Chapter 4

Thoma

Comparison and interpretation are associated with Herodotus' overarching goal of explaining. The first sentence of the *Histories,* however, situates explanation (represented by δι'ἣν αἰτίην [for what reason]) within the much broader context of a celebration of achievements great and wondrous (θωμαστά) across the inhabited world. Celebration and narratability overlap with explanation but refuse to be restricted by it. Explanation provides direction without entirely controlling either the pace of the *logos* or the paths it will take. Among the advertisements that throughout the work keep reestablishing the autonomy of narratability vis-à-vis explanation, words of wonder occupy a special place: they alone name an emotional response the narrator wants the recipient to share.[1] This is not to say that in Herodotus' speech act, words like *thoma* are always strictly rationed and precisely targeted.[2] But θῶμα, θῶμα . . . μοι, θῶμα μέγιστον, and the verb θωμάζω are the most emphatic and mysterious directions the narrator provides. They tend to announce special semiotic challenges and occasionally mark the highest philosophical level of the inquiry.

The wonder the *Histories* are designed to inspire is not (at least not openly) self-referential, that is, directed at the *logos* of Herodotus. Aside from one or two cases when wonder is directed at someone else's *logos,* the object of wonder belongs to the world of the narrated, which in turn imitates the real world. Nevertheless, mention of the wonder response may create, from the point of view of the recipient, a wondrous discourse event, something that surprises primarily within the discourse. Thus,

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1. On the issue of what wonder is and whether it constitutes an impression registered "in the heart" or "in the brain," see Greenblatt 1991, 15–22. For the notion of wonder in Herodotus, see especially Barth 1968; Dewald 1987, 154–55, 165; Hartog 1988, 230–37; Payen 1997, 117–28.

2. E.g., the expressions ἄξιος θώματος or θωμάσαι ἄξιος used as metanarrative qualifiers within narrative statements (see, e.g., 1.185.3, 3.47.2, 3.113.1, 4.199.1, 4.53.3) are often as casual as ἀξιοθέητος or ἀξιαπήγετος, ἄξιος λόγου, and so on. See Barth 1968, 98–99.

when I examined Herodotus' description of the leather boats of the Assyrians, I was proceeding backward.[3] In cases of this sort, the phenomenon itself perhaps causes less wonder than the text's injunction that we, along with the narrator, should wonder (θῶμα μέγιστον μοι). This in turn leads to interpretation and, retrospectively, to a redirection of our wonder response to the object.

Herodotus presents to his audience both ethnographic and historical items as wonders. In the history, appeals to wonder draw attention especially to exceptional actions or agents—onetime behaviors of individuals and animals or occurrences that appear to reveal the intervention of the divine. In the ethnographies, a θῶμα tends to be a tangible foreign artifact, a phenomenon of the landscape or a feature of the flora and fauna of distant lands. Metanarrative *thoma* is rarely used to describe either the activities of foreign peoples in the ethnographies or those of foreigners in the history.[4] In the context of their respective cultures and through Herodotus' rhetoric of similarity or equivalence, exotic actions and customs want to be interpreted as normal. Unlike the narrator, characters are frequently in wonder at the behaviors, utterances, or appearances of foreigners, because they are different.[5] On one occasion, Herodotus expects that some of his listeners will experience great wonder (θῶμα μέγιστον) at a Persian action that is too similar, that is, reminiscent of the contemporary policy of a Greek, not a barbarian, superpower.[6] He implies no doubt that some may not even believe it; but for those who do, this unexpected event will invite reflection.

Whatever is or appears to someone exceptional or strange represents,

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3. See my examination of 1.194 in my introduction.

4. At 2.35, the abundance of *thomata* in Egypt is paralleled, rather than illustrated, by the list of customs that are "opposite to those of the rest of the world." The song of Linus (2.79.2–3), the collection of spices in Arabia (3.111.2, 112), and the boats of the Assyrians (1.194) are the only other items termed *thomata* in metanarrative that have something to do with customs. As Payen observes (1997, 118), none of the Scythian customs, e.g., as strange as they may seem to the reader, belong to the semantic register of *thoma*: Herodotus denies that there are many *thomata* in Scythia, and customs are not included among the few (4.82).

5. E.g., the Fish Eaters wonder at the long life of the Ethiopians (3.23.2), Heracles at the Mixoparthenos (4.9.2), the Scythians at seeing the Amazons (4.111.1), Darius at the actions of the Paeonian woman (5.13.1), and Xerxes' scout at seeing the Spartans combing their hair and doing exercises at Thermopylae (7.208.3).

6. The action is Mardonius' establishment of democracies in Ionia after the revolt (6.43.3, with back reference to 3.80.1). See chap. 2, "The Sameness of the Lydians"; chap. 3, "Explicit Evaluation," n. 170.

at any rate, a stimulus for further thinking. Whether in the ethnography or in the history, once the metanarrative labels any particular fact a *thoma,* that fact tends to jump out from its narrative context but nevertheless needs a context in which to make sense.[7] It is not explained but demands somehow to be explained and to participate, in its turn, in the text's network of explanations. It provides an impulse to mental inquiry, much as, in Aristotle's formulation, wonder provides the impulse to philosophy.[8] It is an inquiry, however, that the text declines to actualize but implicitly identifies as the task of the recipient.

Herodotus and the Conventional Code of Ethnographic Wonders

Scholars have not sufficiently explored Herodotus' notion of wonder. The tendency has been rather to regard wonder as a self-justifying response in the face of what is unusual according to commonsense Greek assumptions of normalcy. The use of wonder words in the *Histories* even represents, according to Hartog, not so much the narrator's signal for the audience to share his response to an object as Herodotus' own response to audience expectations of the most conventional sort. This topos of traveler tales of all ages, he argues, was commonplace also in ancient ethnography. Because people like to be amazed, the narrator adopts a rhetoric to bolster his claim that he is qualified to amaze them.[9] Hartog's own analysis of narrative sections of the *Histories,* including reports of wonders, is clever and profound; but it proceeds against the text and with little regard for Herodotus' communication of meaning to his audience. Wonder words in the *Histories* are often signals that something has a special meaning.

This is not to deny the existence of a previous ethnographic wonder

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7. See Greenblatt 1991, 2–25, on the "anecdotal" character of all literature of marvels.

8. Arist. *Metaph.* 1.2.8–9 [982b]; see also Plato *Thaet.* 155d. Cf. Redfield (1985, 103) on Herodotus: "Wonder is the beginning of wisdom when it leads to further thought."

9. "*Thoma* may be reckoned among the procedures used by the rhetoric of otherness. Generally speaking, the impression it conveys is one of trustworthiness, for the narrator cannot fail to produce this rubric, which is expected by his public. To omit it would be, at a stroke, to ruin his credibility. It is as if it were postulated that far away, in these other countries, there were bound to be marvels/curiosities" (Hartog 1988, 231). Cf. Strabo's accusation (11.6.3) that accounts of marvels by Herodotus and others pander to the desires of the audience. For wonder as a conventional topos of ancient ethnography, see Jacoby 1913, 331–32; Jacoby maintains that ethnographic *logoi* were organized to include a description of the nature of the country, a survey of customs, the mention of *thomasia,* and finally a section on political history.

tradition. Though we know too little about it to make a proper comparison, Herodotus' awareness of this tradition especially emerges from three metanarrative statements that refer to audience expectations by saying that this or that country has or does not have many *thomata* or *thomasia*.[10] The most expressive of these, for our understanding of Herodotus' adaptation of the conventional code of wonders to his own celebratory code, is the following introduction.

> <u>As for wonders</u> [θώματα δὲ], the land of Lydia **does not** have that much suitable **for description** [ἐς συγγραφήν], compared to other countries, with the exception of the dust washed down from Mount Tmolus. But it offers one building that is by far the biggest, not counting those in Egypt and Babylon. (1.93.1)

Placed at the beginning of the sentence and followed by the name of the country and the programmatic word συγγραφήν, the term θώματα here functions as one of the summarizing elements in a title more or less equivalent to "Description of Lydia: Wonders." But as it turns out, this announcement belongs to a programmatic correction. Not much else fits the topic in the normal sense, says the narrator, and not all available items are interesting.

The absence of *thomata* in Lydia corresponds to this country's cultural similarity to Greece. Difference from Greece is, then, one expected requirement for θώματα of foreign lands.[11] "The dust from Tmolus" would qualify in this sense, but Herodotus mentions the phenomenon as notorious and immediately moves on. By the standards of ethnographic narratability, this golden sand washed down by the river Pactolus presumably belongs to the same order of phenomena as other natural treasures of the East. Herodotus gives a lengthy description of the harvesting of gold in India.[12] This follows a pattern similar to that of the harvesting of Arabian spices by various methods, each more "wonderful" than the

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10. See 1.93.1, 2.35.1, and 4.82; Jacoby 1913, 331; Hartog 1988, 231. θωμάσιος, even more than θωμαστός and θῶμα, seems to be a technical term in the ethnographic tradition. See Barth 1968, 108. But in Jacoby's classification (see n. 9 in the present chapter), it is not clear, e.g., to what extent the rubric *thomasia* would have overlapped with the others in ethnographic writing before Herodotus.

11. See Hartog 1988, 231–32. For Lydian customs similar to those in Greece, see 1.94.1.

12. 3.102.2–105. Cf. Herodotus' interest in the gold of Ethiopia (3.114) and northern Europe (3.116.1).

other.[13] At the edges of the earth, where people live apparently untrammeled by societal structure and in direct contact with their environment, the ethnographer is closest to an anthropological mode of inquiry. The Indian-Arabian sections focus on the ingenuity and labor of man in his natural state, on the coexistence of opposite extremes, and on the relations and correspondences that appear to exist between animals and human beings.[14] According to Herodotus' interpretation, these ethnographic and zoological data indicate that the world of nature in general and particularly the customary behaviors of animals are regulated according to a balance that is intelligent and providential;[15] this leads to the implicit suggestion that, at some level, the customary behavior of men translates into the area of *nomos* by virtue of this providential design. The methods for collecting rare products are perfectly good wonders in conventional terms. But for Herodotus in this "ends of the earth" passage, they also provide additional evidence for defining custom in its essence as paradoxically both natural and divine. This confirms the unitarian view, previously theorized, of "Custom king of all."[16]

Lydia, by contrast, is a land of the center. The lesson it ethnographically teaches is not anthropological but political and historical. In this context, Herodotus rejects as not significant the natural phenomenon of the gold from the Tmolus. He even fails to discuss it as the source or emblem of the famous Lydian wealth that impressed the Greeks and that

13. See 3.111.1, 3.112; cf. 3.113.1. On the structural similarity of the methods of collecting spices, see Detienne 1977, 14–20.

14. The last is a concern that, for different reasons, Herodotus was also able to pursue in Egypt. See chap. 2, "The Texture of *Nomos*."

15. See 3.108; cf. 3.106.1. See Immerwahr 1966, 312.

16. See 3.38, again based on a testing case provided by a population of the southeastern edges, the Callatian Indians. See chap. 3, "Funeral Customs and Other *Nomoi*." The ingenuity of the primitive harvesters of spices is at one point denoted with the cultured term σοφίζεσθαι (3.111.3). This term also describes the behavior of cats in the section on Egyptian animals (2.66.2). These two uses of the verb bridge the gap between cultural activity ("devices") and elementary impulses. Similar theoretical interests govern Herodotus' "great wonder" [θῶμα μέγα] (3.12.1) at the softness of Persian skulls and hardness of Egyptian skulls on the battlefield of Papremis. He attributes this contrast to the opposite customs of wearing a head covering or shaving the head: whereas his observation of primitives allows him to verify the ultimate derivation of culture from nature, here he notices changes in nature as a result of culture. Herodotus' most theoretical glosses on anthropological subjects tend to occur in book 3 for two reasons, both connected with the progress of the historical narrative: here the actions of Cambyses, especially in relation to Egypt, raise the question of the absolute value of *nomos* (and therefore of its connection to *phusis*); and here the conquests of Darius bring the narrative to the extremities of the earth, a suitable field for such discussion.

represents an important theme in his own historical narrative about Lydia.[17] The one and only (ἕν) item the narrator agrees to valorize in this section is the monumental tomb that the people built for one of their kings. This oversized building both qualifies as a *thoma* in the conventional sense and serves, as we have seen, as a more analytical symbol of Lydian society and its structure, of the single disturbing custom in which Lydia differs from Greece, and of the oppressive monarchy that will ensure the country's eventual loss of freedom.[18]

Thus, the introduction to the first properly ethnographic section of our text indicates that Herodotus accepts a canonical aspect of ethnographic narrative, the report of *thomata,* but will subsume and adapt it to his representational needs. When Herodotus berates those Ionians who maintain that the Nile's floods are due to its origin from Ocean (2.21), his polemic may be related to this redirection of the notion of ethnographic "wonders." He calls the theory "more fit for an account of wonders" [θωμασιωτέρη] but also "more inept" [ἀνεπιστημονεστέρη] than a theory refuted earlier.[19] Other than factually inaccurate, it belongs to those geographical speculations about the shape of the earth that Herodotus considers ideologically misleading.[20] He therefore declares the "wondrous" *logos* itself as "*not* worth mentioning" (οὐδ᾽ἀξιῶ μνησθῆναι, 2.20.1) except to reject it. The oxymoron registers the narrator's objection to an indiscriminate literature of wonders.

The theory that the Nile derives from Ocean has the flaw of bringing the account into the realm of the invisible (ἐς ἀφανής, 2.23) with no possibility for verification. But just as a verifiable *thoma* may not be a useful tool of representation to Herodotus (the golden dust of the Tmolus is real but uninteresting), so the fact that a wonder is unverified does not automatically disqualify it from being meaningful. The oracle shrine of Apollo and Artemis at Buto, which is "worthy of *logos*" as a whole, includes two orders of *thomata,* visible and unseen. The temple in the precinct of Leto, made of a single block of stone, is programmatically

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17. See, e.g., 1.14.3; 1.50.1–3; 1.51.1–3, 5; 1.52; 1.92.1. A heap of this golden ψῆγμα is presumably what Alcmaeon falls on when he visits Croesus' treasure house (6.125.4). For gold as an index of royalty, see Kurke 1995, 45–51.

18. 1.94.7. See chap. 2, "The Sameness of the Lydians" in the present book.

19. Cf. 2.23. For the attribution of the theory to Hecataeus, see *FGrHist* 1 F 302; Lloyd 1976, 100.

20. Cf. 4.36.2–45 and especially 4.36.2; at 4.42.1, Herodotus' rejection of the Ionians' geographic constructs is phrased in terms of his "being in wonder" [θωμάζω]. See chap 2, "The Texture of the Earth," in the present book.

advertised (φράσω) as "**as far as I am concerned, among the things that can be seen, . . .** the one that causes <u>the greatest wonder</u>" [τὸ δὲ <u>μοι</u> τῶν <u>φανερῶν θῶμα μέγιστον</u> παρεχόμενον] (2.155.3). The combination of wonder "to me" and visibility "to me" is repeated in the conclusion of the very brief description (οὕτω μέν νυν ὁ νηὸς τῶν <u>φανερῶνμοι</u> τῶν περὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἱρόν ἐστι <u>θωμαστότατον</u>, 2.156.1). After the temple, the nearby island of Chemmis, on a lake of the Delta, is a second wonder (2.156.1–2). Here one finds a great temple of Apollo, three altars, and also "palm trees and many other trees, some bearing fruit, some not" (2.156.3). Although this is still all part of the visible, we also are told with great verbal redundancy that the island is supposedly πλωτή; that is, it floats. The narrator has not seen this phenomenon, but the Egyptians say it does float (2.156.2). They tell a story to explain this, namely, "that Leto came to this island at the time when *it did not float,* and having received Apollo in trust from Isis, she saved him from Typhon by hiding him in this island *that now reportedly floats*" (2.156.4).

The sanctuary of Buto testifies to the prominence in Egypt of three gods who are also major divinities in the Greek pantheon and are similarly connected to one another in myth and cult. The flight of Leto to the (perhaps floating) island of Chemmis reproduces the wanderings that lead Leto to the floating island of Delos in the Greek tradition.[21] The palm trees of Chemmis are singled out for mention because they expose what is for Herodotus the ultimate proof of the mutual interface between different religions, the correspondence of specialized signs.[22] No glosses of comparison appear in this passage, but the subtext of the description of the Buto sanctuary has to do with the horizontal and synchronic similarity between Egypt and Greece that Herodotus pursues throughout the Egyptian ethnography. In a context of preexisting relations, palm trees and other features at Buto and Chemmis fulfill the same function as the existence in Egypt of the song of Linus. The latter is hard to fathom as an ethnographic *thoma* in conventional terms but is for this narrator occasion for wonder (ἀποθωμάζειν με).[23] Buto, however, also encodes the otherwiseness of Egypt, even its oppositeness from Greece. Over

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21. See *Hom. H. Ap.* 3.25–138. In a late version of the story (Hyg. *Fab.* 140), Leto is pursued by Python, which would increase the similarity with the Egyptian story told by Herodotus. The correspondence between Greek and Egyptian tradition here accounts for Herodotus breaking his own rule of silence concerning "divine things" (2.3.2).

22. See *Hom. H. Ap.* 3.18, 113. For the Greek association of the palm tree with Artemis, see Sourvinou-Inwood 1991, 99–123.

23. See 2.79.1–2 and chap. 2, "The Texture of *Nomos,*" in the present book.

there, palm trees are "among many other kinds of trees, some bearing fruit some not"; here, a single palm tree sprouts in a rocky land.[24] In Egypt, Leto is the nurse of Apollo and Artemis, not their mother, and these two are the children of Dionysus and Isis.[25] The floating nature of Chemmis contributes to this tension between what is same and what is different: whereas Delos used to float but no longer does (it is in fact by definition *akinetos:* see 6.98.3), Chemmis did not float but is said to do so now.[26] Unlike the Nile's origin from Ocean, therefore, the supposedly floating Chemmis is a wonder to Herodotus, as it perhaps was to Hecataeus.[27] Herodotus' polemic against Hecataeus, if polemic is implied here, limits itself to an emphatic gloss of noncorroboration that acknowledges the scientific distinction between phenomena that are verified by eyewitness, *phanera,* from those that are learned through oral reports: "**I personally did not see** it either move or float, but, **hearing** this, <u>I am AMAZED</u> [τέθηπα], <u>if</u> it truly is a floating island."[28]

In the description of Scythia, a land with no θωμάσια except for the number of its rivers and the vastness of its plain, something that is indeed visible but cannot be what people say it is counts nevertheless as worthy of wonder (ἀποθωμάσαι . . . ἄξιον) and preserves its meaning.

> They show [φαίνουσι] the footprint of Heracles, stamped on the rock; it resembles a man's footprint but has a size of two cubits . . . (4.82)

24. The infertility of Delos is an essential element of the myth of the birth of Apollo (see *Hom. H. Ap.* 3.48, 55, 60, 72).

25. An opaque gloss of testimony recruits Aeschylus to the system of interconnections (see 2.156.6). Here the verb ἥρπασε both recalls the famous abduction of the Demeter and Persephone myth (cf. ἥρπαξεν in *Hom. H. Dem.* 2.3, etc.: by snatching the Egyptian *logos* that Artemis was the daughter of Demeter, Aeschylus has abducted Artemis to replace the Kore of Greek tradition) and participates in Herodotus' polemic against Greeks who exploit Egyptian cultural knowledge without giving it due credit (2.123.3). For the view that Aeschylus' version in this gloss has something to do with the substance of the Eleusinian mysteries, see Mazzarino 1966, 97 and n. 124.

26. See especially Pindar frag. 33d SM on the transformation of Delos as a nonfloating island (ἀκίνητον τέρας). On the symbolic significance of the immobility of Delos, see Wood 1972, 141 n. 55.

27. Hecataeus describes Chemmis in remarkably poetic terms: ἔστι δὲ ἡ νῆσος μεταρσίη καὶ περιπλεῖ καὶ κινέεται ἐπὶ τοῦ ὕδατος (*FGrHist* 1 F 305).

28. 2.156.2. There is no evidence that Hecataeus expressed disbelief of the fact that the island floated. The verb τέθηπα appears only here in the *Histories.* Like θωμάζω, it follows the most frequent construction of verbs of emotion with εἰ rather than ὅτι. See Smyth 1956, 2247. The narrator is amazed at the fact that the island floats, if it does, not wondering whether it does.

Scythia's scarcity of wonders means poverty of material culture in contrast to the powerful kingdoms of the East. The excepted items are natural wonders, the plain and the rivers, elsewhere described at length and representing the elusiveness and insularity of the Scythians, in whose land Darius' army will roam unproductively and risk being trapped.[29] But in relation to the Greeks, as we have seen, what makes Herodotus' Scythia most insular and foreign does not preclude and sometimes even favors the notion of a special similarity between the two peoples. Elsewhere Herodotus even reports an uncorroborated story "the Black Sea Greeks say," according to which the Scythian nation was born from the marriage of their wandering hero Heracles to the Mixoparthenos, a local maiden half woman and half snake.[30] Here the footprint "they show" (appropriately huge to match the landscape and the hero's stature) is not a sort of memorial but rather the visual symbol equivalent to that fictional event. In Herodotus' description of Scythia, it is a pure narrative sign, and as a sign, it represents, from the point of view of the text, a *thoma*.

The traditional topos of ethnographic wonders could provide Herodotus (and no doubt Hecataeus and others, though in ways we do not know) not with material for amazing his audience "ineptly" but with a rich reservoir of symbolic forms. One of the conventional attributes of *thoma* must have been μέγαθος, size, which is hardly devoid of significance, including in a political sense.[31] Already in the archaic period, the Greeks perceived foreign lands, especially the East, as "big" and themselves as "small," with the related invidious problem that bigger is evidently and devastatingly better—and has the better of you—though in the end "small" turns out to be better and stronger.[32]

Bigness in nature is dwarfing and is sometimes related to wilderness and fear of the unknown, as in the case of the Scythian rivers and plain. In cultural artifacts, it often signifies wealth, power, or both at once.[33]

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29. See 4.47–59, 4.99–101. So the Pontus is πελαγέων . . . ἀπάντων . . . θωμασιώτατος (4.85.2).

30. 4.8–10. See the indirect noncorroboration at 4.10.3–11.1. See Vandiver 1991, 172; Georges 1994, 1–9.

31. Hartog (1988, 234) observes that the quantitative aspect of *thoma* is confirmed by the frequency with which it is described in terms of measurements.

32. Phocylides writes (frag. 4 Diehl), πόλις ἐν σκοπέλῳ κατὰ κόσμον/οἰκεῦσα σμικρή κρέσσων Νίνου ἀφραινούσης [A city that is small but on a lofty promontory and well ordered is stronger than foolish Niniveh].

33. Consequently, it signifies the "greatness" of the builder. See Immerwahr 1960, 265 on physical *erga*.

Numerous large buildings in the *Histories* are recruited in the service of the monarchical code, and a few of these are designated with words of the *thoma* family. But Herodotus' signs are more subtle and varied than this simple correspondence. Babylon and its dam built by Nitocris—this last an achievement that is wondrous specifically because it is big and tall (ἄξιον θώματος, μέγαθος καὶ ὕψος ὅσον τι ἐστί, 1.185.3)—are countered by the θώμα μέγιστον of the Assyrian boats, which are also, peacefully, oversized (1.194.3). In Egypt, the gigantic proportions of Eastern art and architecture are adapted to the grandiosity of nature and testify to the high degree of technical skill of this ancient culture.[34] Here Herodotus insists on measurements as part of his polemic against what Froidefond calls the "malevolent snobbism" of the Greeks, who minimize Egyptian things and even shrink Egypt's territory.[35] The pyramids, a product of monarchic oppression, are outranked on the scale of *thomata* by the labyrinth, a collective monument of twelve just kings, and by the yet more wondrous Lake Moeris; one is the cultural match of the land of Egypt, the other of the Nile.[36]

Lloyd remarks how many aspects of Herodotus' attitude toward Egypt are revealed in his description of the labyrinth (2.148)—in his display of sources, admiration of size, and disparagement of the Greeks.[37] From a narratological perspective, we should notice how conspicuously the persona of the narrator has invaded his subject. He celebrates, groups, excepts, compares, compares again, and ranks. The labyrinth is "too great for *logos*" [λόγου μέζω], and indeed there is relatively little *logos* here in the sense of description or "story." Predominant are glosses of *historie,* that is, the narrative of the journey of the researcher/narrator, who soon multiplies into "we" for maximum interpretive and narratorial authority.[38] Using all the available verbs of seeing (εἶδον, αὐτοί τε ὡρῶμεν, αὐτοὶ θεησάμενοι, αὐτοὶ ὡρῶμεν), Herodotus reports that he/

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34. The *propylaia* of the temple of Athena at Sais built by Amasis are θωμάσια (2.175.1), but Herodotus especially wonders at Amasis' achievement in transporting the monolithic chamber from Elephantine (μάλιστα θωμάζω, 2.175.3).

35. On Greek diminutives for Greek things, see Froidefond 1971, 122–23; Lloyd 1976, 310. For the size of Egypt, see especially Hdt. 2.6–11, 15–18.

36. See 2.148–49; Benardete 1969, 63.

37. Consider 2.148.2: "for if **one** were to gather all the walls and display of works of the Greeks, they would appear to be inferior in labor and expense to this labyrinth." See Lloyd 1993, 2:148.

38. See Chamberlain, forthcoming, on the use of "we" not in reference to an ethnographic group but as a projection, operating only on the surface of the text, of the narrator's definitive voice and authority.

"they" personally saw at least the upper chambers, fifteen hundred in number and "superior to all human works"; he was not allowed to see the lower chambers but learned by hearsay (λόγοισι ἐπυνθανόμεθα, ἀκοῇ παραλαβόντες) that they contained the royal burials and sacred crocodiles. Going through (διεξιόντες, διεξιοῦσι) "from the courtyard into the rooms and from the rooms into the columned porches, and from the columned porches into other vestibules, and from the rooms into other courtyards" (just as the narrator walks through cities great and small and along the paths of the *logos*), he/"they" experienced infinite wonder (θῶμα μύριον).[39]

The labyrinth represents the limiting case of glosses clustering around the term *thoma* to connote Herodotus' ownership of the wonder response and consequently also his independence from the wonder tradition of ethnographic writing before him. The object of wonder is first and foremost something he sees, hears, crosses, learns, and tells.[40] It is a wonder to him (μοι), and he is the one who experiences wonder (θωμάζω). Even in the face of what I have called "conventional" wonders, Herodotus' impulse to wonder is by definition idiosyncratic and proceeds from the one who is in charge of the *logos*—my wonder/my *logos*. Wonder theoretically frees Herodotus from tradition, chronology, his task to explain, and various other constraints; in fact, it competes with these factors as one of the requirements or appetites of the *logos*. Hartog (1988, 234) noticed the "connection between *thoma* and digression" in the following passage, where advertisement and program introduce an ethnographic *thoma* that lies clearly outside the expected range of marvels in distant lands.

> So, there [i.e., in Scythia] these phenomena occur because of the cold. <u>But I wonder</u> [θωμάζω]—**for indeed my story sought digressions from the beginning** [προσθήκας γὰρ δή μοι ὁ λόγος ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐδίζητο]—for what reason in the whole territory of Elis mules are not able to be born, when the place is not cold and there is no other visible cause. The Eleans themselves assert that it is as a result of a curse that mules are not born among them. (4.30.1)

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39. 2.148.5–6. The participles could imply an indefinite subject ("anyone going through"), but the main verb in the past tense ("they caused wonder" [θῶμα παρείχοντο]) and the previous first-person plural finite verbs suggest "to us as we were going through." As Payen remarks (1997, 120), "la vue est associée à la marche de l'enquête . . . elle se confond même avec le procès de l'écriture."

40. See Dewald 1987, 155, n. 21.

Wondering Why

The semantic field of *thom-* words, especially the verb *thomazo,* includes an interrogative mode. The question being asked is about the meaning of the thing in a broader, real-world context. In most cases, it remains implicit and ill defined, but at 4.30.1, it is explicit and formulated in terms of why: why are there no mules in Elis? There are no mules or asses in Scythia because they cannot withstand the cold. This belongs to a natural state of affairs, whereas the absence of mules (not asses) specifically in Elis (not in neighboring regions: see 4.30.2) remains a mystery. The divine, which ultimately rules nature (3.108), operates in predictable ways so that phenomena can be seen to derive from material causes. An effect that breaks the pattern and has no visible cause (ἐόντος οὔτε ἄλλου φανεροῦ αἰτίου) leads one, by default, to the immediate and extraordinary agency of a transcendent force.[41]

The local inhabitants of Elis resort precisely to this explanation by maintaining that there are no mules in their country because of some curse. The vagueness of their answer makes it all the more valuable. Because the historical and ethical circumstances of the Elean curse remain obscure, the hypothesis of supernatural causes rests primarily on the observation of the irregularity itself.[42] This constitutes, therefore, an entirely disinterested and independent item of evidence, a tool of persuasion Herodotus can use at a distance to deal with an issue of great importance to the overarching message of the work. If direct divine intervention can be deduced ethnographically from chronic irregularities in the natural world, that assumption can be perhaps extended to sporadic historical occurrences, even when the laws of nature are not violated so drastically or at all.

> <u>It is a wonder **to me**</u> [θῶμα δέ μοι] that when they were fighting next to the grove of Demeter, not even one of the Persians apparently went into the sacred precinct or died there, and it is around the sanctuary that most of them fell, on unhallowed ground. **And I am**

41. So, people in Scythia "are in wonder" when it thunders in winter and regard it as a prodigy (τέρας, 4.28.3). A unique case of rain in Upper Egypt was a great portent (φάσμα μέγιστον) concomitant with the Persian conquest (3.10.3).

42. This is unlike, e.g., the ethical and historical reason of the permanent ethnological abnormality of the Scythian *enareis* (see 1.105.4). Animals as well as human beings are momentarily affected by transcendent causes as a result of human wrongdoing at 1.167.1, 6.139.1, and 7.171.2 (cited by Smith 1992, 9, 53, and n. 5). For the absence of mules in Elis as a taboo rather than an exception in nature, see Nagy 1990, 336.

of the opinion, if one must have at all an opinion about divine things, that the goddess herself did not let them in, because they had burned her temple at Eleusis. (9.65.2)

There are no mules in Elis, no Persians in Demeter's precinct. The answer to the question of cause must both times remain provisional, but cases of the first type are scientific corroboration for the more ideologically charged cases of the second.

From a scientific perspective, animals embody elemental normalcy in nature as projected by the divine and provide a standard to measure the more complicated world of humans. Animals display a range of customary behaviors in the same way as humans do, except that these animal behaviors are not subject to the cultural processing that results in human *nomoi*. As a field on which god operates more directly, the animal world represents an intermediary between the divine and the human realms.[43] Translated into historical terms, this view encompasses the idea that, on the one hand, animal events reflect human events and, on the other hand, the ways in which they do so mysteriously register divine reaction.

From the point of view of Herodotus' narrative, animals are also mediators between ethnography and history; they participate, moreover, in both the theological and the symbolic codes of explanation. In an episode of the narrative of Xerxes' march against Greece, lions in Thrace attack the camels of the Persian army (7.125). Whereas in the case of the absence of mules in Elis the discourse needed to justify an abrupt narrative transition to a different place, here it works just as hard, in a way that appears entirely optional, to break the logical continuity of the narrative for the purpose of bringing the event into prominence. It starts,

> While Xerxes was passing through, lions attacked the camels carrying the provisions.

This sentence is pure nonnarrated narrative; as a moderately interesting entry in the journal of the march, it could have been left at that. But a gloss follows, attached by γάρ, with added narrative details:[44]

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43. See Smith 1992, 7, 32–33, and passim. Smith has counted 804 references to fauna of some kind in the *Histories*, 600 if we exclude horses.

44. The structure of the discourse in the first two sentences of 7.125 is analogous to the sequence of summary introduction followed by narrative; but see chap. 1, "What Is Metanarrative," in the present book.

. . . for, coming down at night and leaving their homes [ἤθεα], the lions touched **no other** animal or man and worked havoc **only** on the camels.

Here, the phrases "no other animal" and "only the camels" incline toward the interpretive. But the best is yet to come, in the form of a concluding gloss where explanation is replaced by interrogation in an advertisement of narratability with the narrator's first person.

> **I am** <u>in wonder as to the cause</u> [θωμάζω δὲ τὸ αἴτιον], whatever it was that compelled [τὸ ἀναγκάζον] the lions to stay away from the rest of the army and attack the camels, animals that they had never seen before and of which they had no experience [ἐπεπειρέατο].

By repeating the substance of the story three times, the discourse implies that these lions did not behave like normal animals. The gloss "I am in wonder as to the cause" [θωμάζω δὲ τὸ αἴτιον] formulates an enigma parallel to that of the absence of mules in Elis ("I wonder why . . . in the absence of other visible cause" [θωμάζω ὅ τι . . . . ἐόντος οὔτε ἄλλου φανεροῦ αἰτίου], 4.30.1–2). If this event also is supernatural, given the context, it perhaps constitutes an omen; if so, we are invited to decode it appropriately. What is its significance?

The phrase "camels carrying the provisions" is bound to recall the prominence of the issue of supplies for Xerxes' army in the preceding narrative, including Artabanus' warning on this matter.[45] His prediction will have no fulfillment, but it underlines Persian vulnerability abroad. More importantly, camels are the most exotic part of the Persian army: Cyrus uses them, for example, to frighten the Lydian horses and defeat Croesus at Sardis (1.80). They are a synecdoche for the strange invader himself.

Lions symbolize lethal behavior and a display of strength, with polyvalent connotations.[46] In a political and social setting, a lion signifies kingship and dominance or, in a negative sense, tyranny and any destructive power that acts from within.[47] In response to a prophecy, Meles, king

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45. See 7.49.5, 7.50.4. See also, in the voice of the narrator, 7.83.2, 7.118–20, 7.187.

46. The lioness at 3.108.4 is "strongest and most daring" [ἰσχυρότατον καὶ θρασύτατον]; her cub, when still unborn, destroys her womb with its claws.

47. In the fight between the lion and the dog at 3.32, the fighting dog represents Cambyses' brother Smerdis, the dog's brother is the opposite of Cambyses, and the lion is

of Lydia, tries to make Sardis impregnable by bringing a lion around the walls. Hipparchus and Cypselus are represented as lions—the first in a dream, the latter in an oracle.[48] Lions in the face of an external enemy, however, connote a valorous offensive stance and fierceness in war.[49] The lions who slaughter the camels in Xerxes' army leave their haunts (called ἤθεα) and take on an exotic opponent of which they have no experience (ἐπεπειρέατο). They are the short-range precursors of the Spartans at Thermopylae, who leave their Peloponnesian homes and customary ways (i.e., their ἤθεα) to fight against an army of which they are "inexperienced" [ἄπειροί].[50] Just as the lions are "compelled" to attack, so the Spartans have undertaken a "compulsory" war: this means a defensive war, but their valor at the time of the battle turns defense into legitimate offense.[51] For they have the "courage of bulls and lions," according to the oracle at 7.220.4, and are led by their king Leonidas, "son of lion," the Heraclid heir of the Pelopids of Lydia—traditionally and heraldically connected with lions—who will be immortalized with the statue of a lion.[52] The gloss of identification of Leonidas at Thermopylae, which introduces his Heraclid genealogy, qualifies him as ὁ θωμαζόμενος μάλιστα [the object of greatest wonder], from the point of view not exclusively of the narrator but of all, then and now (7.204). In a nearby and thematically related section, metanarrative *thoma* praises the courageous actions and words of the two Spartan ambassadors, Sperthias and Boulis (7.135.1). The Persian scout at Thermopylae is in wonder at the Spartans combing their hair and doing exercises before the battle

his analogue. See also Knox's 1952 analysis of the parable of the lion cub in Aesch. *Agam.* 717–36.

48. See 5.56.1 (Hipparchus), 5.92β3 (Cypselus), 1.84.3 (Meles: unfortunately, the lion was born to him from a concubine, and Meles neglected to bring him all the way around, so the device ultimately did not work. Did the king fail adequately to provide for his succession?). Pericles is represented by a lion in a dream at 6.131.2; see "Wonder and Disbelief" later in the present chapter.

49. See, e.g., *Il.* 11.113–21, 170–78.

50. 9.46.2. Their inexperience is due to the Spartans' absence at Marathon, as Pausanias says. I am grateful to Deborah Boedecker for suggesting the double meaning of the term ἤθεα in this passage, with allusion to the Spartans' exceptionally giving up their insularity. This is not the first instance of this wordplay: see chap. 2, "Identification with the Other," in the present book.

51. Cf. *Il.* 11.473–86, where the lion's offensive stance is used to characterize the defensive battle situation of Aias moving against the Trojans who crowd around wounded Odysseus. For Spartan aggressiveness at Thermopylae, see 7.211.3 and 7.223.2–3. On ἀνάγκαίη in reference to the Spartans and "compulsory" war, see Demaratus at 7.104.3, discussed in chap. 2, "The Evils of War," in the present book.

52. See 7.225.2; Immerwahr 1966, 260–61, n. 69; Georges 1994, 141–42.

(ἐθώμαζε , 7.208.3). Herodotus' wondering in the lion episode is related to and foreshadows the broader sense of wonder that he wants the listener to experience at the almost numinous epiphany of heroes in the first battle of this Persian war.[53]

In the passage about the absence of mules in Elis and other cases, perhaps including the lions episode at 7.125, wondering about cause is equivalent to being struck by the possibility that the divine is manifesting itself through an irregularity of nature.[54] What is unambiguously a miracle—that is, a τέρας, φάσμα, or σημήιον—can be termed, from the point of view of the emotional reaction it elicits, a *thoma*.[55] The attack of the Thracian lions, however, represents less of a violation of natural laws than do other animal omens in the *Histories,* especially the two reported in this same narrative of Xerxes' march (7.57.1–2). We should perhaps think of the lions phenomenon as what Homer would call a πέλωρ: this occurs whenever animate beings, animals or heroes, reveal themselves pervaded by the presence of the divine, a notion that would well agree with Herodotus' scientific and ethnographic observation of the continuity among the animal, the human, and the divine realms.[56] But the question of why such and such happened and the answer to that question are in this particular case secondary. The story about the lions and the camels is first and foremost a narrative event, a metaphor. The narrator's intensely subjective and disproportionate wonder at this minor incident in the world of the narrated first and foremost creates a *mise en abîme* for the larger picture of the Thermopylae narrative and what that narrative represents in the larger picture still. It invites the listener not so much to speculate on cause as, less specifically and concretely, to interpret meaning.

Why Wonder

Another minute instance illustrates the extent to which Herodotus' communication relies on the symbolic code. This passage also foregrounds

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53. See chap. 3, "Specific Glosses of Interpretation."

54. Cf. 7.153; Herodotus mentions that the feat of Teline is a "wonder to me" [θῶμά μοι] in light of the man's effeminate nature (πεφυκέναι); the implements of the goddesses in the narrative provide the clue.

55. See 6.117.2–3 (blinding of Epizelus at Marathon), 8.135 (Mys receives oracle in Carian). The miracles at Delphi (8.37–38) are objectively called τέρατα, φάσματα, and θεῖα, but Herodotus also glosses the narrative with wonder words (θῶμα, ἄξια θωμάσαι, 8.37.2). See Nenci 1957, 281–89, for the various terms for miracles in Homer.

56. Cf., e.g., the "divine behavior" of cats (θεῖα πρήγματα) at 2.66.3. See Nenci 1957, 189–293, on the Homeric concept of πέλωρ.

the behavior of animals: during Darius' campaign against the Scythians, the mules and donkeys in the Persian army caused disarray among the Scythian horses (4.129). Once again, the mode of narration forces the recipient of the narrative to perform interpretive operations beyond the literal meaning of the text. The summary introduction to the episode contains an embedded program with an advertisement of narratability.

> I. One thing that was helpful to the Persians and of hindrance to the Scythians when they were assaulting Darius' camp—<u>**I am going to tell**</u> <u>a great wonder</u> [θῶμα μέγιστον ἐρέω]—was the voice of the asses and the sight of the mules. (4.129.1)

An explanatory gloss follows, with a back reference to the ethnographic section about Scythian winters I have already mentioned (4.28). The gloss repeats the same thing twice.

> II. For the land of Scythia produces **neither** ass **nor** mule, **as I have explained before**. In the whole country of Scythia there is **neither** ass **nor** mule because of the cold. (4.129.2)

Next we find another summary introduction, resumptive of the first and in ring composition after the gloss.

> III. So, when the asses brayed [ὑβρίσαντες], they threw into confusion the Scythian horses.

Now comes what we may call the narrative core of the episode, with factual details and in the mode of iteration.[57] The negative causal clause at the end (actually participles preceded by ἅτε) constitutes yet another gloss that essentially rephrases the idea, already expressed in sentence II, that there are no mules or asses in Scythia.

> IV. Often, in the middle of an attack against the Persians, when the horses would hear the voice of the asses, wheeling around they were thrown into confusion and were in wonder [ἐν θώματι ἔσκον], pricking up their ears, for they had **neither** heard such a voice **nor** seen that sight.

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57. Iteration occurs when the narrative represents once what happened many times. See Genette 1980, 116.

The whole passage is capped by a conclusion that reduces the import of the interpretive statement "helpful to the Persians and of hindrance to the Scythians" in the initial introduction (I).

> V.   Because of this, then, they gained a small advantage in the war.
> (4.129.3)

This brief narrative is even more redundant than the one about lions attacking camels. The notion of Persian advantage is repeated twice (I, V), as is the central function that the sound of asses and the appearance of mules troubled the horses (III, IV—both times with ταράσσω). The background information about the absence of asses and mules in Scythia appears three times (II twice, IV). As he is emphasizing the event, the narrator makes clear that it is small and inconsequential to the outcome (ἐπὶ σμικρόν τι ἐφέροντο). This time it is most definitely not an omen; it violates no natural law. There is no wondering why, since the rational cause of the event is clear and reiterated in the glosses. Both the story about Cyrus exploiting the strategic advantage of the camels in his battle against the Lydians (1.80) and the case of the Thracian lions, presented as an exception (7.125), lead us to expect precisely what happened in this case, namely, that animals will be fearful of other animals unfamiliar to them.

If the unexpected is an essential feature of *thoma*, the question is, rather, why should the horses' being "in wonder" at unfamiliar animals constitute a "great wonder" to the narrator or to us.[58] The anthropomorphism of the animals (ἐν θώματι, ὑβρίσαντες, ἐταράσσοντο) is an additional sign that the narrative is metaphorical and designed somehow to illuminate the historical context at a higher level of meaning.[59] The Persians, the only nation in the *Histories* who are called ὑβρισταί by nature (by Croesus at 1.89.2), have symbolic associations with the mule, especially at the beginning of their history. Two mule prodigies refer to Persian actions, but more importantly, Cyrus, the founder of the Persian empire, is called a king-mule by the Delphic oracle.[60] Mules (as well as

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58. For the notion that the expected is "no wonder," see 7.187.1.

59. The verb ὑβρίζω (behave insolently) has the sense of "braying" at 4.129.2 only; the root is elsewhere applied to animals at 1.189.1 only (see n. 63 in the present chapter). The verb ταράσσω is frequently used of armies throwing each other into disarray in this campaign (see especially 4.125.1–5).

60. For the mule prodigies, see 3.151.2 with 3.153, 7.57.2. For Cyrus as mule, see 1.55.2; cf. 1.91.5–6.

donkeys) connote poverty and an inferior social condition; they appear in Herodotean biographies of social upstarts who rise to power.[61] Horses connote very different things. On the one hand, they are the sign of a "hard" culture, primitive or nomadic.[62] On the other hand, horses can also signify power, wealth, and luxury. By the time of Xerxes' expedition against Greece, the Persian is a "horse" in this second sense. This is clear from the omen of a mare giving birth to a hare.

> Hereby it was shown clearly that Xerxes would lead forth his host with mighty pomp and splendor [ἀγαυρότατα καὶ μεγαλοπρε-πέστατα] but that in order to return home, he would have to run for his life.[63]

In the episode of mules and donkeys, it is mildly ironical that the wealthy Persians gain their only advantage against the rude Scythians thanks to the most modest of their resources. At the symbolic level, however, the narrative suggests that mules and donkeys had what it would have taken for the Persians to be successful vis-à-vis the Scythians.[64] In the narrative sequence that immediately follows, the bird, mouse, and frog the Scythians send to Darius are negative symbols signifying what the Persians are not (4.132.2). In the same way, here the Persians are not "mules," and will shortly become "hares" (see 4.134.1; cf. 7.57.1, mentioned earlier). They have lost their original simplicity, such as the Lydian Sandanis described to Croesus (1.71.2–4). No longer a "hard" people, as they were in the early time of Cyrus, they are a "soft" people attacking a "hard" people, and they will lose the war.[65] The proliferation of animal incidents in this group of narratives and the metaphorical value of the animals in the Scythian message constitute one

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61. See 1.59.4 (Pisistratus), 6.68–69 (illegitimacy of Demaratus). Donkeys have equivalent connotations (e.g., at 1.194, 2.121δ, 5.68.1), and at 4.129, the fact that they can bray makes them more essential to the plot.

62. See 1.215.1–2, 216.4. For the connection of horses with nomadism, see Hartog 1988, 18, on Hdt. 2.108.

63. 7.57.1. At 1.189.2, Cyrus' white horse steps into the river "out of *hybris*" when Cyrus is attempting to cross (διαβαίνειν, the verb of violation of boundaries). On Persians and horses, see also 1.192.3, 7.40.2–4, Smith 1992, 120–22. Persian riding at 1.136.2 is, however, a trait of a "hard" culture.

64. In fact, the braying donkeys subsequently provide at least the means of Persian escape: see 4.134.3–135.3.

65. This is an implicit rule of history: see chap. 2, "Implicit and Explicit Difference in the Ethnographies."

guarantee of a metaphorical understanding of 4.129, particularly by an audience more accustomed than we are to the functioning of the symbolic code. An additional guarantee is the disproportionate advertisement of θῶμα μέγιστον.

Herodotus' scientific attention to the animal world, which is part of his work as an ethnographer, joins the multifarious traditions that associate animals to humans. Poetic metaphor, such as we find in Homeric similes and animal metaphors in tragedy, verbally signifies specific human behaviors through animals; it is exploited in the religious tradition, which reads ominous meanings in real animal occurrences. Ionian storytelling includes "historical" anecdotes in which the cooperation of animals with humans shows either human natural ability to control lower forms of life or the granting of divine assent to human enterprises.[66] Not least important, the animal fable features animals for the purpose of conveying a moralistic message about humans.[67] Familiarity with the cultural conventions on which these different types of animal stories are based allows Herodotus' listeners to integrate into an ethical structure individual events that do not in themselves need to signify anything beyond their literal meaning. Herodotus' narration does its share to make these events fulfill the function of narrative omens or signs. The word the discourse uses to celebrate them, *thoma,* is a sign of signs.

Vertical Analogy: Wondering Because

The animal narratives I have considered show the overlap between the ethnographic notion of wonder and its historical counterpart and illustrate the rules of Herodotus' pursuit of wonder in the account of past events. The *thoma* may raise a question concerning its cause or encourage reflection on its meaning. In either case, it often is a small item that the discourse retrieves from the side or magnifies on the way because of its potential to illuminate larger issues.

This potential is fully realized by a spectacular image that springs up fully formed in the midst of the narrative of campaigns undertaken by one

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66. See Charon of Lampsacus (*FGrHist* 262 F 1), analogous to Herodotus 1.80. Cf. 3.85–86.

67. In Herodotus, an animal fable appears at 1.141. The fight between the lion cub and the puppy at 3.32 is an enacted *ainos,* decoded in the text and demonstrating the "natural" character of solidarity based on blood kinship. In the case of Cambyses, violations of custom entail violations of nature.

of the Lydian kings. This is the θῶμα μέγιστον once half-witnessed by Periander of Corinth (who was a friend of the enemy of the king), namely

> Arion of Methyma on a dolphin being carried off to Taenarum. Arion was a harp player, second to none of his contemporaries, and the first we know about who composed the dithyramb, gave it its name and taught the genre in Corinth. (1.23.1)

The transition to the story epitomizes the freedom of Herodotus' *logos* to pursue wonder on the lateral paths opened up by factual connections.[68] The glosses of sources and cautionary λέγουσι (governing a narrative all in indirect discourse) contradict Periander's verification in the narrative of the fact as true.[69] Both off track and unbelievable, the story ranks high in the *logos* for the force with which the narrator applies the celebratory code to its protagonist and to its central event.

Modern readers—and at least one ancient—have responded to these signals. The variety of available interpretations testifies to the depth and indeterminacy of what Herodotus regards "a great wonder."[70] The connection of narratability and symbolism, achieved in the previous examples through the cultural code of animals, emerges even more clearly in this case, owing to the narrative's mythical cast. Attacked by sailors who want to steal his gold, Arion dons his professional robes and sings the *nomos orthios* (a technical term in the musical code, but meaning "correct law/custom" in ordinary language); he then jumps into the sea and is rescued by a dolphin, which carries him to Taenarum. In the poetic tradition, Apollo jumps on a Cretan ship in the guise of a dolphin and leads it to Taenarum and then on to Crisa, where he initiates the dumbfounded sailors to his priesthood by bidding them, among other things, to

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68. See Pagel 1927, 4. Unlike most other anachronic narratives in Herodotus, the Arion episode cannot claim the function of an explanatory gloss in relation to its surroundings.

69. See 1.24.1, 6, 8. Packman (1991, especially 400) argues that Periander, whose initial incredulity is corrected by inquiry and verification (ἱστορέεσθαι, 1.24.7), is analogous to Herodotus vis-à-vis his sources and that Arion, who is on the receiving end of Periander's disbelief, is analogous to Herodotus vis-à-vis his audience, so that "on one level, the Arion story can be read as a plea for a specifically historical suspension of disbelief."

70. See, e.g., Benardete 1969, 14–16; Cobet 1971, 145–51; Flory 1978; Munson 1986; Packman 1991, 399–401. Plato exploits the metaphorical character of the story in the *Republic* (454d), by making Socrates say that when his positions come under the wave of an attack, he will "hope for a dolphin to take us on its back or some other impossible means of rescue." Here the phrase τινα ἄλλην ἄπορον σωτερίαν echoes ἀπορίην in Hdt. 1.24.4.

sing the paean (*Hom. H. Ap.* 3.388–544). Dionysus turns into dolphins the Tyrrhenian pirates who have kidnapped him, but he saves and rewards with prosperity the righteous helmsman (*Hom. H. Dion.* 7). The legend reported by Herodotus uses similar themes to heroize Arion into an almost sacral figure, whose immunity from danger represents the triumph of the fundamental values he embodies: intellectual worth, adherence to *nomos,* loyalty to the gods, deliberate pursuit of one's assigned task in the face of danger, and refusal to be subjugated.[71]

The gloss of testimony appended to the conclusion records the existence at Cape Taenarum of a tangible representation of the rescue, the bronze statue of a man riding a dolphin (1.24.5). The offering is "not large" [οὐ μέγα] and is antithetical, therefore, to the impressive monuments of the East. It does less to corroborate the veracity of the legend than to confirm its meaning:[72] Arion is also "small" in the face of a stronger opponent, who is ethically (though not ethnically) barbaric. The wonder of his survival joins the mystery of a prodigy to the significance of a natural event. In the context of Herodotus' scientific and historical work, the agency of the dolphin points again to the participation of nature in a divine plan that is ethically rational according to the standards of men.

The *ainos* of Arion is inserted in the first detailed report in the *Histories* of the aggression against a small Greek state by a large Eastern power. It independently confirms the evidence provided by that narrative for the causality of success and failure.[73] Its message, however, also reflects preoccupations that will come into better focus later on with the rescue, almost miraculous but natural and rational, of the Greeks from the Persian danger.[74] The symbol of Arion himself will in fact return at that point, this time on the main path of the *logos,* just before the Greeks' first confrontation with the Persian fleet, and in a more realistic incarnation. Gone are the dolphin, the "best musician of his time," the sacred robes and accoutrements of his profession, the *nomos orthios* sung among the rower's benches, and the prodigious reappearance on dry land

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71. See Flory 1978. As Benardete remarks (1969, 15), "nowhere else in Herodotus does νόμος mean 'tune.'"

72. See Bowra 1963 on the actual religious background of this statue.

73. See Cobet 1971, 149. Alyattes' failure to conquer the Milesians, due to a divinely induced sickness (1.19.1–21.1), is just as unpredictable in human terms as is the failure of the Corinthian sailors.

74. See Munson 1986, 99.

of the rescued musician, utterly intact and "just as he was when he jumped" (1.24.7). The new Arion is Scyllias of Scione, "the best diver of his time" (8.8.1). He deserts from the Persian camp and does what he is accustomed to do and does best: he dives into the sea. Having reached the Greeks at Artemisium, he gives them intelligence of the enemy side. A predominantly metanarrative passage in the mode of *historie* replaces the mythical narrative of Arion (8.8.2–3).

> In what way [Scyllias] at that point arrived among the Greeks, **I cannot tell precisely**, but **<u>I am in wonder if the things that are said are true</u>** [θωμάζω δὲ εἰ τὰ λεγόμενά ἐστι ἀληθέα]. For **it is said** that from Aphetae, having dived into the sea, he did not reemerge until he arrived to Artemisium, having crossed a distance of about eighty stades by sea. Indeed, **other things are said about this man that are similar to lies, but some are true** [ἄλλα ψευδέσι ἴκελα . . . τὰ δὲ μετεξέτερα ἀληθέα]. On this matter, however, **let me express my opinion** that he arrived at Artemisium by boat.

Scyllias is almost a contemporary and an Arion translated into history. The narrator intertwines the code of refutation with that of celebration and still expresses the narratability of the unverified event in terms of wonder. He does not so much "wonder whether" as he is "in wonder if"—the formulation he applies to the allegedly floating island of Chemmis.[75] The phrase "other things similar to lies, . . . but some true" assigns Scyllias' "swim" to Artemisium to an uncertain zone between these unbelievable but true facts and the antithetical "lies similar to truth" of epic poetry, meaningful fictions with the power to communicate what is essentially true.[76] True or untrue, prodigious or merely exceptional, the rides to safety and freedom of Arion and Scyllias easily become the subject of *ainoi* that replay the rescue in the larger plot of the *Histories* as a concluded whole. These passages are not symbolically univocal, for they can accommodate references to more recent extratextual in-

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75. See 2.156.2, discussed under "Herodotus and the Conventional Code of Ethnographic Wonders" earlier in this chapter.

76. Cf. the Muses in Hes. *Theog.* 27: "We know how to say many lies similar to truth, but we also know how to sing true things when we want to" [ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτυμοίσιν ὁμοῖα, / ἴδμεν δ'εὖτ'ἐθέλωμεν ἀλήθεα γηρύσασθαι] (cf. *Od.* 19.203, Theognis 713). See Bowie 1993, 17–23. Herodotus' quotation is a nod to Scyllias' heroic status among his contemporaries, on which see Masaracchia 1977, 161, How and Wells 1928, 2:238.

stances of abuse and self-interest among the Greeks. Thus, Arion's aggressors are not barbarian pirates, as are those of Dionysus in the Homeric hymn; they are Corinthians whom Arion "trusted more than anyone else" to convey him safely home (1.24.2). The gloss of identification of Scyllias informs us that he made use of his diving ability after the shipwreck off Mount Pelion to rescue valuable property for the Persians and gain a great deal for himself as well (8.8.1). This is a nonidealized narrative element whose connotations clash with the symbolism of Scyllias' feat at Artemisium.[77]

In the case of Arion, the symbolic indeterminacy is enhanced by the implicit self-referential aspects of the protagonist: he is, like Herodotus, a skilled performer who must eventually confront hostile audiences.[78] One of these listens to him for the sake of pleasure but plans to kill him after the song (1.24.5). The other meets his narrative with the same disbelief the narrator of the *Histories* experiences from his listeners.[79] Herodotus' patterns from small to large or from far to near and across narrative levels create an open-ended system of competing associations that we modern readers have only begun to reproduce. We can only do so by taking interpretive risks.

This brings us to another object of wonder, the mysterious Artemisia of Halicarnassus. More daringly than in his narrative on Arion, here Herodotus combines a self-referential element with a special exploitation of the vertical analogy between individuals and states.[80] Let us begin with the second aspect first. As an ally of Xerxes in his expedition against Greece, Artemisia was for fifth-century Greeks the historical reincarnation of the mythical Amazon, the enemy of the civilized male world of the polis, the invader of Attica, where she found defeat and obliteration at the hand of the Greeks, specifically the Athenians.[81] As we have already

77. Cf. the story of Ameinocles of Magnesia (7.190), criticized by Plutarch (*De Malign. Herod.* 30, 39 = *Mor.* 864C, 871C).

78. See Bernadete 1969, 14–16; Packman 1991; Thomson 1996, 151 n. 20, 167. Benardete quotes Plato *Rep.* 454d (see n. 70 in the present chapter), where Socrates also applies the Arion persona to himself in the face of opposition from his listeners. I call a character "self-referential" when it emerges as a double of the narrator Herodotus. But I have been considering a term or a sentence self-referential when it speaks about the narrative either of Herodotus or of his source (see especially my definitions in chap. 1).

79. See Packman 1991 (see n. 70 in the present chapter). Cf. Payen 1997, 58. For reactions attributed to the audience of the *Histories,* see chap. 1, "Self-Referential Glosses," in the present book.

80. See especially chap. 2, "Analogy as an Interpretive Tool."

81. On the connection between Artemisia and the Amazons, see Aristoph. *Lys.* 671ff.

seen, in book 4 Herodotus reverses this politically significant tradition by inserting into his Scythian narrative the paradox of marriageable, reasonable, and peaceful Amazons.[82] For the purposes of his narrative of the battle of Salamis, he creates a different Amazon paradox, one that turns same into other rather than, as in the Sauromatian *logos,* other into same. Unlike Herodotus' Amazons in book 4, Artemisia is aggressive, eager for war, and equipped with excellent ships.[83] Unlike the Amazons of tradition, she is Greek, not barbarian; cultured, not wild; and renowned for strategic ability. She is also a winner, and she is a winner over her own side. The Amazon of tradition, defeated by Athens, is here reborn as a symbol of the Athens that was born with the victory of Salamis.[84]

The triumph of Artemisia is the opposite of that of Arion and is enough to make the narrator throw up his arms in a very different sort of amazement. The narrative has its comic side: reduced in a tight spot during the battle, Artemisia undertakes to save herself in a flash by ramming an allied ship; she gets lucky and wins, and in the process, she gets doubly lucky and increases her power and prestige (8.87–88). As an open-and-shut case, at least, Artemisia provides evidence that contradicts so much other evidence Herodotus has been accumulating for an ethically rational order of things. Can ill-gained success possibly be permanent? Artemisia is a symbol and an enigma, one of several that punctuate the beginning of the end, and the end of the end, of Herodotus' investigation.[85]

We are now ready to complicate the picture further and examine the peculiar way in which the narrator signals this *thoma* and his own involvement with it. The following is the programmatic introduction to a long gloss of identification for Artemisia.

Of the other taxiarchs, I make no mention/memorial, on the grounds that I am not compelled by necessity [οὐ παραμέμνημαι . . . ὡς οὐκ ἀναγκαζόμενος], **but [I do] of Artemisia,** whom especially <u>**I regard with wonder**</u> [τῆς μάλιστα θῶμα ποιεῦμαι], a woman marching against Greece, who, since the death of her hus-

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82. See chap. 2. "The Other Is Same."

83. See 7.99.3. The inexperience in seafaring that the Sauromatian narrative attributes to the Amazons (4.110.1) becomes more intelligible at the symbolic level in light of their opposite and analogue Artemisia: see chap. 2, n. 245.

84. See Munson 1988 for a detailed argument. On personification of poleis in Greek art, see Hölscher 1995, 174.

85. See, e.g., 7.133.2 and chap. 3, "Divine Retribution" in the present book.

band herself holding the tyranny [τυραννίδην] and having a young son, participated in the expedition out of daring and manly courage, there being no necessity/compulsion for her to do so [οὐδεμιῆς οἱ ἐούσης ἀναγκαίης]. (7.99.1)

The last clause brings into focus Artemisia's aggressiveness. As a female τύραννος (and, we might add, as a symbol of the city-τύραννος), she does what despotic powers normally do, waging an "unnecessary"—that is, offensive—war.[86] At a more immediate level, however, the expression οὐδεμιῆς οἱ ἐούσης ἀναγκαίης bears positive connotations: unlike other allies compelled by Xerxes, Artemisia is, for unspecified reasons (and again like Athens), free.[87] This special position is part of her paradox as a wonder and ostensibly the first reason for her inclusion in the *logos.* In a previous negative program, Herodotus has stated that since the local infantry commanders in the Persian force were not free but slaves, he was "not constrained by necessity" [οὐ γὰρ ἀναγκαίη ἐξέργομαι] to mention them (7.96.1–2). The combination of this passage with 7.99.1, which closely follows, yields the sequence "I am not compelled to mention other commanders who were slaves [i.e., who were under compulsion], but [I am compelled to/will mention] Artemisia, whom I consider a *thoma* and who was not under compulsion." The rhetorical figure, underlined by the repetition of metanarrative self-referential *anank-* words, creates an antithesis between those other foreign subjects of Xerxes and the free narrator (the prominent ἐγώ of 7.96.1), who is not compelled to say in his *logos* what he does not consider worth telling. By the same token, Artemisia of Halicarnassus, at least to the extent that she is free and "not under compulsion," becomes here (independently from whatever else she is already beginning to symbolize) implicated symbolically in the world of the narration also as an analogue of "Herodotus of Halicarnassus," the *histor.*[88]

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86. See, e.g., Artabanus at 7.10δ1 and chap. 3, "The Evils of War," in the present book.

87. In the historical narrative, words of the ἀναγκ- family most frequently refer to compulsion applied by a monarchical ruler, especially in the narrative of Xerxes' expedition (7.103.4; 7.108.1; 7.110; 7.132.2; 7.136.1; 7.139.3; 7.172.1; 8.22.2; 8.140α2; 9.17.1). See Munson forthcoming. The unique position of Artemisia as a free agent is evidenced in the subsequent narrative of her advice to Xerxes (8.67–69). See Munson 1988, 95–98.

88. Georges (1994, 301 n. 93) reminds us that she may have been the great-aunt of Herodotus the real author.

From what sort of compulsion does Herodotus declare himself free? Implicitly it must include something similar or vertically analogous to the monarchical compulsion that the local commanders in the Persian army experience and Artemisia does not. That means all external pressure exercised by persons, for political or other reasons. Herodotus' immunity from that type of pressure consists here, as many other times, in his being free to magnify the minute and meaningful narrative element that is a *thoma* to him. This will entail, as it turns out, robbing the real protagonist at the battle of Salamis of a starring role, in favor of a minor participant in the enemy camp, with five ships to her name. Episodes of Greek—and especially Athenian—skill, valor, patriotism, and love of freedom are conspicuously absent in the battle report, in striking contrast with Aeschylus' version of the same battle and with Herodotus' own narratives of Thermopylae or even Marathon. First, Herodotus' narrative of Salamis attributes the Greek victory in great part to the hopeless strategic disarray of the Persian force. Second, but more importantly, Herodotus narrates this battle to make it mean what it meant as seen from the perspective of later *stasis* developments among the Greeks.[89] The central Artemisia section (8.87–88) contributes to the first purpose in its literal import; by constructing a metaphor for later Athenian unscrupulous behavior, it contributes to the second. Herodotus' narrative of Salamis, in other words, adds two implicit qualifications to his earlier explicit praise of the Athenians as the saviors of Greece, largely owing to that victory (7.139). This is a radical choice, almost as surprising as Artemisia's turnabout maneuver on the battlefield.

Although daring and free from external compulsion, however, the narrator of the *Histories* is, unlike Artemisia, subject to an *ananke* of a higher order. In voicing his praise of Athens at 7.139.1, he counters political pressure by declaring himself compelled (ἀναγκαίῃ ἐξέργομαι) to express an unpopular opinion. Here the compulsion is the moral duty to tell the truth.[90] In two additional cases of self-referential ἀναγκ- in the passive voice, the compulsion to tell is exercised by the *logos* and has to do with the narrator's self-imposed task to provide a didactically effective

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89. Cf. chap. 3, "Disputes, Arbitration, and the Subjectivity of Opinions." The suggestion that the Persian failure was largely due to Persian strategic errors would be part of the argument of those who wished to minimize Athenian merit. See the Corinthians in Thuc. 1.69.5.

90. See 7.139.5: ἀληθές, τἀληθέος. See also chap. 3, "Specific Glosses of Interpretation," in the present book.

account.[91] Herodotus "is" Artemisia, but he also "is" Arion. The requirement of his *logos,* what we may call the *nomos* of the *logos,* is his obligation as well as his choice.[92] This includes, with explanation, the pursuit of wonders, which are signs for things that need to be explained. Warned by the marker *thoma,* a sign of signs, his listeners will take note, stop and think, and explain on their own.

Wonder and Disbelief

The interrogative mode of the root θωμ-, as we have seen, usually does not concern the existence of the object of wonder (is it really true?) but rather has to do with its meaning. Even when the expression of wonder combines with glosses of noncorroboration, Herodotus implicitly encourages the audience to make sense of the wondrous phenomenon as if it were true. A few times, however, θωμ- is more closely connected with disbelief. If some Greeks consider the Persian support of democracies in Ionia a *thoma megiston,* that means they will find it hard to believe (6.43.3). In the two passages where Ionian theories are a cause of wonder because they are implausible and absurd, θωμ- (exceptionally self-referential in the sense that it identifies the reported *logos*) functions as a term of the code of refutation, not of the code of celebration.[93]

The last case I will consider perversely combines the reading directions "*thoma,* absurd *logos,* and untrue fact: disregard" and "*thoma,* untrue fact, interesting *logos:* pay attention," perhaps even adding (according to some interpretations) "*thoma,* unbelievable *logos,* but perhaps true fact." The last possibility is hard to accept because it entails understanding the text as saying the exact opposite of what it clearly says. That several readers have advanced it testifies to the greater than usual discordance of what the text communicates at different levels of metanarrative. If there is

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91. See 2.3.2 (ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου ἐξαναγκαζόμενος) and 2.65.2. See also chap. 2, "The Texture of *Nomos*," in the present book. For other expressions of obligation, see chap. 1, n. 38 and corresponding text.

92. In Herodotus, moral obligation and the compulsion of *nomos* often conflict with monarchic obligation and are strictly related to voluntary choice. See, e.g., the case of Prexaspes, who both decides voluntarily (ἑκών) and declares himself compelled to tell the truth (3.75.1–2).

93. See 2.21, 4.42.1 In the first passage, θωμάσιος almost functions as an advertisement of nonnarratability: the theory is wondrous and therefore not worth reporting. See discussion under "Herodotus and the Conventional Code of Ethnographic Wonders" earlier in this chapter.

a performance in Herodotus that we would most like to observe live, complete with body language and tone of voice, this is certainly it.

The passage in question ranks among the quarrels of the *Histories,* where the *histor*/arbitrator sets forth an accusation and evaluates the merits of a case. Here the accusation is presented not as a current *logos* but as a charge belonging to the world of the narrated, made in Athens at the time of Marathon or shortly thereafter (αἰτίη . . . ἔσχε ἐν Ἀθηναίοισι, 6.115). This *aitie* claimed that after the fighting was over, the Alcmaeonids arranged for a shield to be flashed from Athens to signal to the Persians at sea that they should round Sounion and sail to the city, which in fact they did. Nothing came of the alleged incident, however, because the victorious Athenian army raced back to Athens by land and arrived before the Persians. So the enemy gave up their designs and, from Phalerum, sailed back to Asia (6.115–16).

After the narrative of other events in the aftermath of the battle (6.117–20), Herodotus goes back to the Alcmaeonids issue in a long gloss of refutation introduced by a rejection of the charge. Here, wonder at the fact reported leads to disbelief in the report and to its rejection based on unlikelihood:

> **It is a wonder to me and I do not accept the rumor** [θῶμα δέ μοι καὶ οὐκ ἐνδέκομαι τὸν λόγον] that the Alcmaeonids would have ever lifted up a shield to the Persians as a signal according to an agreement, wishing the Athenians to be ruled by the barbarians and Hippias. . . . (6.121.1)

The participial clause "wishing the Athenians . . .," reported as a logical implication of the charge, has the effect of underlining its absurdity. The refutation is attached directly here in a crescendo of rhetorical animation: "they who [οἵτινες] were tyrant-haters, just as much or more than Callias, the son of Phaenippus and the father of Hipponicus." An explanatory gloss follows, demonstrating the extent of Callias' hostility toward the Pisistratids (6.121.2); this concludes with the restatement of the comparison that had caused the mention of Callias in the first place: "So also the Alcmaeonids were tyrant-haters [μισοτύραννοι] no less than this man" (6.123.1).

So far the refutation seems to express straightforward outrage, even though the comparison that brings the family of Callias into the discourse employs a cultural code of Athenian politics that is not entirely transpar-

ent to us.[94] The second movement of the defense, introduced with a rejection closely analogous to the first ("**It is therefore a wonder to me and I do not believe the slander**," 6.123.1), takes off again with the animated "they who" [οἵτινες] of the first movement. This time it adduces as proof of innocence the Alcmaeonids' exile during the whole period of tyranny and their success in bringing the regime to an end: "it was they who freed Athens [τὰς Ἀθήνας οὗτοι ἦσαν οἱ ἐλευθηρώσαντες] more than Harmodius and Aristogeiton, **in my judgment** [ὡς ἐγὼ κρίνω]." Herodotus then anticipates the objection that the family might have turned to treason against their fatherland because they had some grudge against the Athenian people, but he counters this point by arguing that no one enjoyed more renown and honor among the Athenians than the Alcmaeonids (6.124.1). So not even the report that they would have made signals with the shield for that reason makes any sense (οὐδὲ λόγος αἱρέει). "A shield was raised and **that cannot be denied**; it happened" Herodotus concludes, "but as to who did it, **I cannot say anything further**" (6.124.2).

The rhetoric about the Alcmaeonids as liberators of Athens recalls the encomium of the Athenians, "saviors of Greece" (7.139.5); the conclusion of the refutation has the same definitive tone of the indictment of Ephialtes (7.214.3), except that here Herodotus generalizes the indictment and acquits the individual culprit (far more prominent than Ephialtes!) instead of the other way around.[95] But the mention of the Alcmaeonids' renown generates a long explanatory gloss on the history of their wealth and status, where eager argumentation gives way to amiable mimetic narrative and, at the same time, political history gives way to folklore, or what Thucydides would call "the mythical/romantic element" [τὸ μυθῶδες] (Thuc. 1.22.4).

This gloss consists of three connected narratives, the first of which tells the story of how the family's eponymous ancestor Alcmaeon enjoyed

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94. Cf. the ambiguity of 7.151 (see chap. 3, "Disputes, Arbitration, and the Subjectivity of Opinions," text and n. 239, in the present book). Here the point may simply be that, like the Alcmaeonids, they were loyal democrats and had long enjoyed good relations with Persia: the identification of Callias as "father of Hipponicus" recalls the son of Hipponicus named Callias, the negotiator of the peace. Callias II may have earned Herodotus' approval. Probably a religious conservative (diadouch at Eleusis), he was related to Aristides (see Plut. *Arist.* 24.4–8; Davies 1971, 257), the only Athenian politician whose portrayal in Herodotus does not contain elements connoting "tyranny" (see 8.79.1).

95. He acquits the Alcmaeonids but lays charge on others, complains Plutarch (*De Malign. Herod.* 27 = *Mor.* 862E).

friendly relations with Croesus and visited him at his court in Sardis, where he was given a large amount of gold (6.125). The second is about Cleisthenes, the tyrant of Sicyon, choosing a husband for his daughter, Agariste, among the best and brightest young men from all over Greece. He ended up giving her to Megacles, the son of the Alcmaeon of the previous story, who thereby greatly increased the family's prestige (6.126–30). The third section briefly reports the birth from Megacles and Agariste of the Athenian democratic reformer Cleisthenes and another son, named Hippocrates. The offspring of this Hippocrates included a younger Agariste, who married Xanthippus. When she was pregnant, she dreamed she had given birth to a lion; after a few days, she became the mother of Pericles (6.131).

Scholars have observed that these narratives undermine the defense to which they are appended by highlighting the Alcmaeonids' long-standing connections with Eastern monarchs and Greek tyrants.[96] It is important, however, to establish to what extent they do so and in what way. The possibility of the Alcmaeonids' closeness to the Persians is not even taken into consideration.[97] Herodotus rather refutes the charge on the basis of the Alcmaeonids' hostility toward the Pisistratids (6.121–23), a point that the subsequent "renown" narratives never undermine. We find no reference, for example, to the fact that Megacles, who here marries Agariste and fathers the sons Cleisthenes and Hippocrates, gave a daughter in marriage to Pisistratus, as we learn elsewhere in the *Histories*.[98] We have in these sections not an implicit retraction of the defense but a cheerful reflection on the charge, marked by a striking change in the mode, tone, and level of the discourse.

In the first two narratives—on Alcmaeon and on Agariste's wedding,

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96. See especially Strasburger 1955, 15–18; also Thomas 1989, 264–72. Thomas attributes the jarring effect to the combination of an apologetic family tradition (adapted to the patriotic polis tradition) in the first part of the defense and popular traditions in the second part.

97. We should perhaps infer a pro-Persian policy on the part of Cleisthenes and the Alcmaeonids on the basis of the embassy Herodotus reports at 5.73.3. But Herodotus does not mention Cleisthenes or the Alcmaeonids in that passage, nor does he ever suggest that the *aitie* at the time of Marathon is somehow connected to the *aitie* previously incurred by the ambassadors. See Fornara and Samons 1991, 19–20.

98. See 1.61.1. This silence is noted by Plutarch (*De Malign. Herod.* 27 = *Mor.* 863A–B). Herodotus' claim that the Alcmaeonids were in exile "for the entire time of the tyranny" (6.123.1) is not inconsistent with his statement at 1.64.3 and with the apparent unawareness of other ancient sources concerning Cleisthenes' archonship under Hippias in 525 B.C. (ML 6). See Davies 1971, 372; Fornara and Samons 1991, 17.

respectively—concrete novelistic details proliferate, some very funny. Let loose in Croesus' treasure-house, Alcmaeon is the ethical opposite of Solon on a similar occasion.[99] But he is also his opposite from the point of view of his dramatic role, verbally incapacitated by the gold he has packed into his mouth, his *logos* replaced by body language. "Stuffed up" with gold in his robes, hair, and boots, he staggers out of the room "similar to anything but a human being" (6.125.4). We are similarly made to see the suitors (μνηστῆρες) of Agariste "stuffed up" with lineage and pride.[100] They stick to their best behavior in the gracious and tense atmosphere of Cleisthenes' court while the tyrant assesses their performance in the games and at dinner. During the last and most lavish of an excruciating yearlong series of banquets, in the midst of civilized competitions in public speaking and song, and in front of all the Sicyonians who have been invited to the party, the favored contender, Hippoclides, throws it all away when he starts dancing bottom-up on the table, moving his legs about in the air as if they were arms (6.129.4). "Son of Tisander," Cleisthenes bursts out, "you have just danced away your marriage." Hippoclides replies, "Hippoclides does not care," with a phrase that has become proverbial, as the narrator's gloss explains (6.130.1).

This Hippoclides, who gets tired of good manners, is not just a crude Homeric μνηστήρ finally showing his true colors. He is one who, by breaking the rules of the polite competition, rebels against the political constraints of his tyrannical audience. His performance is just as whimsical and unconventional as the turnabout of Herodotus from the earnest polis patriotism of his Alcmaeonid defense to the irreverent and factually dubious novelistic narratives that follow. As Plutarch observes, in his criticism of a different passage,

> It seems to me that, like Hippoclides standing on his head on the table and waving his legs like arms, Herodotus would dance away the truth and say, "Herodotus doesn't care."[101]

An ancient reader here exploits the proverbial character of Hippoclides' utterance reported by Herodotus to respond to Herodotus' own

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99. See 1.30–33; Strasburger 1955, 18.

100. Chamberlain (1997, 66–67) notices the verbal correspondence between πάντα ἐξώγκωτο at 6.125.5 and ἐξωγκωμένοι at 6.126.3.

101. Plut. *De Malign.* 33 = *Mor.* 867B, on Hdt. 7.233.3. In reference to the Alcmaeonid defense, Plutarch uses another *ainos,* comparing Herodotus to a predator who catches a crab and then promises to let it go (*De Malign. Herod.* 27 = *Mor.* 862F–863A).

subversive narrative methods. The self-referential aspect of Hippoclides seems especially apt when applied to the very context where Hippoclides does his dance, that of Herodotus' extravaganza on the topic of the Alcmaeonids.[102] But the transition from argument to lighthearted narratives that work through connotation and symbolism, and from explicit praise to implicit ambivalence, is not unique to this passage. We have already noticed the shift in tone and substance from the encomium of Athens at 7.139 to the report of the antics of Artemisia and others in the narrative of Salamis. Like Artemisia, the narrator of the *Histories* is a free agent. Like Hippoclides, who frees himself from the constraints of the tyrant Cleisthenes, he displays his freedom as a performer vis-à-vis the political establishment of the leading city (the tyrant city) of his time.

Herodotus dances away not "the truth," as Plutarch says, but the question of what the truth is, in the old controversy of the shield at Marathon. The specific accusation against the Alcmaeonids stands rejected, and he no longer cares (οὐ φροντὶς Ἡροδότῳ, as Plutarch paraphrases). That allegation of the past is now a *thoma* good for thinking in metaphorical terms about the present. Just as Artemisia at Salamis deconstructs the antithesis between male and female, Greek and Barbarian, friend and enemy, in relation to the *polis turannos,* so the old rumor about Alcmaeonid medism at Marathon leads Herodotus to a survey of family history that confounds the distinctions between East and West, democracy and tyranny, citizen and foreigner, in reference to its leaders. Proceeding from the eponymous ancestor Alcmaeon, to his son, Megacles, (to whom a foreign tyrant gives his daughter in marriage [verb ἐγγυῶ] "according to the *nomoi* of the Athenians" [6.130.2]), to the democratic reformer who bears the name of his tyrant grandfather, the Alcmaeonids' ambivalent line leads directly to the ambivalent lion Pericles, the one and only Alcmaeonid who was still relevant in Herodotus' time.[103] As a case that engages Herodotus in his role of arbitrator of differences, the discussion of the *aitie* against the Alcmaeonids conforms in its own way to the rule of explicit acquittal

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102. Chamberlain (1997, 34–81, especially 52–65) is the first, as far as I know, who saw Hippoclides as a double of Herodotus. Cf. Dewald 1987, 151.

103. Dewald (1998, 691) remarks that Cleisthenes' remarkable phrase at 6.130.2 "reminds H's contemporary readers of Pericles' citizenship law of c. 450 BCE, demanding that an Athenian citizen have two Athenian parents. Here Pericles' own great-grandmother is the foreigner involved." Pericles claimed an exception from his own law for the sake of his son from Aspasia of Miletus (Plut. *Per.* 37.5). For the lion imagery, see "Wondering Why" earlier in the present chapter. On Pericles as a lion, see chap. 2, "The Monarchical Model in Athens."

and implicit warning or blame.[104] This combination is here achieved through a mixture of *historie* with the mode of the *ainos*.[105] From the point of view of Herodotus' notion of wonder, however, the Alcmaeonid passage features the narrator more clearly than elsewhere demonstrating through his own discourse what he wants his listeners to do with a *thoma*—freely associate and reflect, to find a broader context or a different plane of experience where the absurd becomes intelligible and the abnormal meaningful.

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104. See chap. 2, "Disputes, Arbitration, and the Subjectivity of Opinions."
105. See Nagy 1990, 310–13.