by editors who have based their supplements on H.: the danger of circularity is obvious. Therefore, although it may seem likely that H. had heard, if not read, a major poem by the most renowned lyric poet of the fifth century, the fragments themselves offer no indisputable evidence that he did. Here, as elsewhere, we are left uncertain about H.'s methods. His use of sources, and the ways in which he put together the first historical work of western literature, still remain imperfectly understood.

Loeb edition; for discussion see Boedeker 1995: 218–19, 223, and Rutherford 2001: 35–40; for the Thermopylae poem see also Flower 1998.

⁹⁶ Important discussions to date are Aloni 1997 (arguing for a Spartan commission); Boedeker 1995, 2001a, and 2001b; Schachter 1998.

⁹⁷ Pl. *Ep.* 2.311a; Plut. (*Cons. ad Apoll.* 105a) reports that Simonides, in reaction to Pausanias' arrogance, advised him to remember that he was only a human being.

⁹⁸ H.'s attitude towards the Corinthians is difficult to discern. In the narrative of Salamis, for example, although the Corinthians do not figure in his account of the actual battle, he notes that they claim to have played a central role and that the rest of Greece supports them (8.94; cf. below, 52n.). In the narrative of Mycale, he includes them among the participants in the narrative itself (102.3, 105 with nn.).

5. THE BATTLES OF PLATAEA AND MYCALE

In 480 Xerxes led a vast armada and land force to incorporate mainland Greece into the Persian empire. Although Thucydides judged (1.23.1) that this war had a quick resolution in two land battles (Thermopylae and Plataea) and two sea-battles (Artemisium and Salamis), H. devoted three full books to these events, treating first the campaigns of Xerxes in 480 (Books 7–8) and then that of Mardonius, whom he left in command (Book 9). In this last book, Mardonius is decisively defeated at the battle of Plataea in Boeotia, and the Greek fleet, under the command of the Spartan king Leotychidas, begins the liberation of Ionia with the victory at Mycale.

(a) Modern approaches and methods

Most modern historians who write on the Persian Wars rationalise the account of H., while supplementing it with details extracted from later sources. The major difficulty with this method is that it relies on two assumptions, both of which are problematic. First, it assumes that the truth of what actually happened is somehow latent in the text, buried under layers of political bias and literary elaboration, waiting only to be extracted. Although it is tempting to try, no process of scraping away the presumed later accretions, like so many layers of varnish on an old painting, will necessarily reveal the true story underneath.⁹⁹ Any modern narrative so derived, no matter how clever the arguments employed, can never attain a greater level of probability than H.'s own narrative.¹⁰⁰ Second, the propensity to rationalise assumes that people always act in rational ways and for rational motives. When individuals or groups do seemingly foolish things in H., such as Amompharetus refusing to retreat when Pausanias had ordered him to do so (53–7) or the contingents of the Greek centre wilfully disobeying their orders during the night withdrawal (52), one cannot assume *prima facie* that the truth must have been otherwise. Rationality may reign in the repose of the scholar's study, but real life is messy, chaotic,

⁹⁹ Cf. Moles 1993 for an excellent discussion of the difficulties with this method.

¹⁰⁰ On the problems involved in reconstructing ancient battles, see Whatley 1964 (written in 1920; still fundamental). Cf. Woodman 1988: 15–23 and Osborne 1996: 337, who comments about the invasion of 480/79: 'Ignorance of troop numbers itself makes battle reconstruction futile, but in any case stories about what happened in the battles became so politically charged that no confidence can be placed in any claims about what went on. . . . The military story that can be told is therefore thin.'