

The Experience of Time in Herodotus’ *Histories**

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ABSTRACT: The present analysis argues that a crucial strand of the temporality of Herodotus’ *Histories* lies at the intersection between timeliness (καιρός) and responsibility-cause (αἴτιος-αἰτία). In the multi-layered temporal texture of Herodotus’ composition, chronology (χρόνος) is not a driving force. In turn, the Homeric-style glory (κλέος) is restricted to Sparta. What seems to instill the *Histories* with its distinctive aetiological temporality lies in the tipping points, when the future hangs in the balance. While for the characters each critical instant appears as a καιρός, from the historian’s vantage point every καιρός is informed by notions associated with αἴτιος-αἰτία. In the fate-ridden horizon of Herodotus’ account, the locus thus shifts from fate to people’s role in causing fate’s plan to be effected. This study also suggests that their mastery of καιρός lifts the Athenians to the summit of Greek excellence, a rung previously unattainable for anything other than Homeric (and Spartan) κλέος.

KEYWORDS: *chronos, kleos, kairos*, temporality, opportunity, responsibility.

Scholarly debate shone a spotlight on the essence of time in ancient Greece during the 1960s.¹ This brought into focus the existence of a seeming dichotomy between a primarily qualitative and a primarily quantitative experience of time in Greek literature.² Studies set out to analyze straightforward time terms: first and foremost, χρόνος (‘timespan’), and secondly, αἰών (‘lifetime’). Centring the analysis of time on χρόνος was the logical by-product of looking at the matter through a twentieth-century lens. Because, for modern societies, time was (and still is, probably more so than ever) fundamentally a matter of measurement, it was identified with χρόνος on a one-to-one basis. As a result, scholars concluded that the concept of time in Archaic Greece was undeveloped

* This paper is a spin-off from the research I carried out for my PhD degree, which I obtained at the University of Oslo in 2019. For that reason, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor and my co-supervisor. Among other things, I thank Anastasia Maravela for allowing me to pursue the goal in my own way even at the most difficult crossroads, and Duncan Kennedy for nudging me in the right direction whenever I was on the brink of getting lost or stranded. I would also like to thank Joanne Vera Stolk, Jens Mangerud, Ágnes Mihálykó Tothne, Panagiotis Farantatos and Federico Aurora for so many edifying discussions about our work as PhD candidates. I am thankful to Emily Baragwanath and Melina Tamiolaki for giving me invaluable feedback on my thesis, and to Ingela Nilsson, Robert Fowler and Catherine Darbo-Peschanski for helping me shape my thoughts at different stages. I am also grateful to the Herodotus Helpline for giving me new insights into the *Histories*, to *Syllogos* editorial board, in particular to Jan Haywood, for drawing my attention to some errors and inaccuracies in my drafts, and to the two anonymous reviewers for their pertinent remarks and suggestions.

¹ Accame 1961, de Romilly 1968, Degani 1961, Fränkel 1955, Momigliano 1966a, 1966b.

² Accame 1961: 383: ‘si tratta in sostanza del permanente contrasto fra il tempo qualitativo e il tempo quantitativo’ (‘essentially, it is about the permanent contrast between qualitative time and quantitative time’).

due to the scarcity of occurrences of χρόνος in the Homeric poems.³ Based on the distinction between qualitative and quantitative understandings of time, it was posited that χρόνος originally had a qualitative meaning related to the personal — i.e. the psychological — experience of time in moments of waiting. These, in turn, were what had initially generated the perception of time for Homeric characters. Those moments of waiting, inherently qualitative, would have stretched out as hope faded away, in such a way that time became quantitative.⁴ Yet although the premise that time was originally conceived qualitatively seems plausible, there is sufficient evidence to support the claim that χρόνος was not the receptacle of qualitative temporal notions. On the contrary, it would appear that χρόνος was from the start (and throughout) essentially quantitative.⁵ In the Homeric poems, χρόνος is the object of measurement and calculation. Out of the twenty-nine occurrences of the term, the vast majority appear in the company of indefinite quantifiers.⁶ Regarded as the manifestation of χρόνος, the Homeric poems indeed relegate time to the sidelines. Contrariwise, the experience of time within them emerges as a driving force when contemplated in the light of κλέος.⁷

In the *Histories* the quandary is precisely the opposite. Even though κλέος is present, its ascendancy in the narration loses prominence.⁸ What seems to instil the budding historical discourse with its characteristic temporality lies at the intersection between ‘opportunity’ or ‘timeliness’ (καιρός) and ‘responsibility-cause’ (αἴτιος-αἰτία).⁹ The frequent use Herodotus makes of χρόνος may cast a veil of confusion over this. Although the *Histories* has normally been evaluated (and criticized) based on chronological criteria, viewing the relationship between χρόνος and ‘time’ as undeviating is as deceptive for Herodotus as it is for the Homeric poems.¹⁰ That the implementation of a chronological framework for the narration

³ Fränkel 1955. Cf. Bakker 2002: 12, 27.

⁴ Accame 1961: 377.

⁵ The fact that Mimnermus, Theognis and Simonides should speak of πήχυιον χρόνον (‘a short span’), ὀλιγοχρόνιον (‘of short duration’) and χρόνος ὀλίγος (‘a short while’), respectively, does not attest to a displacement from qualitative to quantitative time, as Accame 1961: 383 asserted. These instances showcase the quantitative essence of χρόνος, as both πήχυιος and ὀλίγος are quantifiers.

⁶ Two are attested with δηρόν (‘a long [time]’) (*Il.* 14.206, 14.305), fourteen with πολύν (‘a lot of [time]’) (*Il.* 2.343, 3.157, 12.9; *Od.* 2.115, 4.543, 4.594, 4.675, 5.319, 11.161, 15.68, 15.545, 16.267, 21.70, 24.218), two with ὀλίγον (‘a little [time]’) (*Il.* 19.157, 23.418) and three with τόσσον (‘so much [time]’) (*Il.* 24.670; *Od.* 19.169, 19.221).

⁷ Bakker 2002: 27: ‘we do not find any elaborate representations of *khrónos*, but this is less due to any “undeveloped” sense in Homer of what is for us “time” than to the irrelevance for epic *kléos* of *khrónos* in its typical Greek understanding’. Cf. Murnaghan 2011: 109–28 for *kleos* in Homeric epic, especially the *Odyssey*.

⁸ Baragwanath 2008: 8: ‘at first sight [Herodotus] appears a polarized personality, concerned to confer kleos (fame, glory), but at the same time intent also on uncovering underlying and often disreputable motives’.

⁹ The present article posits that the *Histories* are mainly defined aetiologically as regards its temporality. However, I agree with Immerwahr 1956: 279 in that ‘it would clearly be wrong to claim that causation could explain the total structure of the work’.

¹⁰ Cf. Immerwahr 1956: 277: ‘In organizing the parts of his *Histories*, Herodotus was forced to find a principle of connection other than mere chronology (for chronology does not explain anything)’. Cf. Lateiner 1989: 122.

of events was key to the moulding of Herodotus' account is not in question, though, and a certain sense of temporal order does bind the *Histories* together.¹¹

CHRONOS AS THE TEMPORAL FRAME OF THE HISTORIES

Numerous studies on Herodotus' overall chronology, on chronology in segments of his work, on genealogical aspects and on the publication of the *Histories* have doggedly tried to elucidate conclusive dating frames.¹² However, assuming that chronology is what defines the temporality of Herodotus' composition is a fallacious point of departure, as the close association of history with fixed chronologies is a later development. It does not follow that chronology is without importance in the shaping of the *Histories*. On the contrary, the assemblage of a temporal concatenation must have been essential to its conception.¹³ Prior to Herodotus' composition, other historiographical undertakings had begun to transcend the boundaries of local accounts. Local chronologies had proven unable to supply enough elbow room for the task, which impelled would-be historians to put forward tentative chronological frames of their own making.¹⁴ Hellanicus, Herodotus' contemporary, opted for a hybrid chronological frame, a mixture of objective chronology, drawn from the list of priestesses of Argos, and subjective chronology, provided by 'great epochal events'.¹⁵ Shortly after Herodotus, Thucydides set up a triplet as the chronological shell of his work, one composed of the same list of priestesses of Argos Hellanicus had resorted to, plus the list of ephors at Sparta and that of the archons at Athens.¹⁶ For the rhythm of the narration he strung the events together in a seasonal cadence, in a succession of springs and winters corresponding to the beginning and end of the yearly military campaigns. Thucydides' chronological arrangement gives off a sort of self-assurance absent from Herodotus'.¹⁷ The neatness of the

¹¹ For the organization of time in the *Histories*, see Bouvier 2000, Brown 1962, Cobet 2002, Hunter 1982 and Rösler 2002.

¹² For a summary of scholarly stances on Herodotus' interest in chronology, see Wallace 2016: 168–9. Cf. Wallace 2016: 168n2. For the role of chronology in the organization of the *Histories*, see Lateiner 1989: 114–25. Lateiner 1989: 114: 'Chronological research is as necessary for [Herodotus] as for any other historian, but not for the structure of his historical study'. A branch of scholarly tradition starting with Meyer 1892 and continued by How and Wells postulates Herodotus' complete lack of interest in chronology. Cf. Fränkel 1955 in Rösler 2002: 253: 'As regards Herodotus ... he simply has no interest in chronology'. Cf. Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 34: 'Herodotus valued chronology less than other aspects of the events he was discussing'.

¹³ Cf. Pelling 2019: 60: 'Yet chronology itself, as opposed to the stories that attached to the figures that needed chronological fixing, will play little part in his inquiry (little but not none)'. Mosshammer 1979 locates in Herodotus the initial interest in chronology amongst Greeks.

¹⁴ The absence of a unified notion of Greek identity made the lack of a calendar, common to all the cities, a natural consequence. Cf. Feeney 2007: 10, Lang 1957: 271, Lateiner 1989: 114–15.

¹⁵ Feeney 2007: 17. Cf. van Wees 2002: 335n27 regarding Hellanicus' chronological aspirations — what Fowler 2013: 685 called 'chronological scaffolding'.

¹⁶ For Thucydides' implementation of this combined method, see Feeney 2007: 17–18. Cf. Wilcox 1987: 51.

¹⁷ See Keyser 2006 for a revision of the roles of mere storyteller and proper historian traditionally allotted to Herodotus and Thucydides. See Keyser 2006: 347–8 for examples of

chronological organization in his narration of the Peloponnesian War overshadows the comparatively haphazard chronological organization of Herodotus' account. However, the context of the two compositions differs greatly: whereas Thucydides' account dealt with the clash of two Greek blocs, Herodotus' inquiry aims at universal history, even if this is not explicitly conceptualized in the *Histories*. The broadness of the scope of Herodotus' composition puts Greece into context in a much wider world, geographically and culturally as well as chronologically.¹⁸ As one of a kind as the Greeks may have been, the size of their cultural universe was small next to the impressiveness of Persia's or Egypt's.¹⁹ The *Histories*' biggest merit in connection to chronology does not lie in its concern for accuracy but in the amalgamation of different frameworks for counting time across cultural boundaries.²⁰ It is little wonder that the different traditions Herodotus uses to confect his chronological patchwork should have influenced his work.²¹ Unlike Thucydides, Herodotus puts together a chronological palette rather than a chronological line.²²

According to the understanding of time that emerges from the Near East in Herodotus' account, quantification appears as its most immanent temporal trait. By contrast, the experience of time in Greece initially developed on a different note, one eminently associated with virtuous living.²³ In the Homeric poems, the chronology of events is insignificant next to the glorious deeds being recited. The scenes depicted take place by necessity within measurable time, but they transcend their immediate temporal frame in the heroes' desire for immortality. Time periods are remarkably vague — that is, unimportant — in the *Iliad*, and

imprecise time reckoning in Thucydides.

¹⁸ Cf. Keyser 2006: 348.

¹⁹ In the *Histories*, the Persians minimize the importance of the Greeks by repeatedly flaunting their ignorance about them. First, the most illustrious among the Greeks, the Spartans, are reported to be utterly unknown to Cyrus (1.153.1). Secondly, on his way to invade Greece, Xerxes nonchalantly shows some interest in learning something about the people he has set out to conquer (7.101.2). Lastly, Xerxes inquires of Demaratus the number of Lacedaemonians back home and whether they are like those they had just fought at Thermopylae (7.234.1).

²⁰ Cobet 2002: 388 captures the essence of Herodotus' chronological concoction when he asserts that he 'is so to speak the funnel through which heterogeneous traditions about different times and places change into another frame of perception'.

²¹ Cf. Cobet 2002: 391. It is debatable, however, whether the melting pot of quantitative temporal perceptions shaping the *Histories* results in the emergence of a 'new *continuum* of space and time', as Cobet suggests. The definition of a 'continuum' is problematic in view of its unidirectional implications. In the *Histories*, myth permeates history and vice versa. In his comment on Helen's presence in Egypt (2.120), Herodotus applies to Priam the term φρενοβλαβής ('deranged in his mind'), which likely reflects a rational development of θεοβλαβής ('deluded by a god'), a term that, conversely, he resorts to in order to characterize the poor decision-making of two historical figures, Astyages (1.127.2) and the Macedonian king (8.137.4). In like manner, history strolls into the mythical garden when the Athenians and the Tegeans vie with one another at Plataea for the privilege of fighting next to the Spartans by adducing the merits each earned in mythological times (9.26–27). Cf. Zali 2015: 277. Cf. Pelling 2019: 15 for how the 'past mattered' in 'kinship diplomacy, in establishing claims to territory or property, or providing legal precedents to settle disputes'. Cf. also Pelling 2019: 59.

²² Cf. Lateiner 1989: 122: 'non-linear chronological technique'. Cf. also Wilcox 1987: 53.

²³ In that respect, in the *Histories* Tello or Aristides incarnates the Athenian ideal better than Themistocles. Cf. Harris 2019.

Greek drama is similarly indifferent to precise time reckoning.²⁴ On the surface, this situation changes in the *Histories*: χρόνος predominates, with over 300 attestations.

However, demonstrating the existence of an overall undisrupted chronological line across the *Histories* poses more problems than it solves, not to mention the fact that the reassuring effects of such a creation cater for the tastes of modern historiography but not necessarily those of Herodotus' audience.²⁵ After all, the interest of modern scholarship in ancient chronology is just that — a modern interest. Circumspection is therefore advisable when dealing with chronological details retrieved from the *Histories*.²⁶ Numbers in the *Histories* should also be taken with a pinch of salt, as more often than not they have a strong symbolic value.²⁷ This throws into relief the notion that originally, quantity was not their principal association.²⁸ Numbers' function as the manifestation of a deeper order distinguishes them from the primarily quantitative slant they are most commonly identified with.²⁹ Only over time did their qualitative value become subsumed by their quantitative one. Herodotus mentions Pythagoras twice (4.95.4; 4.96.1), both in favourable terms, which does not make him a Pythagorean but confirms his familiarity with, and agreeability towards, Pythagorean philosophy. The overall formulaic tone of numbers in the *Histories*³⁰ may well indicate that Herodotus

²⁴ De Romilly 1968: 111 stresses that in Soph. *Aj.* 193–95 there is an overt allusion to the apparently long time Ajax spent drawing back, although it may have lasted merely a few days. There is also mention (304–6) of the long and arduous recovery of his senses after he blindly slaughtered the sheep, although that episode may have lasted only a few hours. For an analysis of narrative duration in the Homeric poems, see Maravela 2006: 240–7.

²⁵ Cf. Lateiner 1989: 118. For the deceptive notion that Herodotus (and Thucydides) would have regarded absolute chronological systems preferable to their own, see Wilcox 1987: 52. Rubincam 2008: 98 emphatically voices the modern reader's dissatisfaction.

²⁶ Fehling 1989: 216–39. For arguments opposed to Fehling's postulates, see especially Rubincam 2003 and Branscome 2015: 234n8.

²⁷ Fehling 1989: 216–39. Cf. Wallace 2016, Wilcox 1987: 75. Fehling's 'extreme position' (Fowler 1996: 82) 'shocked the community of ancient historians' (Rubincam 2003: 449). Nevertheless, Herodotus' use of typical numbers is widely accepted as a basic premise and Fehling's systematic analysis yields solid evidence. Rubincam 2003 tries to add nuance to Fehling's theories by looking at frequency and therefore at the proportion of numbers that can be labelled 'typical' in the *Histories*. However, I agree with Wallace's assertion (2016: 169n6) that 'Fehling 1989 chapter 4 ... is mostly not challenged by Rubincam 2003'. Keyser 1986 deals with calculations in the *Histories* — i.e. with numbers — at face value.

²⁸ Walter Burkert develops this idea from the point of view of Pythagorean philosophy (in Seaford 2004: 272): 'Number is not quantity and measurability, but order and correspondence, the articulation of life in rhythmical pattern and the perspicuous depiction of the whole as the sum of its parts. To see a "consistently quantitative view of the world" in Pythagorean number theory is a mistake'.

²⁹ Cf. West 1971: 216. Rubincam 2003: 449 regards Fehling's postulates about Herodotus' formulaic numbers as 'an attack on the veracity of Herodotus' and she refers to such numbers as 'not "real"', insofar as they do not 'represent the result of a real attempt to count or measure the phenomenon in question'. Questioning the factual truth of numbers need not be an attack on Herodotus, just as numbers' lack of correspondence with real measurements does not make them any less real. It simply locates them in a different sphere of reality, in no way less real than the tangibly measurable one. Cf. Wallace 2016: 174.

³⁰ For Rubincam 2003: 449, Fehling's concept of 'typical' or 'formulaic' numbers has more sway in poetry and religious texts. Herodotus' composition has strands from both.

shared the same, culturally determined, perception of them.³¹ A high degree of purely numerical quantification is indispensable to (the birth of) history, but in the *Histories* a deeper conceptualization of numbers prevails. This frequently muddles up the dates and the calculations, to the frustration of the modern reader.³² The combination of these two factors partly accounts for the mixture of remarkably accurate data with seemingly off-the-wall assertions that is so characteristic of Herodotus.³³ Before looking at the evidence showing the decline of κλέος and the rise of καιρός in the *Histories*, revisiting some passages featuring χρόνος might add to the extant knowledge concerning Herodotus' formulaic use of numbers.

In a pre-eminently chronological interpretation, Croesus' *logos* could be considered the starting point at which Herodotus begins to count the years. Herodotus even speaks of a 'time of Croesus' (κατὰ δὲ τὸν κατὰ Κροῖσον χρόνον, 1.67.1), which is the first attestation of a time named after an individual, thus making the reign of the Lydian King a broad chronological marker.³⁴ In conjunction with that, Xerxes' destruction of Athens functions as an 'anchor date'.³⁵ Comprehensive chronological frames for the *Histories* rely largely on those two pillars. However, the scrutiny of the details of Croesus' chronology raises further questions about its reliability, which has a ripple effect throughout the *Histories*³⁶ — not least considering the possibility that the meeting between Solon and Croesus never took place, long part of the scholarly debate³⁷ and already viewed with suspicion in antiquity. Plutarch says that some ancient scholars considered it to be fictitious, which he expresses in terms of chronological dating.³⁸ It must also be noted that Croesus is the first of only two characters whose age is stated in the *Histories*, the other being

³¹ Cf. Philolaus on numbers: 'all known beings have a number, for without it nothing can be thought or known', καὶ πάντα γὰρ μὲν τὰ γινωσκόμενα ἀριθμὸν ἔχοντι· οὐ γὰρ οἶόν τε οὐδὲν οὔτε νοηθῆμεν οὔτε γνωσθῆμεν ἄνευ τούτου (Stob. *Flor.* 1.21.7b).

³² Skinner 2018: 195n43 fittingly draws attention to the question of how devices like 'typical numbers', be they in Herodotus or elsewhere, would have been interpreted by the audience.

³³ Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 197 summarize the predicament of knowing that the chronological notices in the *Histories* are often flimsy, but that Herodotus is the main (or only) source of information in most cases: 'The Babylonian *logos* is therefore a mixture of imaginary data and measurements, misunderstandings, and extraordinarily accurate descriptions. It is, in any case, one of our most important sources for ancient Babylon'.

³⁴ This Herodotus combines with 'the reign of Anaxandridas and Ariston in Lacedaemon' (1.67.1), a more precise one but not entirely so. According to Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 108, Anaxandridas and Ariston became kings in about 550 BC. Considering the circumstantial evidence, he concludes that 'the alliance between Croesus and Sparta can thus be dated to approximately 548/7'. He then concedes that the chronology is rife with problems and 'still only partially resolved'.

³⁵ Cobet 2002: 395.

³⁶ Wallace 2016: 172–6. Arguments against regarding the chronology of the Mermnad dynasty as historically precise are abundant. Fehling 1989: 183 raises a strong objection to the veracity of the chronology of the Mermnad dynasty as a whole. Cf. Keyser 1986: 233n17. Cf. Wallace 2016: 168–72 for the recurrence of seven, twice seven, fourteen and seventy in Croesus' *logos*.

³⁷ For the discussion, see Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 99, Fehling 1989: 211–12, Blok and Lardinois 2006: 16n8, Miller 1963: 58–94, Long 1987: 61–73, Wallace 2016: 172–73.

³⁸ Cf. Miller 1963: 58. Plutarch writes that, '[a]s for [Solon's] interview with Croesus, some think to prove by chronology that it is fictitious' (*Solon* 27.1). He rejects this presupposition, but the fact that the meeting between Solon and Croesus was already regarded with disbelief back then should further scepticism about its veracity.

the not-at-all reassuring case of Arganthonius (1.163.2). Herodotus says that ‘after the death of Alyattes, his son Croesus became king, being thirty-five years of age’ (1.26.1). Despite its appearance, rather than a historically accurate number this is likely to mean that Croesus acceded to the throne of Lydia in his ἀκμή — that is, in his prime.³⁹ When, a few lines below, Herodotus reintroduces Sardis, explaining that the city was ‘at her pinnacle of wealth’ (ἐς Σάρδις ἀκμαζούσας πλούτῳ, 1.29.1), he is probably tying together Sardis and Croesus’ stage in life (and fate) without too much regard for Croesus’ real age at that time.

Picking up on the rift between Croesus and Solon around the concept of being ὀλβιος (‘fortunate’), Herodotus continues to depict the former as obsessed with quantification by means of the lexical pair ὀλιγοχρόνιος (1.38.1) and πολυχρόνιος (1.55.1). When a group of farmers makes a plea for Croesus to send a hunting party, led by his son Atys, to rid them of a gigantic boar that is ravaging their crops, the King accedes to the first request but refuses the second. A dream had recently foretold the death of his son, so Croesus was against letting Atys take any risks. Only when confronted with Atys’ personal entreaty does Croesus voice his fear: ‘A vision of a dream was standing over me in my sleep and said that you would be short-lived’ (μοι ὄψις ὀνείρου ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ ἐπιστᾶσα ἔφη σε ὀλιγοχρόνιον ἔσεσθαι, 1.38.1).⁴⁰ A compound made of two quantitative constituents, ὀλιγος and χρόνος, is employed attributively with reference to Atys.⁴¹ In the *Iliad* the idea of being short-lived is expressed with the adjective μινυθᾶδιος (‘lifeblood’) in connection with somebody’s αἰών, which takes the emphasis away from any quantitative considerations.⁴² Two significant parallels intimate that the contrast with ὀλιγοχρόνιος is probably intended. On the one hand, in the *Iliad*, drama is added to the death of a warrior expressed in those terms, in that he will no longer be able to ‘yield to his beloved parents the fruit of his upbringing’ (*Il.* 4.477–78, 17.301–2).⁴³ In Herodotus’ account, Croesus’ distress at the thought of precisely that kind of loss stands in the spotlight, ‘for [Atys is his] only son, as the other, being utterly deaf, does not count for [Croesus]’ (οὐκ εἶναι μοι λογιζομαι,⁴⁴ 1.38.2). On the other hand, in the Iliadic contexts the victim is felled by the blow of a spear:

³⁹ Finch 2010: 9 reminds us of the famous fragment of Solon: ‘In the sixth [age 35–42] a man’s mind is trained for everything and he is no longer willing to commit acts of foolishness’ (Solon, fr. 27). Although he does not remark on the possibility that Croesus’s age is counterfeit, Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 142 observe that ‘all numbers in paras. 1–2 are symbolic’. It is the reign of twice-seven years and the siege of twice-seven days that prompts Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella’s remark (cf. Wallace 2016: 168–72), but this reflection might also be applied to Croesus’ age, which can be reduced to a multiple of seven (35 = 7 x 5). Cf. Immerwahr 1956: 254: the Croesus *logos* ‘is introduced by a mention that Croesus was at the height of his power’. An introduction full of foreboding indeed.

⁴⁰ All translations are mine.

⁴¹ Cf. Konstan 1987: 64.

⁴² Bakker 2002: 19 states that ‘we might want to translate the phrase μινυθᾶδιος δέ οἱ αἰών with “short was his life-time”, but *aion* properly means “life force”’.

⁴³ For the *pathos* of being unable to repay his parents and the shortness of his life, see Kirk et al. 1985: 389. For death and *pathos* in the *Iliad*, see Griffin 1980: 103–43. Griffin 1976: 164–5 points out that these verses combine the motif ‘far from home’ with Homer’s two ‘most pathetic motifs: “short life” and “bereaved parents”’. Cf. Edwards 1991: 92, Pelling 2006: 85.

⁴⁴ As part of Herodotus’ portrayal of non-Greeks as prone to looking at things primarily quantitatively, counting (λογίζομαι) becomes a trope: Persian justice possesses a calculating nature (1.137.1); Darius appears busy with additions and subtractions about Sandoces’ merits

‘His lifeblood became extinct under lofty Aias’ overpowering spear’ (μινυθάδιος δέ οἱ αἰὼν / ἔπλεθ’ ὑπ’ Αἴαντος μεγαθύμου δουρὶ δαμέντι, *Il.* 4.478–79, 17.302–3). In like fashion, Atys is killed when a stray spear hits him by accident: ‘Hurling a spear at the boar, he misses, hitting instead Croesus’ son’ (ἀκοντίζων τὸν ὕν τοῦ μὲν ἀμαρτάνει, τυγχάνει δὲ τοῦ Κροίσου παιδός, 1.43.2).⁴⁵ Additionally, when Croesus discloses his ominous dream to Atys (1.38.1), in his words those of Thetis reverberate, reminding Achilles that ‘[his] impending fate is drawing ever nearer’ (νύ τοι αἴσα μίνυθά περ οὗ τι μάλα δὴν, *Il.* 1.416). While in the Homeric poems life is defined as a temporal quality related to fate,⁴⁶ Croesus’ characterization of his son as ὀλιγοχρόνιος makes length the defining temporal attribute of Atys.⁴⁷

After mourning his son for two years, a number without any sacred associations, Croesus sets out to resume his military campaigns. But before that, he wants to obtain divine guidance and ingratiate himself with the gods. With a view to doing so, he designs a plan to glean which oracle is the most trustworthy by sending emissaries to the Greek ones, as well as to the oracle of Ammon in Libya. Before they depart, he instructs them to ‘count down the days from the day of their departure and consult the oracles on the hundredth day (ἀπὸ ταύτης ἡμερολογέοντας τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἑκατοστῇ ἡμέρῃ χρᾶσθαι τοῖσι χρηστηρίοισι), asking what Croesus, son of Alyattes and King of Lydia, was doing in that moment’ (1.47.1). One hundred days is a large number that allows the emissaries to reach their respective destinations and the consultation to be synchronized. Nevertheless, a symbolic hue is likely to be part of the choice of that specific figure. Powers or multiples of ten often occur in the sphere of autocrats.⁴⁸ Such figures pop up in the accounts of Polycrates, Oroites, Xerxes, Cheops and Gelon, in one way or another.⁴⁹ The presence of Croesus on that list should hardly come as

and faults in order to decide whether and how to punish him (7.194.2); Xerxes computes the potential profits of an invasion of Greece (7.8c.1).

⁴⁵ For the common motif of missing the target and hitting somebody else instead by accident in the *Iliad*, see Edwards 1991: 92.

⁴⁶ Opting for ‘short-lived’ to render μινυθάδιος into English only creates confusion, as it equates it to Herodotus’ ὀλιγοχρόνιος. There is only a handful of attestations of the term in the Greek corpus and most of them come from the *Iliad*, which sets the trend for the others. The interpretation of it as short-lived seems a projection of the Herodotean ὀλιγοχρόνιος in retrospect.

⁴⁷ A paraphrase of ὀλιγοχρόνιος can be found when the Siphnians consult the Pythia along the same lines: ‘When they were building the treasury, they consulted the oracle to know if their present prosperity would last for a long time’ (ὄτε ὦν ἐποιεῦντο τὸν θησαυρόν, ἐχρέωντο τῷ χρηστηρίῳ εἰ αὐτοῖσι τὰ παρεόντα ἀγαθὰ οἷά τε ἐστὶ πολλὸν χρόνον παραμένειν, 3.57.3). In neither case does material wealth guarantee survival per se. Cf. Gagné 2013: 329.

⁴⁸ Moreover, as Fehling 1989: 227 remarked, ‘scholars have long been aware of a whole series of ten-day periods connected with the Battle of Plataea’. See Fehling 1989: 229–30 for the recurrence of the combination of ten and twenty in timespans in the *Histories*. It is especially striking that it should also be part of the complex mathematics in Babylon’s capture (3.155.5–6). In yet another possible indication of Herodotus’ symbolic use of numbers, this could signify that any political entity the numerical combination is used against will fall.

⁴⁹ Fehling 1989: 230. The likely symbolic value of the figure of one hundred days adds to the paltriness of all the days leading to the completion of the one hundredth (quantity). What truly matters is the limit to that number, embodied in the last day (ἡ κυριή τῶν ἡμερέων), and its sacred symbolic value (quality). That the limit should be earmarked for oracular consultation only increases the symbolism of τὴν κυριήν τῶν ἡμερέων (1.47.2), as will be discussed below. For good measure, the importance of quantification for Croesus is further highlighted by

a surprise. After testing the oracles in order to ferret out which is truest,⁵⁰ and after asking the Pythia whether he should attack the Persians, he consults the oracle a third time. On this occasion he does so in order to know ‘if his would be a long-lasting reign’ (εἴ οἱ πολυχρόνιος ἔσται ἢ μοναρχίη, 1.55.1). In the formulation of his question πολυχρόνιος triggers a connection with his son being ὀλιγοχρόνιος.

Another episode undermining word-for-word interpretations of numbers in Croesus’ *logos* is Cyrus’ capture of Sardis. The showdown between Lydians and Persians ends in a standoff and Herodotus informs us that ‘Croesus, putting the blame on the number of his soldiers (Κροῖσος δὲ μεμφθεὶς κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος τὸ ἔωυτοῦ στρατεύμα), for the army he had put together was much smaller than Cyrus’, blaming [the outcome] on that, since Cyrus did not attempt an attack the following day, he left and headed back to Sardis’ (1.77.1). Putting his army’s failure down to numbers, Croesus retreats with the intent to muster his forces during the winter and to gather momentum for a new attempt in the coming spring. With that purpose, he ‘sent envoys to his allies calling on them to convene in Sardis in four months’ time’ (1.77.4).⁵¹ Croesus even sends a message ‘summoning the Lacedaemonians to come at the appointed time’ (παρεῖναι ἐς χρόνον ῥητόν, 1.77.3). Cyrus, privy to Croesus’ plan, assesses the situation well (he shows good discernment), remains undaunted by the harshness of the winter (he is prompt to leap at the opportunity) and attacks Sardis by surprise (he shows warlike courage) (1.79.1).⁵² As a result, Lydia is taken by the Persians and Croesus becomes Cyrus’ servant. Thinking soundly outdoes thinking numbers.

On a different note, in the *Histories* the Ethiopians are presented as μακρόβιοι (‘hearty-living’) without any direct specification as to what this attribute translates into (3.17.1).⁵³ Herodotus reports that ‘Cambyses then marched against the hearty-living Ethiopians (ἐπ’ Αἰθίοπας τοὺς μακροβίους) with an army superior in numbers’ (3.21.3). Only after that comes the first piece of information that is plausibly related: the average life expectancy among the Ethiopians is so high that ‘many lived up to 120 years and some more than that’ (3.23.1).⁵⁴ In translation

the hapax legomenon ἡμερολογέοντας. Counting, be it riches or time, is thus stressed for the umpteenth time as crucial in Croesus’ perception of and interaction with the world.

⁵⁰ In furtherance of the ever-growing doubts about the veracity of the details in Croesus’ *logos*, Thonemann 2016: 153 underscores the absence of evidence for Croesus’ test of the oracles or of any historical parallels from an epigraphic point of view.

⁵¹ As in the two years of mourning, the number four, a multiple of two, has no sacred or propitious connotations.

⁵² Cf. ‘... for, having marched his army into Lydia, [Cyrus] was the messenger Croesus heard about [Cyrus’] arrival from’ (ἐλάσας γὰρ τὸν στρατὸν ἐς τὴν Λυδίην αὐτὸς ἄγγελος Κροῖσῳ ἐληλύθει, 1.79.2). In support of the *καιρός*-like character of Cyrus’ actions, Sleeman 2002: 205 remarks that the pluperfect ἐληλύθει ‘represents an action as already completed at a past time [which] thus neglects the *duration* of the action [and] is naturally used of a *sudden* occurrence’ — the emphasis is mine in both cases. It is a *fait accompli* policy that catches Croesus off-guard.

⁵³ If the factual historicity of many aspects of Croesus’ *logos* can be called into question, in the case of the Ethiopian *logos*, ‘few believe in the historicity of the events’ within it (Irwin 2014: 26). See Irwin 2014: 38 for how the attribute μακρόβιος is ‘significantly placed’ within the *logos*.

⁵⁴ For longevity in Herodotus, see Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 417 and Finch 2010. Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 417 classify this sort of longevity as ‘utopian’. Cf. Arganthonius’ eighty-year rule over Tartessus and his lifespan of one hundred and twenty years (1.163.2).

μακρόβιοι is systematically rendered as ‘long-lived’.⁵⁵ However, translating ὀλιγοχρόνιος as ‘short-lived’ and μακρόβιοι as ‘long-lived’ results in a levelling of both terms that obscures a substantial difference. In the case of ὀλιγοχρόνιος the countable side is doubly in the spotlight. It is intrinsic to the nominal nucleus of the compound, χρόνος, as it is to the adjective, ὀλίγος. Alternatively, in μακρόβιοι neither of the two constituents directly hints at counting. The noun βίος alludes mainly to one’s ‘means of life’,⁵⁶ and μακρός specifies size or volume, a quantifiable characteristic, but a less straightforward one.

This distinction should not be spurned, as a healthy lifestyle is crucial to the longevity of the Ethiopians. Much of the discussion between the Persian envoys, the Fish-eaters, and the Ethiopians revolves around this quandary. The material aspects of their salutary lifestyle, what they eat, what they drink and the water they wash themselves with, are all carefully noted by the Persian emissaries. Additionally, a weighty argument lies in the first words the Ethiopians say. Indeed, ‘the Ethiopian King advises the Persian King that, when the Persians can draw bows this size this easily, then he can march against the hearty-living Ethiopians with an army superior in numbers to [theirs]’ (3.21.3).⁵⁷ These lines contain two kernels for the present discussion. First, there is the bow as a test of worthiness.⁵⁸ This is obviously a Homeric motif linked to the bow that only Odysseus could wield.⁵⁹ Just as Penelope’s suitors in the *Odyssey* covet what does not belong to them, the Ethiopian King says that if the Persian King ‘were a righteous man he would not have lusted after any land other than his own’ (3.21.2).⁶⁰ The test of the bow is a test of quality by definition. Besides enjoying an imposing poise, the Ethiopians are said to be the tallest and the best-looking (3.114.1). Their skill in wielding a one-of-a-kind bow completes their depiction as admirable warriors. Being aware of this, they confidently declare that, even in the unlikely eventuality that the Persians learn to draw similarly large bows with ease, only with superior numbers could they manage to sway the balance in their favour.

Herodotus states this in a matter-of-fact tone and nothing in the formulation gives away any hints of intended playacting. For the coincidence of age between Arganthonius and the Ethiopians, see Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 422. Finch 2010: 364 puts forth that this figure may be a symbol for ‘long-standing’. This does not solve the riddle but it seems right in shifting the fulcrum to the symbolic value of these numbers.

⁵⁵ Godley 1920–1931, Macaulay 1914, Purvis and Strassler 2009, Waterfield 2008.

⁵⁶ Cf. Chantraine 1968: 176–7. For Herodotus’ use of it in the Ethiopian *logos* in relation to Hippocratic medicine, see Irwin 2014: 37.

⁵⁷ The attribute μακρόβιος can be taken as wordplay: since βίος means ‘bow’, this would blend their hearty living with the large size of their bows, the two attributes that define the Ethiopians in Herodotus’ account.

⁵⁸ For the bow being representative of the Ethiopians, see Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 422. Cf. Irwin 2014: 38–9, How and Wells 1912a: ii.262 on 3.21.3.

⁵⁹ *Od.* 19.577–8, 586; 21.75–6. For this and other Homeric (and Hippocratic) resonances in the Ethiopian *logos*, see Irwin 2014: 42–57. See Irwin 2014: 38–9, 42 for the thought-provoking connection of βίος with a Hippocratic context and βίος with a Homeric one. For the ‘Homerizing narrative’ of the Ethiopian *logos*, see Irwin 2014: 58–70.

⁶⁰ This motif can be found elsewhere in the text: in the story of Prexaspes (3.35.3), in the story of Croesus (3.36.4), and in the story of the false Smerdis (3.78.2–3). Cf. Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 422.

After the messages are exchanged over the test of the bow, the Persian spies give the Ethiopian King the gifts they have brought for him. Wine is the only item he reacts enthusiastically to (3.22.3).⁶¹ He inquires of the messengers how it is made. He then asks about the food the Persian King eats and how long Persians can live, thus linking those two factors together. Taking a dim view on the Persian staple diet, since its fundamental ingredient, bread, is basically ‘the fruit of manure’, he concludes that it is not surprising that the Persians should live eighty years at most. By contrast, he explains, nourishment among the Ethiopians comes principally from boiled meat and milk, thanks to which they live to see 120 years as an average, more in some cases (3.23.1–3). The correlation between food and longevity for the Ethiopian King is patent. Herodotus also underlines the importance of the wondrously light waters of the spring used by the Ethiopians as the cause of their longevity.⁶² To sum up, longevity is not presented as a goal in itself but as the consequence of a healthy existence, whence the difference between longing to be πολυχρόνιος and the bliss of being μακρόβιος.

THE DECLINE OF (HOMERIC AND SPARTAN) *KLEOS*

Herodotus does not make flippant use of κλέος. It only occurs four times in the *Histories*, a considerable curtailment compared to the sixty-one occurrences in the Homeric poems.⁶³ It appears exclusively in contexts of war, which links with its usage in the *Iliad*, and always in the orbit of Sparta.⁶⁴ It has been noted that Herodotus may have been attempting to depict Leonidas as the new Achilles⁶⁵ and there are two mentions of Leonidas’ κλέος which confer a certain Homeric aura on him (7.220.2, 7.220.4). However, in the *Histories* the figure of Leonidas differs from the Homeric characters not only in motivation⁶⁶ but also in goal. While in the Homeric poems κλέος is an individual matter related to lineage, in the *Histories*

⁶¹ For the interpretation the Ethiopian king makes of the gifts, see Irwin 2014: 30–3. Cf. Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 419–20.

⁶² For the waters as a key element in explaining the longevity of the Ethiopians, see Irwin 2014, esp. 36–7. Irwin 2014: 37 suggestively links the light waters in this passage with Hippocrates’ *Airs, Waters and Places* on the properties of waters.

⁶³ Thucydides and Xenophon barely use the term and only do so when alluding to times long past. Thucydides uses it three times: once referring to Sparta’s legendary reputation (1.10.2), once describing the mythical Phaeacians (1.25.4) and once as part of Pericles’ funeral speech, where it refers to the widows of the Athenian soldiers fallen in battle (2.45.2). In Xenophon, κλέος is only attested in *Cygeneticus* (1.6.4) in reference to Asclepius’ superhuman skills, a sphere completely out of human reach. The term then fell into disuse.

⁶⁴ Just as κλέος only applies to Sparta among the Greeks, so does αἰσχύνη (‘shame’): Othryades, *ashamed* of returning alive when all the other Spartans have perished fighting the Argives, kills himself (1.82.8), while Amompharetus eschews his *shame* from a previous insubordination (9.53.2) because he dies in combat (9.85.1). Interestingly, it also refers to female chastity among non-Greeks: twice in relation to Candaules’ unnamed wife (1.10.2, 1.11.1) and twice applied to Atossa (3.133.1, 3.133.3). Loraux 2014: 66 speak of αἰσχύνη as an ‘extremely effective cement of Spartan civic cohesion’. Cf. Loraux 2014: 275n33.

⁶⁵ Bakker 2002: 17 highlights the Homeric tone of the fight over Leonidas’ body in 7.225.

⁶⁶ As Baragwanath 2008: 70 puts it, ‘Leonidas, in parallel to Herodotus, is self-consciously monumentalizing *kleos*’. Cf. Pelling 2019: 203.

it has collective repercussions.⁶⁷ In Herodotus' representation the beneficiary of Leonidas' feat is Sparta, not Greece as a whole.⁶⁸

Importantly, Herodotus brings into focus the element of choice. Leonidas and the Spartans did have a choice.⁶⁹ In fact, they had choices to make in more than one respect. For one thing, they had to decide what to do with the allies who had joined forces with them at Thermopylae.⁷⁰ But before that was the question of whether to stand their ground and confront certain death.⁷¹ The tribute Herodotus pays Leonidas conveys unsettling undertones, as he writes that Leonidas contemplated leaving Thermopylae (7.220.2). Judging by the overall context and the phrasing, there is no apparent intent on Herodotus' part to besmirch Leonidas and the Spartans.⁷² Yet, from the emphasis on their choice to stand their ground arises the jarring thought that they could have acted differently.⁷³ Ultimately, Leonidas' κλέος is sealed by his death.⁷⁴

Let us consider the other episodes in which κλέος appears, which it always does in relation to Sparta and always with a shadow of ambiguity. First, during Cleomenes' invasion of Eleusis at the head of a mixed force, the Corinthians change their mind about the campaign at the last minute, as the wrongness of the action dawns on them (ὡς οὐ ποιέοιεν δίκαια).⁷⁵ Half of the Spartan army follows suit, which causes a chain reaction resulting in the dispersal of the rest of the allies. In this manner, the outbreak of hostilities comes to an inglorious (ἀκλεῶς)

⁶⁷ Bakker 2002: 17–19. Bakker 2002: 26 speaks of the 'biological prosperity of [the] community'. Under this premise, the sense ἐξίτηλα ('extinct') in the prologue can be better grasped, as can ἐξηλείφετο ('wiped out') (7.220.2) in relation to it. Cf. Bakker 2002: 17 and Pelling 2006: 93. Cf. Pelling 2019: 203 for the connection between Leonidas' glory and ἐξίτηλα in the prologue.

⁶⁸ By contrast, in Simonides' dirge (PMG fr. 531) good repute and glory for Leonidas' and the Spartans' heroic death shall go to the whole of Greece. For the possibility that he was commissioned to write it, see Aloni 2001: 87–8, Parsons 2001: 64 and Rutherford 2001: 39–40. For the discussion of the possibility that Simonides' poems may have been commissioned specifically by the Spartans, see Aloni 2001: 102–4, Rutherford 2001: 27–31 and Stehle 2001: 52–7.

⁶⁹ Cf. Baragwanath 2008: 77–8.

⁷⁰ Cf. Loraux 2014: 64–78. Cf. also Flower and Marincola 2002: 245. Some had already left of their own accord (7.219.2), but Herodotus reports that the final decision was made by Leonidas (7.220).

⁷¹ For the 'Spartans' beautiful death' at Thermopylae, see Loraux 2014: 70–4.

⁷² Cf. Baragwanath 2008: 128: 'Herodotean alternative motives are frequently of a sort that implies no obvious moral or ethical judgement attaching to a particular choice, but simply provides readers with a broader background or potential explanation'. Cf. Baragwanath 2008: 130.

⁷³ Cf. Baragwanath 2008: 68, 70. Cf. Baragwanath 2008: 73–4 for similar alternatives in the Gyges narrative. Baragwanath 2008: 78 says that 'the Spartans' stance at Thermopylae was *not* inevitable, but chosen, and the result of personal courage'. Cf. Loraux 2014: 70.

⁷⁴ Cf. Loraux 2014: 63, 66. Cf. Baragwanath 2008: 71, where she points out that the Thebans stayed 'unwillingly and reluctantly' and that this 'will in fact precipitate their later open medizing, which in turn threatens to be altogether damaging to Greek *kleos*'.

⁷⁵ Cf. Baragwanath 2008: 144 for how the story turns 'from portraying Cleomenes freeing Athenians from tyranny, to instead becoming a promoter in his own interests of the would-be replacement tyrant Isagoras'. For the negative portrayal of the Spartans collectively, see Blösel 2018: 249–57.

end (5.77.1).⁷⁶ The last two attestations delve deeper into Sparta's ambivalent relationship with κλέος in the *Histories*. When the Persians taunt the Spartans before the fight at Plataea, they reproach them for not living up to their fame by taking the position in front of the Persian soldiers (9.48.3).⁷⁷ The resonance of this slight is complemented by the accusation that they are 'foisting the brunt of the fight on the Athenians' (9.48.2). To round off the jeering, the Persians challenge the Spartans to a fight of equal numbers (9.48.4). To begin with, a Greek audience would not have been misled about the dimension of the sacrifice the Spartans had made at Thermopylae. Also, Herodotus had explained that the Spartans would face the Persians in the oncoming battle, and a Greek listener would have known the invading army would not have renounced its numerical superiority. That is to say, the Persians' accusations would have lacked credibility before a Greek audience. And yet, the affront to Spartan repute has been made and a rather murky image of their κλέος results from it.⁷⁸ Creating this impression also concurs with the fact that the Persians' words shift the focus from the act worthy of glory (κλέος) per se to the go-between of mediation (κατά κλέος), a rather iffy space in comparison (9.48.3). With that twist, κλέος, in theory indisputable at its root, can be brought into question on account of the pitfalls of hearsay. Herodotus deploys this criticism in the guise of a misunderstanding on the part of the Persians. It is impossible to tell to what extent he is echoing popular talk and to what extent all that cavilling is of his own making.⁷⁹ Whatever the proportion, the displacement of κλέος from source to transmission seems evident.⁸⁰ Only in the end does Herodotus add an apparent grace note conferring a heroic halo on the Spartans. Despite the lengthy tirade of Mardonius' messenger, the Spartans offer (a heroic Homeric) silence in return (9.49.1).⁸¹

⁷⁶ Cf. Hornblower 2013: 222.

⁷⁷ The Persians expected the Spartans would 'want to fight it out with the Persians *alone*' (βουλόμενοι μούνοισι Πέρσησι μάχεσθαι). Μούνος is also found in the passage where Leonidas is said to have wanted 'to deposit glory on the Spartans *alone*' (κλέος καταθέσθαι μούνων Σπαρτιητέων, 7.220.4) — the emphasis is mine in both cases. Its recurrence pinpoints Sparta's exclusive relation with κλέος, while at the same time suggests that the Spartans are trying to hoard all the glory for themselves — i.e. that they are being greedy about glory. For the Homeric tone of the taunts, see Flower and Marincola 2002: 193.

⁷⁸ Flower and Marincola 2002 underline that 'this challenge ... emphasises Mardonius' fatal and tragic blindness to the realities of the situation ... although the hesitancy of the Spartans could be interpreted by [him] as cowardice'. Regarding the position the Spartans would take in battle, Blösel 2018: 254 opines that 'Herodotus himself is unambiguous in stating that Pausanias was driven by fear'.

⁷⁹ Cf. Loraux 2014: 70 regarding Herodotus' 'pro-Athenian bias', in keeping with Plutarch's take in *De malignitate Herodoti*. Cf. Loraux 2014: 278n71. See Blösel 2018: 260 for Herodotus reflecting anti-Spartan Athenian propaganda and Blösel 2018: 261 for opinions about Sparta found in other fifth-century Athenian works.

⁸⁰ There is only one instance predating Herodotus' use of κατά κλέος, in Pindar's *Pythian* 4. The ode commemorates Arcesilaus' victory with the chariot in 466 BC (Gildersleeve 2010: 278). Pindar narrates Jason's return home and the manner in which word of his homecoming spreads: '... and both his father's brothers came when they heard the report of Jason' (καὶ κασίγνητοὶ σφισιν ἀμφοτέροι / ἤλυθον κείνου γε κατά κλέος, 125–26).

⁸¹ Flower and Marincola 2002: 196–7. Cf. Zali 2015: 70, 277. For silence as a rhetorical device in Herodotus, see Dewald and Kitzinger 2015 and Zali 2015: 39–45. For Spartan silence, see

Thucydides will elaborate at length on Pausanias' tumble from glory to corruption but there are already intimations of things to come in the *Histories*.⁸² After the fight at Plataea, an Aeginetan leader, Lampon, declares that κλέος has been bestowed on Pausanias by a god because of his role in it (9.78.2). Pausanias somehow hogs the glory⁸³ and, accordingly, his cut of the booty becomes larger than the others' (9.81.2). All this represents a case in point of the shift of paradigm from communal to individual glory.⁸⁴ Leonidas gains κλέος, either for Sparta (Herodotus) or for the whole of Greece (Simonides), dying in the process. Pausanias gains κλέος for himself, surviving the battle only to see his fame devoured by his greed.

THE RISE OF (ATHENIAN) *KAIROS*

In attaining κλέος death was what sealed the deal permanently.⁸⁵ Although unexpressed, another decisive factor was recognizing the opportunity and leaping at it. Like death, this element was defined temporally. One had to excel in combat when things came to the crunch in order to attain κλέος. In fact, outstandingly sound decision-making could be a means of excelling too, as Nestor does in the *Iliad* (11.626–27). Herodotus capitalizes on this idea in the *Histories*. Only the temporal component surfaces, like in his depiction of Themistocles: 'Another view of Themistocles had proven optimal at a critical time before this occasion' (ἑτέρη τε Θεμιστοκλεί γνῶμη ἔμπροσθε ταύτης ἔς καιρόν ἠρίστευσε, 7.144.1). While the Spartan leaders excel in combat, what exalts Themistocles' figure is prowess in decision-making at critical moments.⁸⁶ As opposed to the countable nature of χρόνος, καιρός stands for the momentousness of the moment cutting across the temporal line. It is the hour of presentness, the decisive moment or moment

Zali 2015: 64–77.

⁸² Zali 2015: 273 speaks of indications of Pausanias' 'noble nature' combined with an 'abusive and excessive' attitude 'towards the Persians'. Zali 2015: 274: 'Flashforwards elsewhere in the *Histories* operate directly to expose Pausanias' later tyrannical tendencies'.

⁸³ This may be anticipated in the way that Leonidas is said to have wanted to 'amass glory' for the Spartans (7.220.4). Cf. Flower and Marincola 2002: 245.

⁸⁴ In the *Iliad*, Hector wants to gain κλέος for himself and for his father, but not for the city, as he knows that Ilion is doomed (Kirk 1990: 220). First, the notion had oscillated from the solipsistic κλέος of the Homeric heroes to the communal κλέος of the polis (Bakker 2002). With Pausanias' case in the *Histories* the solipsistic pattern re-emerges. However, the individualism of the Homeric κλέος is unfailingly connected with a long-term transactional order — i.e. lineage —, whereas Pausanias' heralds the advent of his corruption and therefore links to what is presented as a baneful short-term transactional order. See Parry and Bloch 1989, Ready 2007 and Seaford 2004: 9–16 for the meaning and implications of short-term and long-term transactional orders.

⁸⁵ Loraux 2014: 63–72 show how death, glory and excellence are inextricably intertwined in 'the Spartans' beautiful death'.

⁸⁶ Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 46. Cf. Pelling 2019: 202: 'Prowess in battle was a prime value but a great motivator was the thought of what others – the community – would say about you; good counsel, *eubolia*, was prized too, the counsel that was good for everyone. So even in Homer the individual is never as individual as all that, never quite distinct or separable from the collective'. Cf. Pelling 2019: 290n57.

of maximum threat, where all outcomes are possible.⁸⁷ Herodotus expresses it vividly in the case of Themistocles but the idea is ubiquitous in the *Histories*.⁸⁸ The responsibility of the participants in the events (αἴτιος), as conceived by the historian (αἰτίη), becomes visible and is coloured by what each does (or does not do) at each watershed (καιρός).

The historian makes incisions in the temporal chain in order to pinpoint critical moments as events unfold. The *quasi*-physical nature of that incision in the temporal succession of events is borne out by the origin of καιρός. In the Homeric poems the notion only occurs in the form of the adjective καιρίος.⁸⁹ It refers to wounds inflicted in battle to the most vulnerable parts of the body.⁹⁰ In the *Iliad*, the expression ἐν καιρίῳ marks the wound as a life-threatening one.⁹¹ Had the stroke hit the target, the wound would have been fatal. Looking at the Hippocratic corpus helps untangle some of the intricacies of the transition from the physical world to a temporal dimension.⁹² The momentousness of making the right decision before cutting is underlined by the only instance of διαίρεισις documented in the Hippocratic corpus. In *Physician* 5.4 we read that ‘in cases where the surgery is performed by a single incision, you must make it a quick one’ (χρή ποιέεσθαι ταχεῖαν τὴν διαίρεισιν). Attention is drawn to the hand of the physician, first the necessity of making a decision, and, subsequently, its execution.

⁸⁷ Cf. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 46. Cf. Maravela 2006: 67: ‘this temporal level, populated by the characters whose story is narrated, is presented as a fragment of time extracted from the remote ... past and “made present” by virtue of the narrative act’.

⁸⁸ It is especially perceivable in the war council scenes: Cyrus and his generals debate attacking the Massagetae (1.206–8); the Scythians debate about Darius’ advance (4.118–19); the Ionians debate destroying the pontoon over the Hellespont (4.133–39); Miltiades and Callimachus debate fighting at Marathon (6.109–10); Xerxes and the Persians debate invading Greece (7.8–18); Xerxes and the Persians debate fighting at Salamis (8.67–69); Xerxes, Mardonius and Artemisia debate the course of action after Salamis (8.100–3). While foreshadowing implies backward causation and so squeezes the presentness out of an event (Morson 1994: 7, 45), sideshadowing enlivens it through the vivification of choice and surprise. In the *Histories* the war council scenes conjure up the presentness of the instants when a critical decision is about to be made. Since the *what* of past events was already known in its main guidelines, the war council scenes focus on the *why* and the *how*, stressing that other futures — i.e. presents — would have been possible. During these fleeting instants the characters discuss the possibilities before them, the future stands undecided and time opens up, filling with eventness (Morson 1994: 22). See Morson 1994 for sideshadowing.

⁸⁹ Cf. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 23.

⁹⁰ Cf. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 24–5. Cf. Wilson 1980: 180: ‘Though this concretely spatial sense of *kairios* persists down to Xenophon and is even found in Polybius ... it is worth noting that outside Homer the early examples of *kairios* are figurative in sense’.

⁹¹ ‘The sharp arrow did not lodge in a critical point’ (οὐκ ἐν καιρίῳ ὄξυ πάγη βέλος, *Il.* 4.185).

⁹² For a thorough analysis of καιρός in medical texts, see Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 149–93. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 184: ‘... *kairos* est très souvent l’heure décisive, le moment opportun pour l’intervention’ (‘... *kairos* is very often the decisive hour, the opportune moment for intervention’). For the right use of the καιρός in medicine in the Hippocratic Corpus, see *Diseases* 1.5. Cf. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 189. Cf. Pelling 2019: 81: ‘The Hippocratics lay emphasis on identifying the *krisis*, the critical moment when the future outcome of a disease is determined: it is also vital to know the right time, the *kairos*, to apply the treatment that will make the crucial difference. That is not far from Herodotus’ identification of the tipping point in 490 BC Athens’ decision not to desert the Greek cause’.

The physician therefore cuts a straight line into the anatomy at the decisive place at precisely the decisive hour in order to save the patient.⁹³ So too does Herodotus, only the incisions he carries out are in a different type of body, one made of cultural tissue and time past.⁹⁴ This is exemplified in the subtle comparison he introduces around the notion of *διαίρεσις* to illustrate the critical importance of making good decisions in the nick of time for the survival of the community. At 3.57.2 he narrates that the Siphnians decided to split up (*διανέμω*) the windfall they had received from their mines. By contrast, Themistocles' advice (7.144) will prevent the Athenians from dividing up individually (*διαίρεσις*) the windfall they received from Laurion. This decision will steer Athens away from a fateful ending like that of the Siphnians (3.58), as it will lead to the construction of a fleet which later on will allow them to face and defeat the Persians at Salamis. The sense of *καίριος* as both the crucial spot and the crucial time for killing or saving cues an understanding of *καιρός* as the translation of the anatomical attribute into temporal terms.⁹⁵ In Herodotus' inquiry, the tipping points of the temporal succession were those which determined the survival, modification or demise of a culturally defined worldview. He carries out an incision at each point that is particularly decisive in shaping events to follow. The evolution of *καίριος* from its anatomical context into the abstract field of temporality defined by *καιρός* is characteristic of Herodotus' probing of its conceptual possibilities.⁹⁶

⁹³ Nutton 2004: 93. Cf. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 185: 'C'est ainsi qu'il [le médecin] détermine les *καιροί*, les moments décisifs de la maladie, moments cruciaux pour l'action thérapeutique, au nombre desquels figurent le début du mal (*ἀρχή*), son point culminant – *ἀκμή* – et l'heure où la maladie "se juge" – *κρίσις*' ('This is how [the physician] identifies the *καιροί*, the decisive moments of the disease, crucial moments for the treatment, among which feature the beginning of the ailment (*ἀρχή*), its high point – *ἀκμή* – and the time when the disease is "ruled upon" – *κρίσις*'). Failing to recognize the momentousness could kill the patient: 'On rencontre ainsi au fil des traités des remarques incidentes signalant les conséquences funestes d'un dîner pris à contre-temps (*ἀκαιρως*), ou d'une incision faite trop tard (*ὑπερβάλλον τὸν καιρόν*)' ('There are incisive remarks in the treatises indicating the fateful consequences of an ill-timed (*ἀκαιρως*) dinner, or of an incision made too late (*ὑπερβάλλον τὸν καιρόν*')) (Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 189). Cf. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 189n115.

⁹⁴ Cf. Nutton 2004: 50: 'Herodotus' ways of thinking about historical processes and about the various nations with whom the Greeks came into contact have strong parallels within the Hippocratic Corpus'. Cf. Lateiner 1986: 15: 'The doctors focused on the human body, its health and diseases; Herodotus on the cultural and political achievements of noteworthy communities in the recent past'.

⁹⁵ The very etymology of the term 'anatomy' describes a cutting. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 51–6 postulates that *καιρός* derives from the stem *ker-*, 'to cut', which would therefore link it with *κρίνω* ('bring to crisis', in medical terms) and *κείρω* ('cut down'). In both Greek and English 'crisis' suggests a moment when the questions of decision and judgement are particularly acute. Also, the Latin 'decision' is an incisively cutting word. I thank Duncan Kennedy for this remark. In the case of Herodotus' inquiry, this would refer to the decisions taken by the characters at critical junctures as well as to the historian's discernment in determining 'cause'. For that purpose, he makes temporal incisions on the point of *αἰτία*, whose flip side is *καιρός*. Kapparis 2018: 45 also broaches *ἀνάκρισις* as 'a long process of presentations before the responsible magistrate'. It is documented twice in Herodotus (3.53.2, 8.69.1).

⁹⁶ Wilson 1980: 197: 'Herodotean *Kairos* is entirely temporal or circumstantial'. Cf. Wilson 1980: 202. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 195 locates the evolution of the term in the second half of the fifth century, but she does not mention Herodotus. Instead, she singles out medicine as

The anatomical use attested in the Homeric poems somehow finds continuation in the description of Cambyses' death (3.64.3).⁹⁷ However, the upshot differs greatly from its Homeric antecedent: in the *Histories* the wound proves mortal, whereas in none of the four times it occurs in the *Iliad* does a warrior die of a (potentially) mortal (καίριος) blow.⁹⁸ The only case in which a stroke turns out to be fatal is when Nestor's horse is felled by an arrow hitting him on the deadliest spot, the crown of the head (*Il.* 8.84). The blows are fatal in theory but the hero affected always manages to survive, which likely indicates that καίριος in the *Iliad* is primarily a suspense device.⁹⁹ That only an animal should succumb might be a means of demonstrating that καίριοι blows do carry death with them. In the *Histories* the threat becomes real and Cambyses dies of one such blow, which constitutes a point of departure. Additionally, in a mixture of cruel irony and incipient indeterminism, Cambyses strikes himself with the fatal blow. He stabs himself in the equivalent anatomical spot that he had previously stabbed, with deadly consequences, the calf that the Egyptians believed to be the god Apis (3.29.1).¹⁰⁰ One of the manifestations of the budding sense of human freedom of choice in the *Histories* lies in the fact that fate determines but humans carry out actions.¹⁰¹ Cambyses' agency, even if unintentional, functions as an acknowledgement of sorts of his multiple transgressions. A clear awareness

the field that drove forward the evolution of the term. In terms of chronology, the *Histories* precedes practically all the treatises which today make up the Hippocratic corpus. Coan and Cnidian medicine emerged (cf. Lane Fox 2020: 66–8) in the same area Herodotus came from and Hippocrates himself was from Cos (Jones 1962: xlili). For the dating of the Hippocratic corpus, see Nutton 2004: 50, 60–1. The timing and the location are therefore too much to the point not to consider the *Histories* a key testimony for the study of the emergence and/or prevalence of the temporal side of καιρός.

⁹⁷ 'And as he was leaping on his horse the tip of the scabbard comes off and the bared sword goes into his thigh. Wounded in exactly the same spot where he had previously struck the Egyptian god Apis. Feeling that the injury was fatal (ὡς οἱ καιρῆ ἔδοξε τετύφθαι), Cambyses asked what the name of the town was, and they told him that it was Ecbatana'.

⁹⁸ First, at 4.185 a belt parries a mortal blow against Menelaus (οὐκ ἐν καιρίῳ ὄξυ πάγη βέλος). The text continues (4.185–87): 'but the shining belt turned it aside before it reached the target', ἀλλὰ πάροιθεν / εἰρύσατο ζωστήρ τε παναίολος. Bearing strongly on the present discussion, Kirk et al. 1985: 350 remark that 'πάροιθεν could be either local ('in front of the skin') or temporal ('before it reached there')'. Secondly, at 8.326 Hector deals a potentially fatal blow to Teucer (μάλιστα δὲ καιρίον ἐστίν), who is nonetheless rescued by his brother Ajax and taken to the safety of the ships. Linking this example with the previous one, Kirk 1990: 325 opines that 'the formula ... is not wholly appropriate here, where death does not supervene' but, in truth, no person dies of a καιρίος blow in Homer. Thirdly, at 11.439 Odysseus is injured but not fatally, as he instantly realizes (γνώ δ' Ὀδυσσεὺς ὃ οἱ οὐ τι τέλος κατακαίριον ἦλθεν). This instance equates τέλος with death, which makes Solon's advice to Croesus reminiscent of it (1.32).

⁹⁹ Cf. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 24 as regards *Il.* 4.185.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Konstantakos 2016: esp. 45–6. Cf. Konstantakos 2016: 46n26 for scholarly references to 'the retaliation principle in Cambyses' death'. Retaliation and 'coincidence' tend to stay in focus. Rightly so, but Cambyses' agency, even if only as executioner, deserves attention too.

¹⁰¹ Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 37: 'Like Attic tragedy, the cycle of events in Herodotus is generated by the unconscious cooperation of gods and men ... Herodotus grants human beings a certain degree of free will, which, though unable to influence the predestined course of history, may influence its time and manner'. Cf. Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 65.

seems to emerge in the *Histories* as to the decisiveness of certain instants.¹⁰² Just as a religious motive lies beneath Cambyses' death, the opportunity embodied in *καιρός* appears mostly as ancillary to fate.¹⁰³ However, just as Cambyses carries out fate's plan with his own hand, mortals are shown to be responsible insofar as they become the executioners. Croesus' *logos* offers several examples of this. Each and every one of his numerous blunders, at every watershed, is presented as the result of his failure to interpret circumstances correctly or of conspicuously poor decision-making in the face of them.¹⁰⁴ Human choice involves interpreting oracles correctly, which Croesus never does.¹⁰⁵ The opposite case is that of Themistocles. The true merit of his success in causing the Greeks and the Persians to engage in a sea battle at Salamis against their will (7.144) consists in unravelling the meaning of an earlier oracle (7.141.3–4). His cunning links to the strategic value of *καιρός* despite the oracular substratum. The subordination of *καιρός* to fate in Herodotus' account does not necessarily mean the absence of strategic value in his conception of the term.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Cf. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 203. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 197 says she regrets that awareness is not accompanied by a theorization of *καιρός* in the *Histories*, but the lack of a theory does not need to be understood as a notion being undeveloped. The title of the section devoted to Herodotus is 'L'Enquête d'Hérodote: une histoire sans *kairos*' ('Herodotus' *Histories*: a history without *kairos*'). Nevertheless, Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 199 speaks first of the indisputable strategic value of *καιρός* in 8.87.2 and then (Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 200) of a political *καιρός* in 5.97.1 and 8.79.3–4. That Herodotus should concede prevalence to divine causation over choice (Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 201–10) lies behind her classification of the *Histories* as not having *καιρός* but Herodotus was paving the way for later developments. The idea of *καιρός* is dealt with in theoretical terms in Plato's *Phaedrus*, but that does not exclude *καιρός* as a perfectly operational notion in the conception of history. Since theorization will only come at a later stage, the conclusion that the *Histories* are 'without *kairos*' is not consistent with the evidence beyond the lexical level. Cf. Kennedy 2013: 93: '[Morson] points to Bakhtin's suggestion that narrative develops insights into temporality which are then "transcribed" into philosophical discourse, although the narrative dimension is then buried and forgotten. Thus we could see concepts such as *determinism* or *free will* as precipitated out of narratives such as the *Odyssey* or *Oedipus*'. Or the *Histories*, one might add.

¹⁰³ Cf. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 197. For a summary of the scholarly debate around the opposing forces of fate and human causation in the *Histories*, see Baragwanath 2008: 7–8n20. Cf. Pelling 2019: 146–62.

¹⁰⁴ First, the prophetic dream announcing the death of his son (1.34), secondly, the oracular response indicating that, were he to attack the Persians, he would destroy a great empire — i.e. his own (1.53.3), thirdly, the oracle about whether his would be a long-lived reign (1.55.2), fourthly, the ill-omened episode of the snakes and the horses (1.78) and lastly, the oracle announcing his ruin on the day his mute son should finally speak, recalled on the day of its fulfilment (1.85.1). Cf. Gagné 2013: 337: 'Misinterpretation is the one constant feature of [Croesus'] character. His errors are embodied in his repeated failure to understand the oracles ... and the recurrence of these misreadings of the oracles emphatically brings attention to his own personal fault in his downfall'.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 206. Cf. also Baragwanath 2008: 291. Pelling 2019: 161: 'We see [mortals] often wrestling to make sense of oracles, and the gods do not make it easy: there too the narrative falls on the mindsets of the mortals as they struggle for insight, not of the gods who set the puzzle'.

¹⁰⁶ Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 195–6 stresses the reduced range of action of the notion in the *Histories* in comparison to the work of Thucydides.

The strategic use of *καιρός* results from the mastery of it. This, in turn, springs from the mastery of politics and war.¹⁰⁷ Verbs like *γινώσκω* ('discern'), *σκοπέω* ('examine'), *παριέναι* ('disregard'), *φυλάττειν* ('keep watch'), *φροντίζω* ('consider'), *ὀράω* ('observe') and *λαμβάνω* ('detect') give pre-eminence to the human factor in the process of decision-making.¹⁰⁸ An example can be found in the narration of Persia's rise to power. Cyrus receives a letter from Harpagus inciting him to rebel against Astyages and, 'after considering the matter, he arrives at the most opportune course of action' (*φροντίζων δὲ εὐρίσκεται ταῦτα καιριώτατα εἶναι*, 1.125.1).¹⁰⁹ The timeliness of the move had been presented to him a few lines before, as Harpagus had asked him to 'act ... quickly in the knowledge that everything [was] ready' (1.124.3). The decisiveness of the move seems indisputable, as it will lead to Persian supremacy over the Medes. Considering that timeliness, decision and action come together, Cyrus' decisions have an evident temporal and strategic character.¹¹⁰

The same can be said of three instances of *καιρός* in the prepositional phrase *ἐν (τούτῳ) τῷ καιρῷ*. In the first one, at a highly politically momentous juncture, when the Persian threat looms large over Athens, Aristides makes a display of statesmanship. In the dire straits of those critical instants (or any other) (*ἐν τε τῷ ἄλλῳ καιρῷ καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐν τῷδε*, 8.79.3–4), Aristides wants to dispel any internal political turmoil, a phenomenon which had wreaked havoc too many times in the Greek *poleis*.¹¹¹ His advice will prove correct and Athens will come out victorious. Strategic, political and psychological depth:¹¹² all three are operational in Aristides' analysis around that *καιρός*. In the second one, Aristagoras of Miletus first tries to garner support from Sparta to stir Ionia to revolt against Persia, but he fails. Consequently, he turns to Athens, kin to his home, Miletus. His arrival is particularly timely in the political context of the moment (*ἐν τούτῳ δὴ τῷ καιρῷ*), and so his request is met with enthusiasm (5.97.1). The momentousness of this episode becomes manifest: the assistance that the Athenians dispense to the Ionians in their rebellion is what will put the city in Persia's way for the first time (5.97.3). The joint effort between Athens and the Ionians and the subsequent destruction of Sardis (5.102.1) will make the Athenians partially liable for the war. Although *καιρός* normally describes the opportune instant for gaining fame, here

¹⁰⁷ Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 210 locates that stage in Thucydides' work.

¹⁰⁸ Trédé-Boulmer does not consider Herodotus' *καιρός* on this score.

¹⁰⁹ The superlative implies that there might be more than one adequate way to proceed.

¹¹⁰ The strategic value of the term can be inferred from Trédé-Boulmer's own words: '*kairos* qui consacre le lien entre réflexion et action est le garant du succès' ('the *kairos* which establishes the link between reflection and action ensures the success') (2015: 195).

¹¹¹ The *Histories* abounds in situations of political turmoil. For *stasis* in Greek politics, see Berent 1998, Gray 2015, Hansen and Thomas 2004: 124–9, Manicas 1982. Cf. Loraux 2002: 104–8 and esp. 64–7 for *stasis* in Athens. Political quarrelling between rival factions in local feuds was the rule (1.59.3, 1.73.3, 3.82.3, 3.144, 4.162.2, 5.29.2, 5.36.1, 5.72, 6.109.5). It is such an active historical force for Herodotus that, in an historicizing incursion into the mythological accounts of the past, he accounts for the origin of the Milyas, an ancient Asian people, in terms of political turmoil (1.173.2).

¹¹² The parameters which Trédé-Boulmer lists as constitutive of the technical *kairos*.

it distils negative connotations.¹¹³ Strategic, political and psychological depth are absent from Aristagoras' plan, but a plan he had nonetheless.¹¹⁴ In the third and last occurrence, Artemisia, at a critical juncture (ἐν τούτῳ τῷ καιρῷ) during the battle around Salamis, resorts to the only course of action possible if she wants to save herself: namely, to sink an allied ship in order to make her own getaway from certain death (8.87.2). Watching from a distance, Xerxes mistakenly takes the sinking ship for an enemy, which prompts him to eulogize Artemisia's valour.

The same temporal value is detectable in Herodotus' employment of ἐξ τὸν καιρὸν, although the kind of temporality condensed in it differs from that of ἐν τῷ καιρῷ. In the four contexts in which ἐξ τὸν καιρὸν occurs a counterfactual version of opportunity takes place.¹¹⁵ The first appears during Athens' feud with Aegina. An Aeginetan, Nicodromos, makes an agreement with the Athenians in order to hand over the island to them. The Athenians, however, fail to turn up 'while the window of opportunity was open' (ἐξ τὸν καιρὸν, 6.90.1). The opportunity slips through their fingers because they do not arrive 'when it was necessary' (ἐξ δέον, 6.88.1).¹¹⁶ There are a number of details to consider in this passage. First and foremost, the Athenians miss their chance by a hair's breadth, as they 'came just one day later than agreed' (ἡμέρη μῆ τῆς συγκειμένης, 6.89).¹¹⁷ A one-day delay for a fleet that size would have surely been a trifle by fifth century BC standards, so this example illustrates the fleetingness of such a unique opportunity, as well as the increasing importance of accurate time-reckoning. The Athenians could have cobbled together whatever ships they had and acted swiftly but 'in the lapse

¹¹³ For the Ionian Revolt and Herodotus' negative judgement on it, see Baragwanath 2008: 160–202, Evans 1976, Hohti 1976: 43, Hornblower 2013: 277, Lang 1968 and Lateiner 1982a: 98, 1982b.

¹¹⁴ Herodotus does not mince his words when stating his opinion about Aristagoras (5.124.1–2). As Baragwanath 2008: 185 puts it, 'the sordid, needless nature of Aristagoras' death casts a grim shadow over the Ionian Revolt, hinting perhaps at its similar futility'. Cf. Immerwahr 1956: 266. For a thorough analysis of Aristagoras' selfishness from the perspective of 'the rhetoric of deceit', see Zali 2015: 187–203.

¹¹⁵ Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 199 interprets the divergence between ἐξ τὸν καιρὸν and ἐν (τούτῳ) τῷ καιρῷ in that the temporal dimension is in full swing in the latter. The fact that the opportunity becomes thwarted in the instances of ἐξ τὸν καιρὸν might lead one to think that its temporal force is cancelled out, but the consequences of unfulfilled opportunities develop into decisive scenarios.

¹¹⁶ Here ἐξ δέον equates to ἐξ καιρὸν. Cf. McQueen 2000: 175, Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 60–2, 197, 199.

¹¹⁷ Later the Aeginetans will defeat the Athenians in a sea battle, making the thought of the lost opportunity sting all the more for Athens (6.92.3). Σύγκειμαι as 'to sum' or 'to calculate' emerges as an important term in the computation of time in the *Histories*. It is documented five times with this meaning, always with variants of λείπω ('leave') or ὑστερέω ('be late'). Three belong to the narration of the capture of Babylon (3.157.3, 3.157.4, 3.158), which underlines how critical it was for Zopyrus and Darius to make the calculations correctly, as if Babylon, famous for its mathematics, needed to be taken in the realm of numbers before it could be taken in reality. The remaining example appears in the narration of the drought at Thera. Sailing in search of a place to establish a colony the Therans leave Corobius as an outpost. However, not being masterful in mathematical computation, they do not leave enough grain for him to survive until their return (4.151–2). The Samians, whom Herodotus depicts as seasoned in quantitative matters, happen to come along and, informed of his plight, give Corobius food for precisely one year (4.152.1).

of time they used asking the Corinthians to lend them ships their chances were ruined' (6.89).¹¹⁸

The three other examples attest to the use of this expression without the definite article. First Tomyris, queen of the Massagetae, warns Cyrus, as he marches on her territory, against attacking her people (1.206.1).¹¹⁹ Translations normally render τοι ἐξ καιρὸν as referring to 'Cyrus' advantage', with which the temporal dimension disappears.¹²⁰ However, depriving it of its temporality might diffuse its meaning. An alternative along the lines of 'Cyrus' heyday' could be closer to the original. Tomyris subtly brings up time when she demands that Cyrus 'stop in [his] tracks' (παῦσαι σπεύδων τὰ σπεύδεις), since, as defined in physics, speed is but the distance travelled per unit of time. Half advice, half threat, Tomyris' words underline that what Cyrus may be rushing to is his own death. This would only be fitting, given that the possibility of death is included in the sphere of possibilities of καιρός, as evinced by its cognate καιρίος. That Tomyris' statement reverberates with these tones might also be hinted at by her calling Cyrus 'insatiably bloodthirsty'¹²¹ (ἄπληστε αἵματος Κύρῃ, 1.212.1).¹²²

Secondly, Darius entrusts Histiaeus, tyrant of Miletus, with guarding the bridge that should see the Persian army's safe return home once the attack against the Scythians is over (or in case of necessity). However, the Scythians give the Persians the slip and come to the bridge, inciting the Ionians to destroy it. Histiaeus then makes the Ionians realize that their position as tyrants in their respective cities depends on the support of the Persian king. So, he concedes to the Scythians that their arrival and their proposal are 'timely' (ἐξ καιρὸν) but when he promises to dismantle the bridge he does so only to get rid of them.¹²³ The momentousness of those instants was stressed a few lines earlier, when the Scythians prompted the Greeks, 'dismantling the pontoon, [to] take [their] leave promptly as free men' (νῦν λύσαντες τὸν πόρον τὴν ταχίστην ἄπιτε χαίροντες ἐλεύθεροι, 4.136.4). Under the guise of picking up on Darius' remark that 'they will earn his gratitude (χαριεῖσθε) if they follow his instructions' (4.98.3), χαίροντες here plausibly represents a play on the largely homophonous καιρός, which could refer to the emotional rush that comes from recognizing an opportunity and acting upon it. This is the golden opportunity for the Ionians to regain their

¹¹⁸ The forces would have been even, as Aegina had a powerful fleet and Athens had not yet become master of the sea. Cf. McQueen 2000: 175. Still, this example may intimate that numbers should not have been Athens' top priority, that somebody (a Themistocles *avant la lettre*?) should have realized it was the right time for swift action.

¹¹⁹ 'King of Persia, stop in your tracks! You cannot know if it will be your heyday after all is said and done', ὦ βασιλεῦ Μήδων, παῦσαι σπεύδων τὰ σπεύδεις· οὐ γὰρ ἂν εἰδείης εἴ τοι ἐξ καιρὸν ἔσται ταῦτα τελεόμενα.

¹²⁰ Cf. Godley 1920, Macaulay 1914, Purvis and Strassler 2009, Waterfield 2008.

¹²¹ The interrelation also lies in how both statements apostrophize Cyrus (in the imperative and vocative) and by the alliteration of 'p' and 's'.

¹²² As Harrison 2018: 353 puts it, Tomyris is one of the 'most direct speakers of unpalatable truths'. Cf. *Hdt.* 1.187.5.

¹²³ Herodotus mentions at 6.3.1 that Histiaeus conceals the truth of his selfish motivation (οὐ ἐξέφαινε) to stir Ionia to revolt. As Baragwanath 2008: 180 remarks, here 'the tyrants choose to do all they can to hide the truth from the Scythians'. For the 'motives of the tyrants', see Baragwanath 2008: 179–83.

freedom without even striking a blow. Bearing in mind the endless troubles they would put themselves through later in order to attain this very goal, the temporal palpitation of the lost opportunity becomes poignant.

Thirdly, once the Persians have been defeated at Plataea, the Greek army makes for Thebes to punish the city for taking sides with the invader. Timogenides, one of the individuals responsible for the Theban deflection to the Persian side, proposes two courses of action to the people of Thebes: to probe the besiegers' frame of mind first, in case money can placate them, and, if that is to no avail, for the city leaders to then turn themselves in. Among the Thebans, Timogenides' 'words came across as very appropriate and timely too' (κάρτα τε ἔδοξε εὖ λέγειν καὶ ἐς καιρόν, 9.87.2). Timogenides also puts forth that the siege might be a 'pretext for [the other Greeks] wanting money'. If, in truth, that is not the case, he and the other leaders 'will give [them]selves up for trial' (9.87.2). This he states in very legal, Athenian-like terms.¹²⁴ However, Pausanias dismisses the army and has the Theban leaders summarily executed. Ten plus twenty is a recurring combination of numbers in the *Histories*. It probably signals that an event is complete or about to take a new turn — that a καιρός is drawing near. Timogenides' speech comes about ten days after the fight at Plataea, plus twenty since the beginning of the siege. Herodotus' employment of ἐς καιρόν here refers to a level of timeliness other than actions, namely, that of speech. Timely (ἐς καιρόν) and appropriate words (εὖ λέγειν) interlock and define each other in this instance.¹²⁵

The dialogue between Histiaeus and the Scythians (4.139.2–3) also attests to the subjectivization of καιρός. A separation of duties or opportunities is effected with καιρός as subject. When Histiaeus tells the Scythians that it is their 'opportunity to track down the Persians' (ὕμεας καιρός ἐστὶ δίζησθαι ἐκείνους), he is compartmentalizing καιρός: while the Ionians continue breaking up the bridge, the Scythians would do better to chase down the Persian army. This shifts the spotlight from the importance of the moment to that of the task, but the temporal nugget does not disappear. Herodotus resorts to the same structure to compartmentalize the task the Athenians and the Spartans should undertake as they are faced with the

¹²⁴ ἡμεῖς ἡμέας αὐτοὺς ἐς ἀντιλογίην παρέξομεν. Cf. Flower and Marincola 2012: 258: "to answer the charges", lit. "for a speech against (the charges)". Cf. Thuc. 1.31.4, ἐς ἀντιλογίαν ἐλθεῖν for this sense. Although Thebes' precise type of government is debatable, there is no evidence of any such lawcourt system there (Simonton 2017: 251). Timogenides' stance gives off a sense of self-assurance that death is never an option: paying a fine, bribing the Spartans or being judged at Athens will put an end to their plight. Considering that Pausanias will have Timogenides executed, Herodotus shines a pretty light on the justice system in Athens by comparison.

¹²⁵ This is somehow a broken-down *pre*formulation of the more synthetic καιρία λέγειν which would gain ground later. The Herodotean εὖ λέγειν καὶ ἐς καιρόν is in accordance with Trédé-Boulmer's words about καιρία λέγειν (2015: 43): 'dans la mesure où le kairos, intervenant du dehors, tranche et décide d'un coup des événements, il est associé à des mots suggérant la coupure; dans la mesure où il suppose une action bien calculée, appropriée, il est associé à des mots suggérant l'ordre et la mesure' ('as long as the *kairos*, acting from without, suddenly decides and determines events, it is associated with words suggesting a cut; as long as it implies a well calculated, appropriate action, it is associated with words suggesting order and measure'). This is even more the case when one bears in mind that Timogenides never contemplates death as a possible outcome.

imminent Persian invasion. The Athenians reassure the Spartans that they will not side with the Persians, but they remind them that, ‘before [Xerxes] arrives in Attica, [they] have the opportunity to pre-empt his advance in Boeotia’ (ἡμέας καιρός ἐστι προβοηθῆσαι ἐς τὴν Βοιωτίην, 8.144.5).¹²⁶ The original Greek has been the object of a silent debate. It can be heard in how the translations disagree on whether ἡμέας should be the subject of προβοηθῆσαι or an accusative of respect governed by καιρός ἐστι. To make matters more complex, the manuscript tradition oscillates between reading ἡμέας and ὑμέας.¹²⁷ Confusion also arises from the wider context, since the Athenians had shortly before compelled the Spartans to send an army (8.144.4). If Histiaeus’ words to the Scythians can be taken to correlate with this passage, the meaning would be that, while the Athenians march into Boeotia to await the arrival of the Persians, the Spartans would do better to send an army. At any rate, Athens is taking the lead and instructing Sparta regarding the course of action during wartime, which is a significant reversal of their previous roles. In both instances of καιρός ἐστι, a joint effort is the key to making the strategy successful. In both cases the combined action must be carried out while the window of opportunity is still open. In both cases the end result depends on two agents. In the first case the occasion is not seized, whereas in the second it is. In the first case the selfishness of the tyrants becomes a lifeline for the Persians, whereas in the second the Athenian Panhellenic leadership brings about the defeat of the Persians.

In the famous meeting between Croesus and Solon, καιρός occurs in one last syntactic form: κατὰ καιρὸν. During his tour of Solon’s riches, ‘after inspecting everything and reflecting on it appropriately (θεησάμενον δέ μιν τὰ πάντα καὶ σκεψάμενον ὥς οἱ κατὰ καιρὸν ἦν), Croesus asked [Solon] the following’ (1.30.2). Discordance in the interpretation of this phrase begins in determining whether κατὰ καιρὸν refers to Croesus or Solon.¹²⁸ The elucidation depends greatly on the

¹²⁶ In an impassioned speech, the Athenians manifest their loyalty to Hellenism, defined around their common blood, their common language, their common gods, their common rituals and their common ways (8.144.2). For ‘the rise of a new, culturally based definition of Greekness, in contrast with non-Greek barbarians’ in the fifth century, see Haubold 2013: 98–9, 118. The Athenians’ unselfish behaviour offsets the selfishness of the tyrants. Bowie 2007: 235–6 is right when he states that ‘this speech attempts to characterise the Athenians as selflessly devoted to the ideal of Greek freedom’. In his account of the fight at Thermopylae, Herodotus had hinted at the Spartans’ heroic act as being intended for the glory of Sparta only. That the Athenians, the Greek power on the rise, should make the definition of Hellenism for the Spartans is most telling.

¹²⁷ Wilson 2015 gives ἡμέας but Wessling, in his 1763 edition, reads ὑμέας. Some have opted for the former (Macaulay 1914 and Purvis and Strassler 2009), some for the latter (Godley 1920–1931 and Waterfield 2008). Taking ἡμέας as the subject of προβοηθῆσαι, it can be interpreted that the Athenians are referring to themselves but also including the Spartans in the personal pronoun (Bowie 2007: 237–8).

¹²⁸ Godley 1920–1931 and Waterfield 2008 connect it to Croesus’ oncoming interpellation. Macaulay 1914 and Purvis and Strassler 2009 see it in relation to Solon’s contemplation of Croesus’ treasures. Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 65 offers a third possibility. She links ὥς οἱ κατὰ καιρὸν ἦν with Solon, only she interprets the meaning of καιρός in its facet as measurement: ‘quand il eut bien tout regardé, et examiné combien ces richesses étaient à la mesure du roi’ (‘when he had inspected everything, and examined how much the riches were commensurate with the king’). Her reasoning sees καιρός as related to the right measure in all things, that is

association of *καιρός* with the concept of *ὄλβιος*, since, after the tour, Croesus tells Solon that '[he] crave[s] to ask [him] whether [Solon has] seen anyone who was more fortunate (*ὀλβιώτατον*) than everybody else' (1.30.2).¹²⁹ Solon's examination of Croesus' wealth *κατὰ καιρόν* is an act of measurement based on qualitative standards.¹³⁰ If *κατὰ καιρόν* in the passage refers to Solon, as seems to be more plausible, the temporality of the term admittedly gets pushed into the background, to the detriment of the intellectual process implied in Solon's evaluation. This would only be in line with *καιρός ἐστὶ*, where undertaking the necessary course of action may restrain the temporality of *καιρός* without strangling it.

Lastly, the paraphrase *ἡ κυρὴ τῶν ἡμερέων* ('the critical day') seems to be tantamount to *καιρός* in its facet as 'opportunity' on the three occasions it occurs. It spells out the essentially temporal dimension of *καιρός*, which allows us to contemplate how some instants within the ordinary temporal sequence (*χρόνος*) reach a more substantial temporal echelon.¹³¹ In order of appearance, the first presents a syntactic structure that heightens the human factor in decision-making. Croesus wants to find out which oracle is truest. Therefore, 'when he had sent his emissaries to the oracles, awaiting the critical day, he contrived the following plan' (*φυλάξας τὴν κυρὴν τῶν ἡμερέων ἐμηχανᾶτο τοιάδε*, 1.48.2). The verb *φυλάττειν* unequivocally indicates awareness of the opportunity and the appropriate action required to profit from it.¹³² In the next occurrence, after a one-year trial of his daughter's suitors, 'the crucial day of the wedding ceremony came when Cleisthenes would give his verdict as to whom of all the suitors he chose' (*ὡς δὲ ἡ κυρὴ ἐγένετο τῶν ἡμερέων τῆς τε κατακλίσιος τοῦ γάμου καὶ ἐκφάσιος αὐτοῦ Κλεισθένης τὸν κρίνει ἐκ πάντων*, 6.129.1). The human factor is decisively present here as well, as *κρίνω* points to the reasoning done before reaching the

to say, to the notion of *συμμετρία*. For this concept, see Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 66–71. In order to elucidate the sense of *κατὰ καιρόν* in Herodotus, Trédé-Boulmer draws on the one exact parallel documented in Pindar (*Isth.* 2.19–22).

¹²⁹ Although the connection is not patent in Herodotus' text, Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 61 adduces a passage from Pindar where the two terms appear together: *τὴν δ' εὐκλότα καιρόν ὄλβου δίδωσι* (*Nem.* 7.58). 'She gives a due measure of prosperity'. She remarks that *κατὰ καιρόν* is not just 'the right moment' but also 'the appropriate manner'. In view of Solon's reputation in tradition for establishing standard sacrifices for rituals, laws and fines for infractions, with the implicit processes of measuring that these entailed, her argument is persuasive.

¹³⁰ There is another suggestive layer of temporality implicit in Croesus' question as regards *ὄλβιος*. At *Il.* 24.546 and *Od.* 14.206 (begetting a renowned) progeny is presented as part and parcel of a good life, in close relation to *ὄλβιος* ('prosperous') and *πλοῦτος* ('full cellars', rather than 'full purses'). Reverberating with epic tones, the death of Croesus' son in the *Histories* (1.43) will therefore reflect in retrospect the impossibility of the Lydian King being *ὀλβιώτατος*. Solon proclaims that Tellos was a man who enjoyed many 'blessings' (*πολλά τε καὶ ὄλβια*, 1.31.1), which is in stark contrast with how he had previously been shown Croesus' 'great riches' (*πάντα ἔοντα μεγάλα τε καὶ ὄλβια*, 1.30.2). To cap it all, among the blessings in Tellos' life, Solon mentions that he left behind many children but, more importantly, that they were 'beautiful and noble' (*καλοὶ τε κάγαθοί*), thus conceding pre-eminence to quality over quantity once more.

¹³¹ The momentousness of the instants in which the future hangs in the balance expressed as *ἡ κυρὴ τῶν ἡμερέων* co-occurs twice in the Hippocratic corpus (*Diseases*, 1.25.2 and 1.27.9).

¹³² Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 211.

verdict.¹³³ It puts the focus on the process of apportioning and weighing up the options rather than on the final instant when the decision is made.¹³⁴ One has only to think of its derivative κρίσις to realize its momentousness. The last appearance of ἡ κυρία τῶν ἡμερέων signals several decisive days within a unitary conflict. At a time when most Greeks back the Spartans' resolution to reinstate Hippias as tyrant at Athens with a view to trammelling the city's progress, Socles the Corinthian speaks out against this plan. In an oracle-esque prediction, Hippias replies 'that the Corinthians would miss the Peisistratids more than anybody when the critical days of suffering at the hands of the Athenians came' (ὅταν σφι ἤκωσι ἡμέραι αἱ κύριαι ἀνιᾶσθαι ὑπ' Ἀθηναίων, 5.93.1). Indeed, Athens would turn into the scourge of Corinth in decades to come.¹³⁵ The three events prove to be turning points with an enormous impact on future developments: for Croesus the test of the oracles and the subsequent consultations at Delphi mark the beginning of his precipitous decline; for Cleisthenes, his decision to betroth his daughter to Megacles of Athens becomes the genesis of Athenian democracy, as the child the couple begets, Cleisthenes, will play a key part in it; and for Corinth, Athens' oscillation towards democratic rule will turn it into Corinth's archenemy, disputing her control over Megara and Aegina, as well as becoming a fearsome commercial competitor.

To sum up, including ἡ κυρία τῶν ἡμερέων as a paraphrase of καιρός in the count, there are fourteen occurrences in the *Histories*. Abstract, political, military or rhetorical καιροί are all represented without lessening their throbbing temporality. As a whole, καιρός emerges as Athens' trademark, with Athenians or the city of Athens showing mastery of it four times: Solon at his meeting with Croesus (1.30) — the scene that sets the tone for the composition in numerous aspects; Themistocles concerning the windfall from Laurion (7.144) — the source of Athens' muscle; Aristides in the run-up to the sea battle at Salamis (8.79) — the occasion when Athens' might becomes manifest; and the Athenians before the fight at Plataea (8.144) — the first time Athens leads Sparta.¹³⁶ The καιρός comes

¹³³ Κρίνω in this passage is not included in Trédé-Boulmer's list. For καιρός and κρίσις, see Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 44–8.

¹³⁴ Chantraine 1968: 585.

¹³⁵ This occurrence links to the hard bargaining between the Ionians and the Scythians regarding the destruction of the bridge over the Ister. The latter remind the former that the sixty days Darius instructed them to wait for him have passed: 'the days of your count are over' (αἶ τε ἡμέραι ὑμῖν τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ διοίχηνται, 4.136.3).

¹³⁶ Trédé-Boulmer 2015: 202–10 picks out some representative episodes to illustrate that the *Histories* are 'without kairos'. In them, although the characters are faced with a crucial choice, the balance is swayed by divine will. The instances are the following: Gyges' choice (1.11); the plot of the seven conspirators against Smerdis the Magus (3.71–6); the first clashes between the Ionians and the Persians (book 4); Marathon (6.109–14); Thermopylae (7.219–26); Themistocles before Salamis (8.75–96); the war council(s) between Xerxes and his generals (7.8–18; 8.67–9); the debate at Athens (8.139–44); Plataea (9.26–85). Although these are very important, those in which καιρός appears are by no means less crucial. As a matter of fact, events at Salamis and Plataea are also shaped by good decisions taken at previous καιροί (8.79 and 8.144 respectively). In the *Histories*, fate — i.e. determinism — and opportunity — i.e. indeterminism — coexist side by side. Cf. Immerwahr 1954: 32 for 'what are *for us* impossible combinations of free will and determinism'. Cf. Immerwahr 1954: 36. Cf. also Pelling 2019: 48. As Pelling 2019: 152 puts it, 'the divine strand in no way negates or usurps

in the guise of ‘fortuitous chance’ to favour Athens twice: when Corinth gives the coup de grâce to the Peisistratids in Athens (5.93) — the final crack in the previous political system that would allow democracy to emerge; and when Hippocleides blows his chances of marrying Cleisthenes’ daughter with his unexpectedly unbecoming behaviour, causing Cleisthenes to pick Megacles instead (6.129) — the genesis of a family whose descendants would be fundamental for the birth of Athenian democracy. Of the remaining occasions, two take us back to Athens to witness miscalculations in what would appear to be a learning process. Both (failed) occasions have grievous consequences: Aristagoras convinces the Athenian crowd to send ships to assist Miletus against the Persians and their joint forces end up pillaging Sardis, which makes Persia turn its attention toward Athens (5.97); the Athenian fleet does not show up at the appointed time when Timocrates has offered to hand Aegina over to the Athenians and the enmity between the two cities causes Athens to suffer heavy losses in the years to come (6.90). Opportunities deliberately ignored by Greeks out of selfishness bring about disastrous consequences: Histiaeus, tyrant of Miletus, recognizes the opportunity to destroy the Persians only too well (4.139), but decides not to act upon it.¹³⁷ Timogenides the Theban does weigh up the situation and speaks well according to his own reasoning (9.87), but his estimation turns out to be wrong, which costs him his life.¹³⁸ In the hands of non-Greeks, *καίρως* is fabricated, manifold or aleatory. Croesus tries to create his own window of opportunity in his rather high-and-mighty test of the oracles (1.48.2),¹³⁹ Cyrus picks one opportunity among several (1.125.1) and Tomyris is willing to roll the dice of chance in her confrontation with Cyrus (1.206). Except for the Athenians, the only character to show mastery of the *καίρως* is Artemisia of Halicarnassus, whom Herodotus depicts as able to recognize and seize the opportunity in the hour of truth (8.87).¹⁴⁰ Just as Artemisia’s command of *καίρως* stands for Herodotus’, any characters’ command of it testifies to Herodotus’ command of historical causality (*αἰτίη*) and political responsibility (*αἴτιος*).

CONCLUSIONS

The temporal texture of the *Histories* has an indispensable but nonetheless subordinate temporal component in *χρόνος*. Measurements of time apparently

the role played by human factors, and indeed the divine element becomes explicit at the moment when human factors are also at their most active’. Cf. Baragwanath 2020: 172 for the ‘tension between free will and divine determination’ in the Libyan *logos*.

¹³⁷ The fact that Herodotus has him say the words further incriminates Histiaeus for his responsibility in the outbreak of the war (4.139.3).

¹³⁸ By contrast, another ringleader, Attaginus, having no confidence in Timogenides’ plan, decides to flee the city at night, thus saving himself.

¹³⁹ In one stroke Herodotus portrays Croesus as self-important enough to test the oracles and to artificially create an opportunity for himself. Cf. Christ 1994: 189–97 for ‘testing the divine’ in the *Histories*. Although this aspect has not received attention, the programmatic nature of Croesus’ *logos* in all respects makes this detail acquire a new dimension when observed against a background of *καίρως*.

¹⁴⁰ In addition to this, Artemisia’s (sound) advisory skills in other passages of the *Histories* (8.67–9 and 8.100–3) evinces Herodotus’ use of the character as his *doppelgänger*.

stake out a road along which the sequence of events takes place. However, it is not possible to use them to establish a precise and coherent chronological line. The techniques and the materials employed in its construction do not follow a single recognizable pattern either. More importantly, its foundations are ultimately symbolic. Herodotus can hardly be reproached for his lack of concern, or know-how, regarding setting up a chronology that suits modern standards and tastes.

While the imperative to attain glory and fame for posterity pervades the temporality of the Homeric poems, the *Histories* are suffused with a two-sided temporality, one displayed as timeliness for the characters, the other aetiological for Herodotus. 'Opportunity', 'responsibility' and 'cause' are therefore fundamental threads of the temporal fabric of the account. Even though κλέος still retains a prestigious Homeric aura in Herodotus' work, the *Histories* would become its swansong. In that respect, its decline runs parallel to the Spartan hegemony being called into question. In conjunction with these two fluctuations, the importance attributed to divine intervention in events can be seen to start fading away.

The conceptual gap is then filled with the realization that the human factor was pre-eminent in events. In the *Histories*, this consists in the ability to recognize the καιρός at critical junctures, which involves correctly assessing the circumstances before making a decision. Herodotus constantly puts the participants in the events he is narrating on the spot. Even though the term καιρός appears only on a few occasions, it looms over every crossroads at which a character must make a momentous decision. When καιρός does pop up, Herodotus focalizes the crisis through the eyes of the characters. This, among other reasons, means he can foster identification between the character in question and the audience as a means of calling for good reasoning and deliberation before reaching a judgement on their plight. When it does not appear, it is still perceivable as the flip side of αἴτιος or αἰτία, the shape καιρός takes when contemplated through the eyes of the historian. By presenting Themistocles and Aristides as paradigmatic examples, Athens rises as a leading figure in matters of καιρός.

Various experiences of time coexist in the *Histories* and they all perform fundamental tasks in its articulation. That said, each has a different degree of importance. 'Glory' and 'fame' (κλέος) as core temporal values are a thing of the past: they reached their peak in the Homeric poems and would fall into disuse not long after Herodotus' lifetime. Chronology (χρόνος) as a central interest for historiographical works is a thing of the future: only later does it start to come closer to our understanding of it. The *Histories* are lodged right in between, but neither concept can account for its distinct temporality. This can be better grasped in full by looking at the junction of 'opportunity' (καιρός) and 'responsibility-cause' (αἴτιος-αἰτία), where the experience of time of Herodotus, the characters and the audience blend into one.

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