

HERODOTUS THE ΣΟΦΟΣ – THEOLOGY AND THE CLAIM TO KNOWLEDGE

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Abbreviations

*Addenda*² – T. H. Carpenter, with T. Mannack and M. Mendonca. *Beazley Addenda*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1989.

*ARV*² – J. D. Beazley. *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1956.

DK – Diels, Herman. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Ed. Walther Kranz. 6th ed. 3 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1952.

FGrH – *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Felix Jacoby. Leiden: Brill, 1923–1957.

LSJ⁹ – *A Greek-English lexicon*. Henry G. Liddell (ed.), et al. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

TGrF – *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta*. Richard Kannicht. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004.

Abstract

As remarked by John Gould, ‘Herodotus and religion’ is a vast subject that has provoked much discussion amongst scholars. Thomas Harrison has made a strong contribution to this area with his *Divinity and history* (2000), in which he comprehensively engages with Herodotus’ approach to religious matters. The purpose of my thesis is to analyse in particular the extent to which Herodotus’ ideas about divinity correlate or conflict with the ideas of other fifth-century (BCE) writers, specifically the sophists and pre-Socratic philosophers. This is an approach to Herodotus that has not been pursued at length since Wilhelm Nestle’s contribution at the turn of the twentieth century in his 1908 article *Herodots Verhältnis zur Philosophie und Sophistik*. It is also important because Herodotus has only recently again been reconsidered by scholars to be a contributor to the development of theological ideas in the ancient world, despite the fact that he was writing squarely in the midst of the fifth century, a time when all domains of understanding were being re-evaluated by Greek philosophers and scientists. In this way I hope to shed light on the notion that Herodotus was engaging on some level with the significant theological ideas in circulation in his lifetime, a proposition worthy of deeper and updated research.

The scope of this thesis is then as follows:

In chapter 1 I will address the various critiques of Herodotus’ theology analysing the ancient through to the modern literary critics. This is important because I can then determine what shortfalls and assumptions pervade the existing research and what I can contribute that is new.

In chapter 2 I will discuss the concepts of σοφός and σοφιστής, explicating the original meanings of these terms, specifically that σοφός referred to a broad range of individuals with special understanding, and that σοφιστής meant a purveyor of knowledge, and not only a ‘Sophist’ in the later sense of the term, meaning a professional teacher. I will look at Herodotus’ account of Solon as σοφός, especially in terms of Solon’s travel and collection of cultural knowledge. In comparison I will consider the extent to which Herodotus himself is σοφός/σοφιστής. Finally, I will look closely at the practice of display, ἀπόδειξις that display of knowledge through oral presentation at Olympia was a goal of the σοφιστής,

and that Herodotus actively participated in this display culture. This is important in order to address the misconception that he was simply a storyteller.

In chapter 3 I will pinpoint Herodotus' theological methodology, meaning the manner in which he gains knowledge that ultimately crystallises his attitude to the divine. More precisely, I will elucidate Herodotus' self-proclaimed reliance on his own eyewitness account, judgement and inquiry, ὄψις τε ἐμὴ καὶ γνώμη καὶ ἱστορίη. In as much as Heraclitus also explicitly relies on these empirical techniques, I will compare this philosopher's attitude to the divine with Herodotus. I will also compare the Hippocratic writers' empirical methodology in a more general sense, as these figures do not inquire into the divine, although comparing their methodological similarities to Herodotus further facilitates my argument that Herodotus was undeniably a proponent of the ubiquitous inquiry culture of the fifth century.

Then, to further explicate how Herodotus relied on his own inquiry and judgements I will examine three cases where Herodotus looks at both divine and mundane accounts of historical three specific individuals' transformations. I will analyse Herodotus' judgement about the accounts of Salmoxis' return from death, Rhampsinitus' descent into the underworld, and finally the onset of Cleomenes' madness. In exploring each of these accounts I can affirm the consistency of Herodotus methodology, centred on his personal judgement.

In chapter 4 I will explore Herodotus' research into specific Egyptian accounts, and how travel and inquiry facilitates his conclusions about the divine. I will focus on the accounts of Helen of Troy as described by Egyptian priests, as well as Heracles, and how Herodotus challenges the Hellenocentric versions of these accounts. In the process I will compare Gorgias' similar challenge to existing narratives. I will then discuss theories of nature, φύσις, as postulated by the Ionian pre-Socratics, focussing on the Nile's flooding, and the manner in which Herodotus engages with these theories, ultimately positing his own. In this way I can edify the argument that Herodotus demonstrates an authentic capacity to engage with the intellectual conversations of his day.

In chapter 5 I will explore epistemological limitations in theology, and the fact that Herodotus is clearly aware of these limitations. I will compare his tacit awareness of the limits of inquiry with Xenophanes, Prodicus and Protagoras, in as much as these figures

explicated the difficulties in human beings attaining reliable knowledge of the gods. I will also make clear how these figures challenged the traditional narratives of the Olympian gods propagated by the poets. Following this discussion I will analyse Herodotus' reliance upon witnesses, μάρτυρες, and evidence τεκμήρια, upon which he founded his judgements. This is important to further strengthen my argument that Herodotus was conducting consistent empirical inquiry, by showing his awareness of the limitations of inquiry.

Within the realistic constraints of this thesis I will mainly focus on the *Histories* book 2, since Herodotus' general methodology is explicated in this book, notwithstanding the passages mentioned above.

My overall focus is to re-evaluate and demonstrate beyond mere plausibility that Herodotus was an authentic contributor to both intellectual culture and ancient theology. This is a challenging task considering the diversity of Herodotus' scope of subject matter, which must be acknowledged for a fair treatment of his work to be undertaken. Ultimately I wish to show that Herodotus is not merely a writer of history of his own fashion, but that he is also actively engaged in the theological conversation of his time on a nuanced level.

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION – CRITICISM OF HERODOTUS' THEOLOGY

It is initially necessary to determine Herodotus' place in the ancient theological literature in order to begin to establish the extent of his contribution to knowledge in this field. Literary criticism of Herodotus is vast, spanning back to ancient reception, and opinions on Herodotus' credibility and importance in the canon of ancient theology have historically been divided. Therefore the scope of chapter 1 engages with the categories of writers and genres of subject matter as determined by ancient theorists, in order to shine light on where Herodotus fits in the schema. The chapter then turns to the modern dichotomy of religious traditionalist as opposed to innovator of theological ideas, which often forms the basis of contemporary scholarship. It is valuable to present these pervasive arguments to gain a comprehensive view of the literary reception of Herodotus' theological investigations, so we might find a clearing to locate him within.

As the proclaimed 'Father of History,' Herodotus has proved himself to be a contentious figure for ancient writers and modern scholars alike. This contention arises from the sheer diversity of Herodotus' work itself, as Herodotus was compiling an encyclopaedic account of the known world as perceived by a fifth-century Ionian Greek writer. The fifth century was a time of profound change in Greek thinking about all aspects of knowledge, where there was a re-evaluation of beliefs about the world. A number of significant groups are important in this shift – the Hippocratic writers, the pre-Socratic writers and the sophists. These individuals are anachronistically sorted into neat milieu by modern scholars, while Herodotus is often excluded and sits apart as an anomaly. Xenophanes' poetry in the sixth century, and many more writers' works in the fifth century displayed a significant break with the epic poets as the authoritative voices of truth, especially regarding the role of the gods in the affairs of the world. Human knowledge was becoming partitioned into domains of specialists in different fields. Plato articulated such differentiations when his Socrates divided literature into three different modes in the *Republic*: that which only presents speech uttered by characters (tragedy and comedy), that which consists in the author's reporting of events (dithyramb and lyric), and that which combines the two (epic).¹ Later in the *Poetics* Aristotle differentiated subject matter between pre-Socratic Empedocles, and Homer, acknowledging

¹ ἄρ' οὐκ οὐχὶ ἤτοι ἀπλῇ διηγήσει ἢ διὰ μιμήσεως γιγνομένη ἢ δι' ἀμφοτέρων περαίνουσιν;
'Do not they [fabulists or poets] proceed either by pure narration or by a narrative that is effected through imitation, or by both?' (*Republic*, 392d)

the metered form to be the similarity, while the subject matter was different.² Herodotus himself acknowledges content that is more fitting for different genres when he critiques Homer's rendition of the Helen of Troy story, Herodotus arguing the epic poet chooses one more 'suitable' εὐπρεπής, for the epic genre (2.116.1). In this we see Herodotus tacitly aware of genres and appropriateness of different subject matter for different literary forms.

While it was appropriate for sophists and pre-Socratic individuals to discuss the nature of the divine or the gods, Herodotus sits apart as an anomaly, essentially creating a 'pre-disciplinary' prose genre,³ on account of which he would later receive criticism for the inclusion of the divine according to later standards of history, for example in Lucian's desire to keep the genres of history and poetry separate (Lucian, *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit*, 8.10–11). Often, however, this is anachronistic, it was common intellectual currency of the time to engage with concepts of the divine, regardless which medium one was working in – art, poetry, or large-scale prose.

The rejection of the divine is articulated most clearly in no other than Herodotus' successor Thucydides when the latter writer explains in his methodology that he will exclude fantastical elements from his own account, which is an implicit dig at Herodotus. Thus, the later historian announces at the beginning of the *History of the Peloponnesian War* that the accuracy (ἀκριβεία) of the reports he collated for his *History* will be 'tried by the most severe and detailed tests possible' on account of the absence of story-telling (τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες, 1.22). This assertion of a new authoritative medium of ideas is also asserted by Pericles in his funeral speech in Thucydides' *History* when the statesman asserts:

καὶ οὐδὲν προσδεόμενοι οὔτε Ὀμήρου ἐπαινέτου οὔτε ὅστις ἔπεσι μὲν τὸ αὐτίκα
τέρψει, τῶν δ' ἔργων τὴν ὑπόνοιαν ἢ ἀλήθεια βλάψει.

² οὐδὲν δὲ κοινόν ἐστιν Ὀμήρῳ καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλεῖ πλὴν τὸ μέτρον, διὸ τὸν μὲν ποιητὴν δίκαιον καλεῖν, τὸν δὲ φυσιολόγον μᾶλλον ἢ ποιητήν.

'But Homer and Empedocles have nothing in common except the metre, so that it would be proper to call the one a poet and the other not a poet but a scientist' (*Poetics*, 1447b).

³ Kurke (2011) 362. Compare Lateiner (1989), especially chapter 1: 'A new genre, a new rhetoric,' 13–51. Heraclitus is also an important figure who was establishing prose as an authoritative medium for theological investigation.

We do not need the praises of a Homer, or of anyone else whose words may delight us for the moment, but whose estimation of facts will fall short of what is really true. (2.41.4)⁴

Amongst other opinions of ancient writers, Aristotle labelled Herodotus a *mythologos*, or storyteller, (*Gen. An.* 3.5.756b 6–7). Aristotle too in the *Poetics* asserts that poetry deals with universals, while history deals with particulars. Regarding Herodotus, Aristotle remarks:

εἴη γὰρ ἂν τὰ Ἡροδότου εἰς μέτρα τεθῆναι καὶ οὐδὲν ἥττον ἂν εἴη ἱστορίατις μετὰ μέτρου ἢ ἄνευ μέτρων· ἀλλὰ τούτῳ διαφέρει, τῷ τὸν μὲν τὰ γενόμενα λέγειν, τὸν δὲ οἷα ἂν γένοιτο. διὸ καὶ φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν· ἢ μὲν γὰρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἢ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει.

You might put the work of Herodotus into verse, and it would still be a species of history; it consists really in this, that the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be. Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature of universals, whereas those of history are singulars.

(Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1451b 4–8)⁵

Aristotle does not reject the presence of the divine in history during his discussion of genres. The philosopher's only concern is the difference in subject matter between poetry and prose. He essentially concludes by implication that Herodotus is cataloguing data, and not addressing serious philosophical matters. Second-century, common era Roman, Lucian of Samosata further delineates what is appropriate to each genre, thus advancing Thucydides' standards for history:

μέγα τοίνυν μᾶλλον δὲ ὑπέρμεγα τοῦτο κακόν, εἰ μὴ εἰδείη τις χωρίζειν τὰ ἱστορίας καὶ τὰ ποιητικῆς, ἀλλ' ἐπεισάγει τῇ ἱστορίᾳ τὰ τῆς ἐτέρας κομμώματα, τὸν μῦθον καὶ τὸ ἐγκώμιον καὶ τὰς ἐν τούτοις ὑπερβολάς,

So it is a great deal – all too great a fault – not to know how to keep the attributes of history and poetry separate, and to bring poetry's embellishments

⁴ Translations of Thucydides, Rex Warner (1972).

⁵ Translation, Ingram Bywater (1920).

into history – myth and eulogy and the exaggeration of both. (Lucian, *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit*, 8.10–11)⁶

In Herodotus’ work these clear delineations of history and poetry are not present and poetic resonances abound. For Herodotus, poetic elevation is clearly a means to make important events more memorable, and his borrowings from the epic tradition are clear, most explicitly in the desire that human beings’ deeds not be forgotten ἐξίτηλα γένηται, nor go without fame, ἀκλεῖα (1.1), renown, κλέος being the primary motivation of Homeric heroes.⁷

However, the poetic elements lead ancient critics to label him the ‘father of lies,’ *mendaciorum patrem*,⁸ an adage that has persisted into modern scholarship.⁹ Plutarch went further to write a full polemic against Herodotus, *De Herodoti malignitate*, wherein Plutarch attacked Herodotus’ conclusion about the divine that Herodotus puts into the pronouncement of Solon. Plutarch, referring to Solon’s response to Croesus about human fortune: ὁ δὲ εἶπε ‘ὦ Κροῖσε, ἐπιστάμενόν με τὸ θεῖον πᾶν ἐὼν φθονερόν τε καὶ παραχῶδες ἐπειρωτᾶς ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων περί,’ ‘‘Croesus,’ replied Solon, ‘I know God is envious of human prosperity and likes to trouble us; and you question me about the lot of man’’ (1.32.1). Plutarch thus makes the criticism of Herodotus:

τοῖς δὲ θεοῖς λοιδορούμενος ἐν τῷ Σόλωνος προσωπεῖω ταῦτ’ εἶρηκεν·
‘ὦ Κροῖσε, ἐπιστάμενόν με τὸ θεῖον πᾶν ἐὼν φθονερόν τε καὶ παραχῶδες
ἐπειρωτᾶς ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων περί’· ἃ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐφρόνει περὶ τῶν θεῶν τῷ
Σόλωνι προστριβόμενος κακοήθειαν τῇ βλασφημίᾳ προστίθησι.

Abusing the gods in the persona of Solon, he says as follows: ‘Croesus, you ask me – who understand that the divine is completely jealous and disruptive – about human affairs.’ By attributing to Solon his own ideas about the gods he compounds his blasphemy with malice. (*De Herodoti malignitate*, 858a)¹⁰

⁶ Translation, Melina Tamiolaki in Ruffell (ed.), (2017) 270–271.

⁷ Boedekker (2012) 99. Compare Pelling (2006) 78.

⁸ Holland (2013) xxi, remarks that the first instance of this view is found in Petrarch’s *Rerum memorandarum libri*, 4.26. The adage also appears in the sixteenth century humanist, Juan Luis Vives’ book *Libri XII de disciplinis*: ‘Quem verius mendaciorum patrem dixeris, quam quomodo illum vocant nonnulli, parentem historiae’ London: William Stansby (1531, rpt. 1612) 87.

⁹ For example, the title of J. A. S. Evans’ (1968) article: ‘Father of history or father of lies: the reputation of Herodotus.’

¹⁰ Translation Lionel Pearson (1927).

On account of Herodotus' statements about the gods, Plutarch accuses him of βλασφημία, blasphemy and κακοήθεια, malice. But this polemical either stems from Plutarch's own Platonic views about a wholly good deity (ὁ θεός ἀγαθός),¹¹ alongside the accusation that Herodotus had inappropriately represented the gods.¹² Thus ancient critics accused Herodotus of falsehood, not only in his claims about fantastical worldly phenomena, but also in the theological views Herodotus presents in the narrative passages.

For instance, Lucian parodically condemns Herodotus, accounting in his fantastical journey, *A true story* that he encounters his predecessor Herodotus in a Dante-esque realm for liars:

προσετίθεσαν δὲ οἱ περιηγηταὶ καὶ τοὺς ἐκάστων βίους καὶ τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἐφ' αἷς κολάζονται· καὶ μεγίστας ἀπασῶν τιμωρίας ὑπέμενον οἱ ψευδάμενοί τι παρὰ τὸν βίον καὶ οἱ μὴ τὰ ἀληθῆ συγγεγραφότες, ἐν οἷς καὶ Κτησίας ὁ Κνίδιος ἦν καὶ Ἡρόδοτος καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοί. τούτους οὖν ὁρῶν ἐγὼ χρηστὰς εἶχον εἰς τοῦπιόν τὰς ἐλπίδας· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐμαυτῷ ψεῦδος εἰπόντι συνηπιστάμην.

The guides told the life of each, and the crimes for which they were being punished; and the severest punishment of all fell to those who told lies while in life and those who had written what was not true, among whom were Ctesias of Cnidos, Herodotus and many more. On seeing them, I had good hopes for the future, for I have never told a lie that I know of. (Lucian of Samosata, *A true story*, 2.31)¹³

This criticism is exemplary of the many anachronistic attempts to dismantle Herodotus' project, by applying later standards of what constitutes history. The inclusion of such fantastical elements led twentieth-century scholars to question Herodotus' general credibility.

¹¹ οὐδ' ἄρα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὁ θεός, ἐπειδὴ ἀγαθός, πάντων ἂν εἴη αἴτιος, ὥς οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσιν, ἀλλὰ ὀλίγων μὲν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις αἴτιος, πολλῶν δὲ ἀναίτιος· πολὺ γὰρ ἐλάττω τάγαθὰ τῶν κακῶν ἡμῖν, καὶ τῶν μὲν ἀγαθῶν οὐδένα ἄλλον αἰτιατέον, τῶν δὲ κακῶν ἄλλ' ἅττα δεῖ ζητεῖν τὰ αἴτια, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸν θεόν.

'Therefore, since the god is good, he is not – as most people claim – the cause of everything that happens to human beings but only of a few things, for good things are fewer than bad ones in our lives. He alone is responsible for the good things, but we must find some other cause for the bad things, not the god.'
(Plato, *Republic* 2.379c, translation C. D. C. Reeve)

Anthony Ellis illuminates Plutarch's own Platonic biases: 'Plutarch's theological criticisms of Herodotus are, then, intimately connected with Plato's criticisms of Homer and 'the poets'. Indeed, at the end of his *On the Malice of Herodotus* Plutarch even likens Herodotus to a bard (ᾠοδός), a term which in Plutarch's mind may have had Platonic theological overtones' Ellis (2015) 27.

¹² Marincola (2015) 79.

¹³ Translation A. M. Harmon (1913).

For instance, Detlev Fehling has rigorously dismissed Herodotus' references to sources that the ancient writer frequently mentions, when the German scholar concludes that Herodotus intentionally fabricated elements 'for the sake of a good story.'¹⁴ Criticisms arose from Herodotus' inclusion of fantastical stories, such as dog-sized ants in India (3.102–5). Such a critique does not dismiss the narrative art that Herodotus was capable of, but it does dismiss historical credibility. On the other hand, Herodotus was labelled 'most Homeric' by Longinus (μόνος Ἡρόδοτος Ὀμηρικώτατος ἐγένετο, *On the sublime* 13.3), an adage exemplary of the broad trend of the Hellenistic literary critics to associate writers with Homer as a father figure of Greek literature. Cicero's proclamation above, that Herodotus is the 'father of history,' *pater historiae* (*De legibus* 1.5), does similar service essentially locating Herodotus next to Homer as father of a 'family' of literary figures.¹⁵ While these myriad views of Herodotus attribute him the status of an adept storyteller, or a literary founding figure on par with Homer, he remains an elusive figure.

The contrast in subject matter in passages of the *Histories* makes arriving at a conclusion all the more difficult. The more fantastical passages of the *Histories* contrast with Herodotus' more philosophical passages, such as the *Croesus logos* in which the travelling statesman Solon famously discusses human fortune and nature with the Lydian king Croesus. On account of this diversity of writing, historian Edward Gibbon remarks in a footnote to *The decline and fall of the Roman empire* that Herodotus 'sometimes writes for children and sometimes for philosophers.'¹⁶ Gibbon sees Herodotus alternating in rhythm between storyteller and philosopher, while John Gould, perhaps more astutely, sees a synergy of narrative art and intellectual acumen when he remarks: 'Herodotus' conception of historical thought as embodied in traditional stories 'raises (rather than lowers) the level of reasoning.'¹⁷ One might think of Protagoras' use of fable in Plato's dialogue the *Protagoras* where Zeus sends Hermes to give human beings the gifts of a sense of justice and concern for others:

Ζεὺς οὖν δείσας περὶ τῷ γένει ἡμῶν μὴ ἀπόλοιτο πᾶν, Ἑρμῆν πέμπει ἄγοντα εἰς
ἀνθρώπους αἰδῶ τε καὶ δίκην, ἵν' εἶεν πόλεων κόσμοι τε καὶ δεσμοῖφιλίας
συναγωγοί.

¹⁴ Fehling (1989) 201.

¹⁵ Priestley (2014) 190–191.

¹⁶ Gibbon, *The decline and fall of the Roman empire*, chapter 24, note 52.

¹⁷ Gould (1989) 41.

Zeus feared that the entire race would be exterminated, and so he sent Hermes to them, bearing reverence and justice to be the ordering principles of cities and conciliation. (Plato, *Protagoras*, 322)¹⁸

Thus the use of myth and profound thinking about nature and culture are not mutually exclusive; story telling does not automatically imply naiveté;¹⁹ however, arguments still occupy the scholarship.

Tom Holland notes that a division still pervades the study of Herodotus. Holland posits two positions: on the one hand, Herodotus was a ‘cutting-edge intellectual, with perhaps an old-fashioned fondness for detecting the hand of god – or rather gods – at work in the histories’; on the other hand, Herodotus is considered to be ‘a conventional religious practitioner and believer [...] with an enlarged vision and a mind open towards naturalistic or even quasi-scientific explanations of human and natural phenomena.’ Holland sees Herodotus’ treatment of Spartan religion as ‘even-handed,’ when he describes the Spartans’ piety towards the gods over human opinions (at 5.63 where the Spartans drive their friends, the Peisistratids from Athens on account of an oracle at Delphi’s instructions, and at 9.7 where the Spartans turn down an offer from the King of the Medes to return their land in favour of bowing before ‘Zeus of all the Greeks’ and thus they choose not to betray Greece). Holland remarks that sceptical or secular historians choose to see the Spartans as using religion as a pretext. Holland notes that Herodotus maintains his impartiality of judgement, and Holland himself, perhaps in Herodotean fashion, remains impartial about Herodotus’ views, and does not go into a deeper discussion.²⁰

Holland, like many others, gestures at the argument as it stands, which is clearly still on scholars’ mind, yet he passes quickly over it in his introduction. There is a binary established here where Herodotus is determined to be either an intellectual with residue of old-fashioned ideas still appearing in his writing, or on the other hand a fully-fledged traditionalist who accepts the narrative of the gods as the poets so vividly represented it. Even

¹⁸ Translation Benjamin Jowett (1956).

¹⁹ Compare the ending of Plato’s *Republic* in his *Myth of Er* narrative about the afterlife consequences of moral action. Ronald R. Johnson (1999) argues that the myth completes the whole project of the *Republic* ‘fulfilling its functions on a number of levels’ 12. Julia Annas (1992) on the other hand sees the *Myth of Er* as a ‘lame and messy ending’ to an otherwise impressively unified book’ 353. Surely the *Myth of Er* fits in with Plato’s myth of the metals (414b–415e) in the *Republic*, or the creation myth in the *Protagoras* (321–322).

²⁰ Holland (2015) xxv–xxvi.

so, Holland implies that Herodotus is open-minded to what he calls ‘quasi-scientific’ explanations of the world.

Traditional belief can be defined simply as the full acceptance of the pantheon of gods as determined by Hesiod and Homer, and the offices and roles these gods had. Hugh Lloyd-Jones remarks that in the *Histories*, ‘the part played by the gods in the action of the history indicates that the author’s religious outlook resembled that of the early poets.’²¹ Parts of the *Histories* that include, for instance, Persian criticisms of the Greek anthropomorphic gods, does not make Herodotus himself a sceptic,²² a title often attributed to Herodotus’ contemporary, Xenophanes. Likewise, for Lloyd-Jones, the abstraction of particular gods to the terms such as ὁ θεός, τὸ θεῖον, ὁ δαίμων, τὸ δαιμόνιον undermine Herodotus’ traditional beliefs in the pantheon. Furthermore, Lloyd-Jones concludes that Herodotus’ respect and tolerance for Persian and Egyptian religion does not undermine his own beliefs as a Greek.²³ What we see in Lloyd-Jones’ analysis then is that Herodotus can maintain traditional belief systems while investigating other cultural expressions of belief. Furthermore, Herodotus employs abstract terms while maintaining the belief that the Olympian gods are operating in the world. This would align with Holland’s notion of Herodotus’ being ‘a conventional religious practitioner and believer [...] with an enlarged vision and a mind open towards naturalistic or even quasi-scientific explanations of human and natural phenomena.’²⁴

In relation to the quasi-scientific argument, German philologists portray Herodotus to be a writer who was familiar with the language of the time, but who lacked true understanding. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf summarily dismisses Herodotus’ acumen: ‘In fact he has neither political understanding nor historical sense nor a solid and proper *Weltanschauung*, but rather oscillates between rationalism and superstition. The Ionian science is alien to him.’²⁵ In a similar vein, Nestle depicts Herodotus as a sort of naïve collagist who utilises collected impressions, but only at the surface level: ‘Herodotus learned and borrowed much material from the sophists and, at times, also from the Ionian philosophers, but their thoughts and knowledge remain merely ornaments to his work, and he

²¹ Lloyd-Jones (1983) 63.

²² Lloyd-Jones (1983) 64.

²³ Lloyd-Jones (1983) 64.

²⁴ Holland (2015) xxv–xxvi.

²⁵ Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1905) 56. Compare the similar perspectives of Felix Jacoby (1956) who in one instance says of Herodotus: ‘His critical sense still stands in children’s shoes.’ Translation from the German: Baragwanath, Emily and de Bakker, Mathieu (2012) 6.

does not incorporate them into his personal outlook on life.’²⁶ These German scholars attribute a certain sophistication of artistic composition to Herodotus, but they deny him credulity or critical acumen. Consider also Detlev Fehling: ‘There were doubtless many other professional story-tellers in that period who never advanced beyond oral narrative, whereas Herodotus crowned his work by committing it to writing.’²⁷ Fehling thus considers Herodotus a revolutionary of sorts, in that the ‘professional story-teller’ was the first to preserve his displays in an extensive prose work. However, Fehling’s overarching project is to refute any historical veracity to Herodotus. I shall discuss these accusations in due course in this thesis.

Donald Lateiner grants Herodotus more credibility, at the expense of the ancient figure’s religiosity, when he adopts a thoroughgoing secular approach establishing the argument that Herodotus often comes to a rational conclusion about phenomena utilising: ‘historicist, down-to-earth, political analysis, the sort of explanation expected from a modern historian.’²⁸ For Lateiner, human and worldly affairs are most important to Herodotus: ‘Herodotus’ main concern is not religion and the supernatural, but the phenomena of terrestrial experience.’²⁹ Lateiner’s thesis therefore downplays the presence of the gods, when he argues that the ancient writer was merely using language and motifs that were familiar to his audience.³⁰ Lateiner says of Herodotus: ‘For his audience, τίσις was a more convenient and familiar way of linking events than the original historiographical analysis of cause that Herodotus invented.’³¹ The implication of this statement is that Herodotus panders to his audience’s enjoyment of storytelling, rather than challenging their presuppositions about the world, and that Herodotus merely adopts divine phenomena as motifs in service to the narrative. As an overarching statement Lateiner claims: ‘Herodotus eschews theology as such, since he does not regard it as suitable for his ἱστορίη.’³² This view of Herodotus gives

²⁶ Nestle (1940) 513. Translation from the German: Baragwanath, Emily and de Bakker, Mathieu (2012) 6. However, Nestle grants a more perceptive *Weltanschauung* to Herodotus in *Herodots Verhältnis zur Philosophie und Sophistik*.

²⁷ Fehling (1989) 251.

²⁸ Lateiner (1989) 204.

²⁹ Lateiner (1989) 204.

³⁰ See also, Lateiner (1986): ‘Herodotus is dedicated to thorough observation, verification, and non-theological explanation’ (11).

³¹ Lateiner (1989) 141.

³² Lateiner (1989) 250. Lateiner refers to 2.3.2:

τὰ μὲν νυν θεῖα τῶν ἀπηγημάτων οἷα ἤκουον οὐκ εἰμι πρόθυμος ἐξηγέεσθαι, ἔξω ἢ τὰ οὐνόματα αὐτῶν μόνον, νομίζων πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἴσον περὶ αὐτῶν ἐπίστασθαι· τὰ δ’ ἂν ἐπιμνησθέω αὐτῶν, ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου ἐξαναγκάζομενος ἐπιμνησθήσομαι.

‘I am not anxious to repeat what I was told about the Egyptian religion, apart from the mere names of their deities, for I do not think that any one nation knows much about such things than any other; whatever I

credence to his intellect, while it also suggests that Herodotus merely utilises the gods as devices, and not as an object of serious inquiry. Lateiner similarly emphasises Herodotus' empirical, observation-reliant approach when he compares Herodotus' methodology to the Hippocratics, a comparison that gives Herodotus credit for his observations of phenomena, but in Lateiner's view, Herodotus assumes an almost entirely atheistic stance. For instance, Lateiner concludes that Herodotus shares with the author of *The sacred disease*: 'a desire to describe accurately, explain and record for other investigators, all without recourse to the supernatural.'³³ Lateiner makes astute observations concerning Herodotus' empirical method, but all at the expense of any consideration of the divine, but this approach goes astray as it attempts to modernise Herodotus' more nuanced view of phenomena that allows for multiple causes.

Thomas Harrison is acutely aware of this secularisation of Herodotus when he notes that modern scholarship has turned to portray Herodotus as 'increasingly ingenious.' Harrison notices the shift from a depiction of Herodotus as 'uncritical,' a figure who is 'almost sinisterly clever, creating patterns of reciprocity, setting up expectations which he then subverts, manipulating his characters and their preoccupations like puppets.'³⁴ Various scholars present arguments that define Herodotus as an acute intellect of his time, a figure who created a work of highly intentional composition. Harrison in particular cites Immerwahr who sees the repetition of the motif of advisor figures elevated to the status of 'sage' in the text to be an indication of Herodotus' 'excessively ingenious' approach.³⁵ Harrison compares Donald Lateiner, who defines patterns of laughing tyrants in the *Histories*. Lateiner concludes that when Herodotus presents a tyrant such as Xerxes, whose laughter augurs the tyrant's own demise, he 'imaginatively and soberly develops a pattern and creates expectations in us.'³⁶ Thus Harrison concludes that for Lateiner 'there is apparently no aspect, however small, of the *Histories* that has not been fashioned with care by the author.'³⁷ Harrison therefore critiques scholars who attribute to Herodotus an excessive ingenuity. Lateiner polemically replies to Harrison's lack of structured analysis of Herodotus' theology retorting that 'having positioned himself against most modern scholars but also against straw-

shall mention on the subject will be due simply to the exigencies of my story.' This reticence is important and I shall discuss it in the light of Protagoras B4, in section 5.1.

³³ Lateiner (1986) 11.

³⁴ Harrison (2000) 1.

³⁵ Harrison (2000) 2. Lattimore (1934) 34.

³⁶ Harrison (2000) 2. Lateiner (1977) 182.

³⁷ Harrison (2000) 2.

men systematisers, Harrison acknowledges that Herodotus has no consistent ‘coherent theology’ for him to reconstruct, and that Herodotus cannot be viewed in isolation from predecessors and contemporaries.³⁸ What is evident here then is an argument concerning Herodotus’ intellectual acumen, with respect to the author’s intention either to include the divine as a real cause of historical events, or as a mere trope to develop his stories.

John Myers elevates Herodotus in another manner when he compares the skill of Herodotus to Greek painters and sculptors in terms of the intentionality, patterns and structures of the work, defined by Myers as a ‘pedimental structure.’ On account of this skill Myers proclaims that ‘Herodotus has so completely united the substance of history with its form.’³⁹ By drawing parallels between Herodotus and Heraclitus, Myers makes the bold claim that Herodotus is the only ‘pre-Socratic’ writer whose work is preserved in full.⁴⁰ More specifically, Myers sees Herodotus using the common language of the time that is shared with contemporaries such as Heraclitus and his contemporaries, ‘other earlier Greek thinkers,’ whose project was to determine the cause, αἰτίη beginning ἀρχή, and nature φύσις, of phenomena. These common terms include φύσις, μοῖρα, τύχη, τίσις, τὸ θεῖον, δίκη, ἀρχή, and most importantly, αἰτίη as seen in the proem: ‘why the two peoples fought with one another.’ These terms that Myers sees as having a technical usage for other pre-Socratic writers, for Herodotus are: ‘used more freely, and more nearly in their primary sense.’⁴¹ Accordingly, Myers sees a commonality in how early Greek thinkers understand the world through the shared use of these terms, while one use is more technical and fragmentary in Heraclitus’ work, Herodotus’ use is broader and general, yet Herodotus’ extended prose work is embedded within a context of fragmentary writers; fragmentary here refers to the eclectic nature of Herodotus’ subject matter and interests, and how smaller passages have been synthesised into a whole. Myers suggests that Herodotus was utilising the common speech of his day in a manner this is ‘in no way consistent,’ and that Herodotus seems to apply his thinking alternately between the gods, the human moral realm, and nature. He states that Herodotus ‘seems to have combined beliefs in an immutable order of nature and human fate: and in human initiative and responsibility; a moral order as well as a physical nature. That the world is intelligible admitting analysis by human reason, and synthesis by human imagination, was no discovery of Herodotus. But the background of early Greek thought,

³⁸ Lateiner (2002) 372.

³⁹ Myers (1999) 87.

⁴⁰ Myers (1999) 43.

⁴¹ Myers (1999) 46–7.

against which he should be displayed, is fragmentary, like his own statements.’⁴² Myers also adds that Herodotus had ‘beliefs’ in an order of both the human realm and also in the physical, both of which interests concern many fifth-century individuals.

Wilhelm Nestle makes more explicit connections between Herodotus and the currents of thought of the fifth century in his *Herodots Verhältnis zur Philosophie und Sophistik* (1908). Nestle makes the argument that if Herodotus’ work does not qualify as philosophy per se, there is still very much a very prevalent *Weltanschauung* (world-view) a superordinate (*übergeordneten*) concept that incorporates both religion and philosophy. Moreover, Nestle acknowledges that Herodotus is practicing *ιστορίη* in the broadest sense, encompassing all fields of knowledge in Herodotus’ time.⁴³ Nestle does not explore the meanings of the term *ιστορίη* at length, which opens a space for my research. He outlines that it would be difficult to attribute a philosophical system to Herodotus, but he aims to determine ‘if and how much Herodotus has been touched by the spiritual currents of his time’ (*geistigen Strömungen seiner Zeit*). Nestle sees Herodotus importantly putting an anthropological focus to his research (*anthropologische*).⁴⁴ He also makes strong connections of Herodotus with Xenophanes in terms of research into fossils – epistemological evidence found through travel. Furthermore, Nestle argues that Xenophanes and Herodotus have the common disposition in that they both ‘distrust the poets.’⁴⁵ He also determines that Xenophanes and Herodotus both show a similar restraint to making claims about the divine (*Zurückhaltung ähnlich*).⁴⁶ He further notes a striking parallel between Herodotus’ account of the Persians not having anthropomorphic forms of worship (1.131) with Heraclitus’ criticism of worship practices (B5).⁴⁷ Nestle acknowledges Herodotus’ implicit critique of Anaxagoras’ account of the Nile flooding (2.22), indicating the notion that Herodotus was engaging with contemporary theories.⁴⁸ He makes further connections with the sophist eristic debating methods in the dialogues of the *Histories* such as the debate between Croesus and Solon (1.30), the Persian constitutional debate (3.80), and the conversation between Xerxes and Artabanus (7.46).⁴⁹

⁴² Myers (1999) 47.

⁴³ Nestle (1908) 4. Translations of Nestle’s German are my own.

⁴⁴ Nestle (1908) 5.

⁴⁵ Nestle (1908): ‘Misstrauen gegen die epischen Dichter’ (8).

⁴⁶ Nestle (1908) 8.

⁴⁷ Nestle (1908) 9.

⁴⁸ Nestle (1908) 11.

⁴⁹ Nestle (1908): ‘hört man deutlich den Ton der sophistischen Eristik aus diesen Debatten heraus’ (15).

Nestle conjectures that of all the sophists, Herodotus likely had acquaintance with Protagoras,⁵⁰ especially due to their mutual relationship with the colony Thurii. Moreover, Nestle makes the link between the creation myth of Protagoras in Plato's *Protagoras* (321B) to Herodotus' observations of natural order in Arabia (3.108).⁵¹ He is a lot more hesitant to propose an acquaintance of Herodotus with Gorgias, claiming there are 'only small and uncertain traces' of evidence,⁵² citing similarities in tropes of speeches.⁵³ With Prodicus, Nestle makes the connection of the sophist's euhemeristic religious tendency (B5): 'a fetishistic worship of life-promoting things,'⁵⁴ with Herodotus' descriptions of how the Greek gods received their names and attributes from the Egyptian versions. He makes a connection to a further sophist, Critias, and his Sisyphus fragment (fr. 19), to Herodotus' descriptions of how cultural practices that benefit mankind were established – Nestle using as an example Glaucus of Chios inventing welding (1.25).⁵⁵ In his conclusion, he determines that Herodotus shared with the sophists the desire to look outside the Greek customs, thus determining a broader idea of what constitutes a human being – 'the essence of man as a family'⁵⁶ – through Herodotus' examining foreign customs, νόμιμα βαρβαρικά in order to determine what is due to φύσις and what is due to νομός, thus 'planting the seed for a cosmopolitan attitude.'⁵⁷ He ultimately concludes that Herodotus 'has no internal relation to philosophy at all.'⁵⁸ In contrast to Hecataeus, whom Nestle deems has a 'consistent rationalism' (*konsequenter Rationalismus*), Nestle argues that Herodotus presents a 'mixture of belief and criticism' (*Mischung von Glauben und Kritik*),⁵⁹ and that his conception of history remains as 'religious-moral' (*religiös-moralisch*).⁶⁰ He further concludes that there are unmistakable traces of the influence of contemporary sophists in Herodotus.⁶¹ He argues that we see in Herodotus the same interest in origins – of culture, languages, religious and political institutions – as the sophists.⁶² He sees a pessimistic streak in Herodotus, showing Herodotus'

⁵⁰ Nestle (1908): 'Am nächsten liegt es von vornherein, an eine Bekanntschaft, und zwar sogar an eine persönliche, mit Protagoras zu denken' (16; 37).

⁵¹ Nestle (1908) 16.

⁵² Nestle (1908): 'nur geringe und unsichere Spuren' (16).

⁵³ Nestle (1908): 'Keim zu der kosmopolitischen Gesinnung gepflanzt' (19).

⁵⁴ Nestle (1908): 'eine fetischistische Verehrung der das Menschenleben fördernden Dinge' (22).

⁵⁵ Nestle (1908): 'das Wesen des Menschen als Gattung' (35).

⁵⁶ Nestle (1908) 36.

⁵⁷ Nestle (1908) 36.

⁵⁸ Nestle (1908): 'insofern hat er zur Philosophie überhaupt kein inneres Verhältnis' (37).

⁵⁹ Compare Hauvette (1894): 'Partout dans son livre on trouverait ce mélange de scepticisme et de foi' 'Throughout his book we find this mixture of skepticism and faith' (35). My translation.

⁶⁰ Nestle (1908) 37.

⁶¹ Nestel (1908): 'unverkennbare Spuren des Einflusses der zeitgenössischen Sophisten' (37).

⁶² Nestle (1908) 37.

depth of thought to extend beyond mere naïveté, and that he ‘sought to gain knowledge through doubt.’⁶³

Nestle presents a thoroughgoing analysis of Herodotus’ connection with his contemporaries, utilising many pieces of evidence I also wish to address. He makes insightful observations about Herodotus’ attitudes and potential associations with other figures. I wish to push Nestle’s argument further by looking in more detail into Herodotus’ methodology when he researches the divine in particular.

For Henry Immerwahr, the order of the world emerges also in patterns in the *Histories*. Immerwahr argues that Herodotus recognises rise and fall, and that ‘the pattern of such order is neither theological nor moral, but existential.’⁶⁴ For instance, a tragic story consisting of a pattern of ὕβρις, κόρος, and subsequent ἄτη, is tragic only on the micro scale for the protagonist of the particular story, while on the macro level those forces (ὕβρις, κόρος, and ἄτη) are used as a motif with the function of maintaining order and furthering cycles of growth and decay.⁶⁵ In similar fashion, Immerwahr sees the role of the gods as motif maintaining the order both in the human world and in nature. His approach then, grants Herodotus an intellectual acumen and a rational approach to his understanding of the gods. In this there is a duality though: as Herodotus gives scope to popular traditions about the gods – including popular traditions and individual divinities – he also ‘rationalises the gods into a semi-abstract ‘divine’.’⁶⁶ Thus Immerwahr deduces that traditional notions such as particular divinities that had an undisputed power, in a sense defined by traditional belief systems, now become abstract forces that maintain the order of things. Immerwahr therefore concludes that ‘the idea of function as the main criterion distinguishes Herodotus from previous thinkers (as it did Heraclitus and Sophocles). Therefore traditional ideas found in Herodotus have a tendency to be reduced to abstractions considered merely in relation to their effect on the historical process.’⁶⁷ Thus, for Immerwahr, a concept such as, for example, τίσις, becomes more a force that propels historical action, forsaking the term’s moral connotation. In sum, Immerwahr sees Herodotus as a rationalist that identifies ‘constantly recurring irregular

⁶³ Nestle (1908): ‘die durch den Zweifel zum Wissen zu gelangen suchte’ (37).

⁶⁴ Immerwahr (1986) 307.

⁶⁵ Immerwahr (1986) 310.

⁶⁶ Immerwahr (1986) 311.

⁶⁷ Immerwahr (1986) 324.

cycles.’⁶⁸ This does not exclude the gods but rather incorporates them into cycles of rise and fall. This is perhaps an application of what Myers calls ‘synthesis by human imagination.’⁶⁹

This ‘synthesis’ makes it difficult for us to clearly discern the layers of Herodotus’ writing to determine his proximity to the Ionian milieu whose proponents have unique intentions, language, and views concerning the divine. The *Histories* are a sum of disparate episodes and themes. As a result, they oftentimes appear fragmentary, as is common with the works of the pre-Socratics. Herodotus shifts from a more traditional narrative with religious and tragic elements that fulfil functions of furthering the narrative, as Immerwahr argues, such as the example of the Atus–Adrastus–Croesus narrative. Immerwahr defines the composition of the Atus–Adrastus–Croesus narrative to be ‘truly organic in the sense of tragedy’⁷⁰ due to the structure of each part of the sequence and its consequences. Specifically, Croesus becomes the tragic hero of the story who tries to outwit the oracle but who accepts the murderer Adrastus into his house, ultimately leading to the death of Croesus’ son. The tragic realisation is then determined for Croesus.⁷¹ At other points Herodotus shifts to a more analytical mode when he is investigating cultural practices of religion and foreign belief systems. This is most prominently displayed in book 2 where Herodotus collects reports from the Egyptian priests about the genealogy of the Greek gods, and contrasts these with the traditional Greek stories. He then positions himself to make his own judgement. This analytical mode where Herodotus weighs up different accounts is markedly different from when Herodotus simply presents a tragic narrative of Croesus, Atus and Adrastus in book 1. We therefore see the multi-faceted nature of the work clearly in this contrast, which makes the role of this ‘father of history’ all the more elusive.

Anthony Ellis deals with this by proposing that Herodotus ‘makes full, creative and repeated use of two quite distinct personas.’ The first persona is a ‘mimetic’ style of an omniscient narrator, following in the epic tradition from Homer. The second persona entails an ‘empirical’ approach by an ‘epistemologically cautious, Hippocratic style narrator, who

⁶⁸ Immerwahr (1986) 152.

⁶⁹ Myers (1999) 47.

⁷⁰ Immerwahr (1986) 71.

⁷¹ Pelling (2006) following Vernant (1982) and seeing elements of the both tragic and Homeric spirit in Herodotus argues that the fifth century provided the combination of circumstances that facilitated the coinciding of the heroic code of values and ‘a new sensibility for the community and rule of law’ that he determines made tragedy the dominant fifth-century genre. For Pelling, ‘the role of interventionist gods are distant, but not too distant from everyday experience’ at that historic moment (75).

remains a very human inquirer.’⁷² According to Ellis, Herodotus employs the narratorial style when presenting interlocutors in a dialogue, such as Solon and Croesus. At such time the characters’ discussion reveals general truths; when Herodotus employs the inquiry mode, this is in order to deal with particular truths ‘in a strongly empirical style.’⁷³ In this way Ellis determines that Herodotus can employ different literary styles to suit different subject matter. This notion reflects Aristotle’s that ‘poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature of universals, whereas those of history are singulars’ (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1451b 4–8). While Ellis sees the potential for Herodotus to employ both methods, other critics determine that the domain of ‘history’ is more limited. In chapter 3 I will explore nuances of the Greek term ἱστορίη that is often translated ‘history,’ since, I will argue, it in fact has a range of meanings.

Thus the question arises regarding the role of history. Momigliano sees the responsibility of history to report on conflicts that are catalysts, specifically: ‘wars and political revolutions, because they produced consequential changes.’ On the other hand Momigliano does not think it is within the sphere of history to engage with theological ideas about the world, or to systematically explore human nature (φύσις). For Momigliano, the divine as it appears in history, for example as intervention in human affairs, is merely an example of ‘exploitation’ of the general trend of Greek thought in the fifth century. Furthermore, according to Momigliano’s position there is a ‘lack of interest’ in theology displayed in texts such as the *Histories*, which becomes more explicit in later Hellenistic historians, such as Polybius for whom, according to Momigliano, forces such as ‘Τύχη (fortune)... represented an elegant way of avoiding any serious religious or philosophical commitment.’ This comment is of interest with respect to the prominence of Τύχη in Thucydides, for whom the force becomes personified and perhaps fills the space where the Olympian gods are absent.⁷⁴ Momigliano’s view of ancient history is that it must be empirical and ‘compatible with the use of evidence,’ relying on ‘criteria of reliability,’ and is not interested in metaphysical thought.⁷⁵

Momigliano clearly downplays any serious engagement on the part of historians with respect to theology. Rather, he sees the primary concern of historians to be the reportage of

⁷² Ellis (2017) 104.

⁷³ Ellis (2017) 116.

⁷⁴ Sorensen (2014) 38–9.

⁷⁵ Momigliano (1978) 7.

warfare and political events, as they ‘produced consequential changes,’ the relevance of gods to men is relegated to the ‘other sciences.’ I think Momigliano makes a sound statement about the inconsistency of divine activity in the *Histories*, but I would argue that when he claims that there is an ‘implicit acceptance, or exploitation, of the general trend of Greek thought in the fifth century,’ he actually does a great disservice to Herodotus’ acumen and contribution to fifth-century inquiry into the divine. Why would Herodotus be so preoccupied with the nature of the gods in book 2 if he were utilising divine motifs only as pastiche for historico-political events, as a form of literary chameleon? Momigliano claims that historians tend to avoid theological matters, through the use of notions such as Τύχη as they, he claims, are more concerned with ‘reliability.’ This is proclaimed by Thucydides who announces that he will eliminate the story-telling element, μὴθῶδες for ‘those who desire an exact knowledge,’ σαφὲς σκοπεῖν (1.22.4).⁷⁶ But the scope of Herodotus’ investigation is broader. Momigliano makes the error of anachronistically imposing his own modern conception of a historian onto Herodotus. But perhaps Herodotus defies categorisation to an extent worthy of our investigation. In the course of this thesis I shall unveil the fallacy of this categorisations of writers, as this approach compromises Herodotus’ scope as a multi-disciplinary writer.

The overt attempt to categorise Herodotus as a ‘historian’ ignores his polymathic tendency as he touches on natural science, ethnography, theology, politics, in turn and to different extents. The climate of the fifth century was more akin to a conversation with a milieu of intellectuals and writers, all considering topics of the day, with a shared currency of ideas. At this historical moment specialisation was not yet determined. It is only later that divisions of specialist knowledge are articulated more explicitly – such as ‘sophist.’⁷⁷ This was a time of exploration in both the physical world, journeys to other places, and also exploration in the domain of ideas. However, due to this diversity, the fact that a writer could more accurately account some observations such as the geography of a place, but inaccurately account for another category of human understanding such as the nature of the gods, causes modern scholars some consternation.

⁷⁶ Momigliano (1978): ‘Thucydides basically did nothing more than reinforce the strictness and coherence of Herodotus’ criteria by preferring contemporary to near contemporary history and by refusing to tell anything which he did not consider absolutely reliable, whereas Herodotus had considered it legitimate to report with a warning what he could not vouch for directly’ (5). We must take into account, however, Thucydides’ own emotive accounts such as his dramatic description of the plague in book 2 of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*.

⁷⁷ The term ‘sophist’ is explored in detail in chapter 2.

John Gould determines that the ‘part played by religion’ in the *Histories* causes a ‘recurring unhappiness’ for modern scholars. From Gould’s perspective, scholars appear to be let down by Herodotus in one of two ways. Either, he determines, they find it difficult to accept the incredulity of Herodotus’ acceptance of divine phenomena as it occurs on a seemingly superficial level – they expect him to be more sceptical. Or, they are let down by his inclusion of religious phenomena which contrasts with his ‘usual sharpness of observation.’⁷⁸

Gould criticises scholars whose expectations are let down by Herodotus’ perceived lack of rigour in his theological investigations. Gould presents the expectation of scholars that Herodotus must have a consistent acumen that is applied to all subjects of his *Histories*. A further expectation is that Herodotus must necessarily be a sceptic, and that, by considering the divine, he somehow discredits himself. Some scholars grant that Herodotus acknowledges the reality of religious phenomena, but that he separates these phenomena from his main historical project. For an example of this view, consider Lateiner who claims Herodotus ‘detects a pattern of divine action, but he suggests that it is distinct from historical causation, his particular concern.’⁷⁹ This is clearly not the case when in the major battle scenes of the *Histories* significant historic events are accompanied by significant religious phenomena. Harrison sees a further ‘insidious approach’ of scholars who, Harrison asserts, see Herodotus as consistently sceptical. That is to say they do not take into account Herodotus’ attitude towards individual instances of religious phenomena, where he might alternately express belief at one moment and scepticism at another.⁸⁰ Particular accounts that may include scepticism do not necessarily correlate to an overarching scepticism. It is important to note that there was a multiplicity of ways in which the divine was conceived and represented, and that religion was practiced by fifth-century Greeks. This is a central consideration I will take into account in this thesis. Denis Feeney explains this multiplicity of the divine for the Greeks:

⁷⁸ Gould (2013) 183–184. A more even-handed way to deal with this would be to consider Ellis’ (2017) proposition that Herodotus consciously employs different personas for different purposes – switching from a narratorial mode (general ideas about human nature) to an empirical mode (specific observations) when needed.

⁷⁹ Lateiner (1989) 200.

⁸⁰ Harrison (2000) 13.

There was no one frame of mind appropriate to the reception of all the varied forms of literature in which a Greek of the Classical or Archaic period might hear talk about the divine.⁸¹

The ancient audience was able to accept a god in both tragedy and in other forms of literary or artistic representation. Likewise Greeks could conceivably turn their intelligence to matters of divinity without an outright move to atheism or the rejection of divine causes. As Feeney puts it: ‘there is no belief without disbelief.’⁸² Divine power is expressed in so many ways that its articulation in a text as vast as the *Histories* becomes a sliding scale; there is no single representation. At times Herodotus presents an account of the divine and then proceeds to reject it (Cleomenes’ madness, book 7), accept it as evidence of the divine (oracles and the appearance of a heralds staff in book 9), or present dual causes (Poseidon/an earthquake causing the gorge, book 7), or perspectives from accounts he has gathered on a particular account of divine phenomena (accounts of Heracles’ divinity, book 2), all of which approaches to the divine I shall address in turn. Thus the divine manifests itself in oracles, retribution, and epiphanies, to name a few examples. Versnel expresses this amorphous nature of the divine:

What did ancient man see when he saw a god? Sometimes he saw a god, sometimes a human shape, sometimes a phantom, sometimes an animal form, sometimes he had a hallucination of light or a vision of bliss and sometimes he did not see anything at all but was none the less aware of the divine presence which is too overwhelming to be described.⁸³

Just as the divine is described in vastly different forms at various points in the text, so too does Herodotus’ judgement upon the divine shift: as he reflects on certain occurrences of the divine, while at other times he excludes the divine from his narrative when he deems it inappropriate to discuss. Thus, a crossover of traditional belief and judgement upon divine phenomena creates a tension in Herodotus’ writing, between what we might call the traditional and the contemporary/rational attitude to the divine. As John Gould expresses it: ‘Greek religion is not theologically fixed and stable, and it has no tradition of exclusion and

⁸¹ Feeney (1998) 22.

⁸² Feeney (1998) 22.

⁸³ Versnel (1987) 53.

finality: it is an open, not a closed system.⁸⁴ Thus we might conceive of different degrees of belief or acceptance of the divine in an account depending on each individual context, and which all contribute to a rich investigation of the world and display of human research and inquiry.

1.1 Innovation and the tradition

These different views require elaboration. The traditional view of the gods is very apparent in Herodotus' narrative, most poignantly at moments where significant historical events such as at the naval battle at Euboea towards the end of the war. Here there is an imbalance of the naval fleets and Herodotus claims that the storm that dashes the Persian fleet onto rocks is an act of god to ensure parity and Greek success (8.13). At other times when some individual acts hubristically, retribution always follows according to divine providence. This concept of dispersing benefits on the one hand, and retribution (Τίσις) on the other resulting in calamity (Ἄτη)⁸⁵ clearly articulates the view of divine providence (Προνοίη) that is important in Aeschylean tragedy.⁸⁶

We also see these beliefs in Homeric epic, no more clearly articulated than in Achilles' speech to Priam in *Iliad* 24.525–33, where the Achaean hero vividly describes Zeus' dual jars of happiness and misery from which the father of the gods dispenses justice to human beings. The motif of misery following an individual character is seen clearly in the story of Atus in the *Histories*.

On a community-wide scale divine justice is articulated when a god brings too ambitious individuals or too large armies to a lower level. This is most exemplary in Xerxes' whole campaign and is voiced at the start of book 7 in Artabanus' warning to the Persian king that god always smites great creatures with thunder to bring them low (7.10). This is what

⁸⁴ Gould (1985) 8.

⁸⁵ ἰὼ ἰώ, δαίμονες,

ἔθεθ' ἄελπτον κακὸν

διαπρέπον, οἷον δέδορκεν Ἄτα.

'Alas, alas, you powers divine, you brought ruin upon us, unexpected, unmistakable to see, as is the glance of calamity' (1005–1007). Translation, Herbert Weir Smyth (1926).

⁸⁶ μή τις ὄντιν' οὐχ ὁρώμεν προνοί-

αισι τοῦ πεπρωμένου

γλῶσσαν ἐν τύχῃ νέμων;

'Was it some power invisible guiding his tongue aright by forecasting of destiny?' (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 683–685). Translation, Herbert Weir Smyth (1926).

Immerwahr describes as a representation of the divine working in a traditional way as it does in Homer and the tragedies, again the ὕβρις–κόρος–ἄτη pattern. The scholar sees these tragic patterns as a way to ensure balance in political activity and also nature. However, his view displays too great a desire to impose overarching patterns in all of the *Histories*. Herodotus is, of course, interested in these patterns of rise and fall when he states in book 1 that he will report of cities that were once small that are now great, and vice versa (1.5), and when we see how the divine clearly plays a role in these reversals, for example, when Apollo/the storm saves Croesus from the pyre or when the Lydian king's refusal to believe in universal fortune results in the fall of the Lydian empire.⁸⁷ These motifs of divine cycles seem to suggest that Herodotus is a thorough traditionalist when it comes to religious matters, but only to the extent of attributing causation of specific events he has recorded to divine forces; it is not Herodotus' intention to lay out a full general theory of historical causation.

It is important to consider how traditional religiosity was affected, if at all, by intellectual/critical attitudes to the gods that became prominent in fifth-century. This is important since we are interested in Herodotus' connection to the pre-Socratics, and any parallels that might be visible in their respective theological investigations. E. R. Dodds cites Xenophanes as a key figure in this cultural shift in the fifth century as a key player who establishes the culture of 'scientific humility' wherein individuals distinguish between what is knowable and what is not. Dodds differentiates Xenophanes' 'private faith in god 'who is not like men in appearance and mind',' and knowledge of the gods; that is to say one may have a pious attitude to a particular god, while also holding opinions about the existence of the gods in general.⁸⁸

Dodds shines a light on the epistemological focus of fifth-century theological investigation. Most importantly Dodds makes explicit the rise of 'scientific humility,' understood as the tacit recognition of the limits of human knowledge. But Dodds is perhaps anachronistic and applying modern Christian values when he attributes a 'private faith in god' to Xenophanes. Rather, Xenophanes displays a henotheistic tendency when he acknowledges one superior god among many:

⁸⁷ We might consider the notion of 'overdetermination' where two causes are present, for example Dodds (1951 rpt. 2004) considers Homer's Diomedes who remarks that Achilles will fight 'when the θῦμος in his chest tells him to *and* when a god rouses him' (Dodds' italics) 16.

⁸⁸ Dodds (1951, rpt. 2004) 181.

εἷς θεὸς ἔν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος,
οὔτι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοῖος οὐδὲ νόημα.
One god, greatest among gods and men,
in no way similar to mortals either in body or in thought. (B23)⁸⁹

Here Xenophanes clearly expresses henotheistic inclinations, not monotheistic faith. Ivan Linforth also cautions against applying modern Christian monotheistic viewpoint to ‘the mind of a polytheist,’ especially regarding instances where Herodotus uses θεός instead of the name of a particular Olympian.⁹⁰

It would be more accurate to speak of a conviction that a certain divinity existed, since Greek polytheism was essentially amorphous; religious practices had multiple gods as loci. Therefore, any attempt to rationalise religion would be dispelled. Simon Price explains that: ‘there was no articulate body of belief for philosophers to reject.’⁹¹ Unlike Christianity, with its dogmas, Greek religion lacked formal priesthood and was influenced by Hesiod and Homer to a large extent. There was only the notion of ‘acknowledging the gods whom the city acknowledges.’⁹² Price recognises the nebulous nature of Greek religious practice, with only commonly accepted ideas about the gods and appropriate ways to relate to them, but this has not been formulated into a system through the priesthood. It was not atheism, but the threat to the πόλις by believing in different gods than those accepted by πόλις that led to the condemnation of Socrates (*Apology*, 24). Criticism and belief of the gods could go hand in hand,⁹³ as seen in the case of Xenophanes. It can be conjectured that the common practice of religion, or a certain degree of religious reverence can accompany new fifth-century attitudes. Consider Walter Burkert’s view:

With the rise of philosophy, the most original achievement of the Greeks in shaping the intellectual tradition of mankind, change and revolution is finally seen to irrupt into the static structures of Greek religion. It is tempting henceforth to dramatise intellectual history as a battle with successive attacks, victories, and defeats in which myth gradually succumbs to the logos and the

⁸⁹ All translations of the pre-Socratic philosophers are by Kirk, Raven and Schofield (1983).

⁹⁰ Linforth (1928) 223.

⁹¹ Price (1999) 126.

⁹² Price (1999) 126.

⁹³ Nestle (1908) 37.

archaic gives way to the modern. And yet from the point of view of the history of religion this is a strange battle: the decisive turn seems to have been taken from the very beginning, but it remains without effect in practice. The picture of the religion as practised changes hardly at all, in spite of the deeds of all the intellectual heroes.⁹⁴

Burkert depicts ‘intellectual heroes’ who conquer the tradition. Using dramatic language Burkert cautions against modern scholars determining intellectual revolutionaries who attempt to violently ‘irrupt into’ and overturn a static religion. Burkert rather suggests that religion retains its practices – albeit in a reactionary way in Burkert’s language – when he says ‘in spite of’ the work of ‘intellectual heroes.’ In this way the emergence of an intellectual culture is not synonymous with a linear progression from mythology to a ‘more rational’ λόγος.⁹⁵ What is arguably most important is the shift in thinking about the divine that occurs, that the divine can now be an object of rational investigation. With the rise of a culture of investigation, there is also a parallel rise in prose writing, which becomes the authoritative medium for presenting knowledge.⁹⁶ This is important because we can see a general language of Ionian science that articulates new intentions of writing – to discover what is knowable about the divine.

The fifth century was characteristic for the emergence of a cultural climate of rigorous testing of traditional ideas; however, this critical culture to a certain extent also depends on the traditional culture. As Thomas Harrison puts it: ‘critiques of traditional ideas may in some sense give focus to those ideas, but they also surely *depend upon those same ideas*.’⁹⁷ The status of the divine was held up to new criteria of judgement rather than being dismantled entirely; there was no Nietzschean ‘God is dead’ moment. Rather, a culture arose which stands out prominently in literary history due to this new methodology that recognised, on the one hand, epistemological and sensory limitations, while on the other hand the primacy of one’s own judgement as important considerations in determining truth. In this climate of investigation individuals became interested in all kinds of empirical phenomena. In his treatise *On nature* (Περὶ φύσεως), Empedocles articulates these methodologies:

⁹⁴ Burkert (1985) 305.

⁹⁵ This idea of linear progress is also the central doctrine of Nestle’s (1940) *Vom mythos zum logos*.

⁹⁶ Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles also stand out as figures that still compose in hexameter, assuming the traditionally authoritative voice of the poets.

⁹⁷ Harrison (2006) 134. Harrison’s italics.

ἀλλ' ἄγ' ἄθρει πάση παλάμῃ, πῆι δῆλον ἕκαστον,
μήτε τιν' ὄψιν ἔχων πίστει πλεόν ἢ κατ' ἀκουήν
ἢ ἀκοὴν ἐρίδουπον ὑπὲρ τρανώματα γλώσσης,
μήτε τι τῶν ἄλλων, ὁπόση πόρος ἐστὶ νοῆσαι,
γυίων πίστιν ἔρυκε, νόει δ' ἢ δῆλον ἕκαστον.

Come now, observe with all your powers how each thing is clear,
neither holding sight in greater trust than hearing,
nor noisy hearing above the other passages of the tongue,
nor withhold trust from any of the other limbs,
by whatever way there is a channel to understanding,
but grasp each thing in the way in which it is clear. (B3, 9–13)

Thus pre-Socratic and sophistic thinkers also acknowledge the limitation of human senses and judgement in the investigation of many subjects.⁹⁸ Trust, *πίστις* in the senses becomes a concern and the hierarchy of reliability of each of the senses. The objects of fifth-century investigation are also vast.

Herodotus stands out as an exemplary individual whose interest is turned in encyclopaedic fashion to many subjects. Thus, early in the twentieth century English essayist Thomas de Quincey saw the title ‘historian’ to be restrictive when we describe Herodotus. De Quincey says: ‘Herodotus ought least of all to be classed amongst historians. That is but a secondary title for him; he deserves to be rated as the leader amongst philosophical ‘polyhistor,’ which is the nearest designation to that of ‘encyclopaedist’ current in the Greek literature.’⁹⁹ For de Quincey it is demeaning to allocate titles to Herodotus such as a ‘fabling annalist,’ or a ‘scenical historian.’¹⁰⁰ It is a misconception that since Herodotus was engaging with many facets of human knowledge he lacked critical acumen or was an unspecialised writer, or that the inclusion of the divine in his account discredits him as a fabulist, or undermines his accuracy.

⁹⁸ I will deal with many passages relevant to this topic in due course in this thesis such as Protagoras B4, Heraclitus B101A, and Xenophanes B34.

⁹⁹ De Quincey (1890) 96–97. For a more modern comparison, Michel Foucault (2002) notes that the eighteenth-century naturalist mathematician, cosmologist, and encyclopédiste, Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon was amazed to find encycloaedic knowledge of a serpent in the writings of his predecessor, Ulisse Aldrovandi.

¹⁰⁰ De Quincey (1890) 99.

When we consider the inclusion of broad subjects in a text such as the *Histories* we would benefit to consider that there is an appropriate way to engage with each individual example of subject matter. In terms of empiricism and the encyclopaedic account of the knowable world we can consider the reflection of Aristotle about broad learning.¹⁰¹ When Aristotle considers the political science, which relies on the other sciences he explains:

πεπαιδευμένου γάρ ἐστιν ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον τὰκριβὲς ἐπιζητεῖν καθ' ἕκαστον.

It is the mark of an educated man to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits (*Nichomachean Ethics*, 1094b.24).¹⁰²

Aristotle takes into account the intersection of different knowledge domains and how one might achieve exactness in each individually to achieve the political greater good. But we must hesitate to apply the same standard of accuracy ἀκρίβεια (here, τὰκριβὲς), to Herodotus, since fifth-century thinkers saw exactness as a difficult goal to achieve, but it was a goal nonetheless. For instance, in argumentative techniques, ἀκρίβεια is cited by Gorgias in his defence of Palamedes' alleged treason. Gorgias addresses his interlocutor: Πότερα γάρ μου κατηγορεῖς εἰδῶς ἀκριβῶς ἢ δοξάζων; 'Do you accuse me, knowing accurately what you say, or imagining it?' (B11a, 22). Thus in the context of arguments one can challenge another individual based on accuracy of their claim, in a very judicial manner, as an important component of a competition, ἀγών of ideas, Protagoras allegedly instituted.¹⁰³

In empirical research the early researchers of the manifold fields of human knowledge that were newly being investigated did not see lack of exactness as a barrier to research. Consider for example the Hippocratic writer of *On ancient medicine*:

οὐ φημι δὲ δεῖν διὰ τοῦτο τὴν τέχνην ὥς οὐκ ἐοῦσαν οὐδὲ καλῶς ζητεομένην τὴν ἀρχαίην ἀποβάλλεσθαι, εἰ μὴ ἔχει περὶ πάντα ἀκρίβειαν, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον διὰ τὸ ἐγγὺς οἶμαι τοῦ ἀτρεκεστάτου δύνασθαι ἥκειν λογισμῷ ἐκ πολλῆς ἀγνοσίης θαυμάζειν τὰ ἐξευρημένα, ὥς καλῶς καὶ ὀρθῶς ἐξεύρηται καὶ οὐκ ἀπὸ τύχης.

¹⁰¹ Heraclitus is also critical of broad learning in fragment B40.

¹⁰² Translation, W. D. Ross in *Aristotle II. Great books of the Western world*. (Mortimer Adler, ed.) 1990.

¹⁰³ DK 80 A1; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of eminent philosophers* 9.52.

I declare, however, that we ought not to reject the ancient art as non-existent, or on the ground that its method of inquiry is faulty, just because it has not attained exactness in every detail, but much rather, because it has been able by reasoning to rise from deep ignorance to approximately perfect accuracy, I think we ought to admire the discoveries as the work, not of chance, but of inquiry rightly and correctly conducted. (*On ancient medicine*, 12.10–16)¹⁰⁴

The practitioners of the medical art accepted a degree of inexactness in their inquiries, but this does not render the art, τέχνη, itself redundant or undermine the credibility of its practitioners. The Hippocratic writers based their understanding on their observations, and their personal judgement. Self-reliance was imperative,¹⁰⁵ and the subsequent discoveries that one achieved would then be scrutinised by one's peers. Like Herodotus, the Hippocratic writers also engaged with vast subject matter, confined within the broad categories of the medical conditions of human beings, while Herodotus had much broader interests encompassing geography, ethnography and the divine, to name just a few categories. Therefore, we are able to see Herodotus as a multi-faceted writer. At times he reports about divine phenomena that are purported to have occurred, at other times he maintains a sceptical stance.

We also see Herodotus making it clear to his audience when he wishes to either include or exclude his findings about the divine. In this way Herodotus arguably demonstrates a critical acumen in accordance with fifth-century methodology and thinking, that is to say a methodological reliance on one's senses and judgement about any subject of investigation, while still being critical of the senses' capacities. As the subject matter of our inquiry the divine is manifested in Herodotus' *Histories* in many manners that require as many ways of appropriately discussing each one. There are many manifestations of the divine in the *Histories*. For example: allusions to specific deities in the pantheon of gods, the manifestation of the divine in epiphanies, the role of the divine in accounts of retribution, divine power in oracles and in dreams. Divine activity is central to human action in the *Histories*. J. Enoch

¹⁰⁴ Greek text and translation: Jones, W. H. S (1959).

¹⁰⁵ Rihll (1999) identifies this self-reliance: 'One of the features of Greek science is that most of its practitioners were autodidacts. Even those who studied under a philosophical giant seem, with very few exceptions, not to have been content to follow a path laid down by a predecessor' (4). Compare Lloyd (1987): 'Egotism, to be sure is not necessarily connected with innovativeness, but the two often go together in early Greek philosophy, especially in claims to set forth the truth that had eluded everyone else' (60). Compare also Thomas (2000), 243.

Powell notes that Herodotus mentions a god (ὁ/ἡ θεός) or gods 272 times.¹⁰⁶ Different appearances of the divine are more or less accessible to empirical, sense-reliant ways of understanding the world. Thus the divine is very prominent in the *Histories*, but Herodotus' treatment of the divine needs to be explored.

The goal of this thesis is to determine Herodotus' proximity to the fifth-century theologians – the individuals categorised as the sophists and pre-Socratics; their methodology, theories about the gods, and challenges to the traditional views of the gods. Individuals termed 'sophists' were prominent in the wider Hellenic world propagating new ideas, through their travel and display of knowledge. I wish to locate Herodotus in two ways, physically, in terms of both where he travelled, and then compiled and presented his research, and also to locate him in terms of engagement with the intellectual conversation of the day. Ultimately I hope to shine a new light on Herodotus' way of treating the divine in its true context – the vibrant fifth-century culture wherein individuals were reconsidering all domains of knowledge, based on empirical understanding, and also argumentative stringency, asserting one's λόγος. Thus I will proceed in chapter 2 – according to the focussed goals outlined in my abstract (pages 4–6 above) – analysing the meanings of the terms σοφός, and σοφιστής. I will then look closely at the practice of display, ἀπόδειξις.

¹⁰⁶ Powell (1938 rpt. 2013) 166.

Chapter 2. THE ΣΟΦΟΣ AND THE DISPLAY (ΕΠΙΔΕΙΞΙΣ) OF KNOWLEDGE

In this chapter I will discuss the concepts of σοφός and σοφιστής, explicating the original meanings of these terms. I will look at Herodotus' account of Solon as σοφός, especially in terms of Solon's travel and collection of cultural knowledge. In comparison I will consider the extent to which Herodotus himself may arguably be considered σοφός/σοφιστής. Finally, I will look closely at the practice of display, ἀπόδειξις that the sophists, and evidently, Herodotus actively participated in to purvey their knowledge, thus facilitating me to challenge the assumption that he was a fabulist. I will look firstly at an ancient account of Herodotus' later-life residence at the colony of Thurii, a significant place to locate him displaying his knowledge.

Herodotus announces himself as 'Herodotus of Halicarnassus' at the beginning of the *Histories*, however Aristotle attributed him the title 'Herodotus of Thurii': Ἡροδότου Θουρίου ἧδ' ἱστορίας ἀπόδειξις, *Rhetoric* 3.9.2.¹⁰⁷ It is attested that Herodotus was born in Halicarnassus and moved to Thurii, a colony whose constitution was drafted by Protagoras and commissioned by Pericles. This is cited in the Byzantine historical encyclopaedia *Suda*, under the 'Herodotus' entry¹⁰⁸ where it is described that Herodotus travelled extensively and located himself in this Panhellenic colony in whose foundation Protagoras participated by drafting the constitution, and to which contemporary intellectuals joined.¹⁰⁹ Herodotus arguably settled in Thurii and finished writing his *Histories* there.¹¹⁰ This is important because we can locate Herodotus in close proximity to the milieu of intellectuals around this time on account of his travel. Travel to large civic centres allowed individuals to present a display, ἀπόδειξις of the results of their inquiry, which was the primary intention Herodotus described of his *Histories* (1.1). This was also the traditional practice of rhapsodes and poets who would present at Olympia, and many individuals utilised such displays in the fifth century to publicise their works. Propagation of new understandings of the world was crucial to the fifth-century milieu and differentiated them from mere writers, which is important for advancing the argument that Herodotus was involved with this milieu and its practices –

¹⁰⁷ Goldhill (2002) however, contests that this is an error on Aristotle's part (11).

¹⁰⁸ *Suidae lexicon; ex recognitione Immanuelis Bekkeri* (1854) 482–3.

¹⁰⁹ Asheri, et al. (2007) 5.

¹¹⁰ Provencal (2015) 31. See also Priestley (2014) 28, and Kerferd (1981) 150.

Herdotus being exemplary as an individual presenting his ideas publicly for critique and applause, and not merely a peripheral figure writing stories to be read.

A notable comparison is with Prodicus who wrote his *Choice of Heracles*, as a display piece to appeal to audiences. This not only points to the intention to revise traditional understanding of a myth and to re-appropriate it as analogy in an intellectual experiment, but also points to the primacy of verbal presentation of ideas, and wide audience appeal. Xenophon recounted that Prodicus gave a display of knowledge to a large audience:

καὶ Πρόδικος δὲ ὁ σοφὸς ἐν τῷ συγγράμματι τῷ περὶ Ἡρακλέους, ὅπερ δὴ καὶ πλείστοις ἐπιδείκνυται, ὡσαύτως περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀποφαίνεται.

And Prodicus the wise expresses himself to the like effect concerning virtue in the essay *On Heracles* that he recites to throngs of listeners. (*Memorabilia*, 2.1.21)¹¹¹

Whether or not Prodicus recited his *Heracles* from memory, or used a written text as an aid is disputed,¹¹² but what is important is that an oral display of knowledge was enacted, ἐπιδείκνυται. Prodicus is here described as σοφός, and it is appropriate for a σοφός to impart knowledge in this performative way as a display piece, ἐπίδειξις and not just as writing.

To be σοφός one had unique knowledge to impart to the world, and from σοφός we also have the term σοφιστής; these two terms require clarification. Diogenes Laertius explains that the term σοφιστής was originally interchangeable with σοφός: οἱ δὲ σοφοὶ καὶ σοφισταὶ ἐκαλοῦντο, ‘Sophists was the other name for the wise men’ (*Lives of eminent philosophers*, prologue, 1.12).¹¹³ Kerferd determines that σοφιστής is ‘clearly related’ to σοφός (‘wise’) and σοφία (‘wisdom’).¹¹⁴ Kerferd notes that it became established in the lexicography to establish an historical progression of the meaning of the term σοφιστής (derived from, σοφίζομαι): initially ‘master of one’s craft, adept, expert;’ then ‘wise, prudent or statesmanlike man’ as of the seven wise men; and finally the term is formalised – ‘Sophist,’ meaning precisely one who gave lessons for money.¹¹⁵ Kerferd argues that Aristotle anachronistically schematised

¹¹¹ Translation, E. C. Marchant (1923).

¹¹² Thomas (2000) suggests that in these scenarios text was a memory aid for speeches (254).

¹¹³ Guthrie (1971) 28.

¹¹⁴ Kerferd (1981) 24.

¹¹⁵ Kerferd (1950) 8, (1981) 24. The categories appear thus in LSJ⁹.

the history of the term σοφιστής in accordance with the philosopher's desire to create a model of historical thought progressing from the particular to the universal.¹¹⁶ Kerferd makes the distinction that the terms σοφός and σοφία can apply to a range of skills, while σοφιστής applies specifically to those individuals who function as sages, the exponents of knowledge in early communities, the term applying 'to poets, including Homer and Hesiod, to musicians and rhapsodes, to diviners and seers, to the seven wise men and other early wise men, to pre-Socratic philosophers, and to figures such as Prometheus with a suggestion of mysterious powers.'¹¹⁷ We see the first rendition of the term, as one who is 'skilled' in an art in Pindar's writing:

μελέταν δὲ σοφισταῖς

Διὸς ἑκατὶ πρόσβαλον σεβιζόμενοι.

They [viz. 'heroes,' ἥρωες] who are honoured by the grace of Zeus provide a theme for skilled poets.¹¹⁸ Pindar, *Isthmian*, 5.28–29

Hesiod also uses the term σεσοφισμένος to describe expertise in seafaring.¹¹⁹ Thus for earlier poets the term indeed refers to aptitude in certain domains, in the cited passages: poetry or sailing. The term took on a more specific designation with Diogenes of Apollonia, another contemporary of Herodotus who assigned the natural philosophers, φυσιολόγοι this title σοφισταί before it was revised to the specific grouping of professionals.¹²⁰ It is important to note that individuals did not allocate themselves the designation 'sophist,' or 'philosopher' in the fifth century. However there existed a culture where one could label their contemporary a σοφιστής, with whom they compared themselves to, and with whom they often competed in a competition of ideas, an ἀγών.¹²¹

The later meaning associated with professionalism is seen in *Hippias Major*, discussing Prodicus:

ἐπιδείξεις ποιούμενος καὶ τοῖς νέοις συνὼν χρήματα ἔλαβεν θαυμαστὰ ὅσα.

'...by giving exhibitions and associating with the young, he received a marvellous sum of money' (282c).

¹¹⁶ Kerferd (1981) 24, Tell (2011) 24.

¹¹⁷ Kerferd (1950) 8.

¹¹⁸ Translation, Hugh G. Evelyn-White (1914).

¹¹⁹ Hesiod, *Works and days*, 649. Although, in this instance, Kerferd conjectures that the term refers to knowledge rather than skill (1950) 8.

¹²⁰ D1 (< A4) Simplicius. *Physica*, p. 151.24–29 = DK 64A4.

[. . .] ἰστέον ὡς γέγραπται μὲν πλείονα τῷ Διογένει τούτῳ συγγράμματα (ὡς αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ Περὶ φύσεως ἐμνήσθη καὶ πρὸς φυσιολόγους ἀντειρηκέναι λέγων, οὗς καλεῖ καὶ αὐτὸς σοφιστάς.

[. . .] one must know that this Diogenes wrote a number of treatises, as he himself says in his *On nature*, when he says that he wrote a reply against the natural philosophers, whom he himself calls 'sophists' [or: 'wise men,' σοφιστάς]. Translation André Laks (2016) 226–227.

¹²¹ Brunschwig, et al. (2000) 8.

Exemplary of this culture of competition is Xenophanes is described by Kirk, Raven and Schofield as ‘a critic, primarily, with an original and often idiosyncratic approach; not a specialist but a true σοφιστής or sage, prepared to turn his intelligence upon almost every problem [...] which is why Heraclitus attacked him.’¹²² In this sense the word takes on the additional aspect, namely that one who is σοφός displays one’s knowledge and is therefore open to scrutiny. Thus, it is more than skill that the term entails, but the privileged access to knowledge about the society, or gods, to which the σοφιστής has access that is important.¹²³ It is also important that the term did not originally have derogatory connotations, but was one of praise of special individuals, often suggesting that one had powers of divination, thus granting these individuals cultural authority of knowledge about matters such as the gods – and they were honoured accordingly, as in Pindar above (*Isthmian*, 5).¹²⁴ It follows that σοφισταί, as public figures, can skilfully contest their contemporaries’ σοφία. This awareness of one’s public σοφία is visible as early as in the elegiac poetry of Theognis:

Κύρνε, σοφίζομένω μὲν ἐμοὶ σφρηγὶς ἐπικείσθω
 τοῖσδ’ ἔπεσιν, λήσει δ’ οὐποτε κλεπτόμενα,
 οὐδέ τις ἀλλάξει κάκιον τοῦσθλοῦ παρεόντος,
 ὧδε δὲ πᾶς τις ἐρεῖ· ‘Θεὺγνιδὸς ἐστὶν ἔπη
 τοῦ Μεγαρέως πάντας δὲ κατ’ ἀνθρώπους ὀνομαστοῦ,’
 ἀστοῖσιν δ’ οὐπω πᾶσιν ἀδεῖν δύναιμαι·

Let the seal of the wise man, Cynrus, be set upon these lines, and they shall never be filched from him, nor shall evil ever be changed with their good, but every man shall say ‘these are the lines of Theognis of Megara, famous throughout the world,’ albeit I have not yet been able to please all my fellow townsmen. (Theognis, *Elegiac poems*, 19–24)¹²⁵

Here, Theognis implores his beloved, Cynrus to maintain the poet’s ‘seal of wisdom’ (σοφίζομένω μὲν ἐμοὶ) and not let it be replaced by inferior quality (κάκιον τοῦσθλοῦ παρεόντος). Theognis also makes explicit his historical inability to please all of his people with his poetry. Here we see Theognis at the point that Leslie Kurke argues is ‘the moment of

¹²² Kirk, Raven and Schofield (1983) 168.

¹²³ Kerferd (1981) 24.

¹²⁴ Kurke (2011) 98.

¹²⁵ Translation, J. M. Edwards (1931).

overt competition in the quality of wisdom.¹²⁶ We see here a sixth-century example of display and critique of wisdom. In the dialogue the *Protagoras*, by Plato, Protagoras also makes explicit the various individuals who practiced the sophistic art from ancient times:

ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν σοφιστικὴν τέχνην φημὶ μὲν εἶναι παλαιάν, τοὺς δὲ μεταχειριζομένους αὐτὴν τῶν παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν, φοβουμένους τὸ ἐπαχθὲς αὐτῆς, πρόσχημα ποιεῖσθαι καὶ προκαλύπτεσθαι, τοὺς μὲν ποίησιν, οἷον Ὅμηρόν τε καὶ Ἡσίοδον καὶ Σιμωνίδην, τοὺς δὲ αὖτε τελετάς τε καὶ χρησμοδίας, τοὺς ἀμφὶ τε Ὀρφέα καὶ Μουσαῖον· ἐνίοις δὲ τινὰς ἥσθηται καὶ γυμναστικὴν, οἷον Ἴκκος τε ὁ Ταραντῖνος καὶ ὁ νῦν ἔτι ὢν οὐδενὸς ἥττων σοφιστῆς Ἡρόδικος ὁ Σηλυμβριανός, τὸ δὲ ἀρχαῖον Μεγαρεύς· μουσικὴν δὲ Ἀγαθοκλῆς τε ὁ ὑμέτερος πρόσχημα ἐποιήσατο, μέγας ὢν σοφιστής, καὶ Πυθοκλείδης ὁ Κεῖος καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοί.

Now I tell you that sophistry is an ancient art, and those men of ancient times who practised it, fearing the odium it involved, disguised it in a decent dress, sometimes of poetry, as in the case of Homer, Hesiod, and Simonides sometimes of mystic rites and soothsayings, as did Orpheus, Musaeus and their sects; and sometimes too, I have observed, of athletics, as with Iccus of Tarentum and another still living – as great a sophist as any – Herodicus of Selymbria, originally of Megara; and music was the disguise employed by your own Agathocles, a great sophist, Pythocleides of Ceos, and many more. (Plato, *Protagoras*, 316d–e)

Here Plato's Protagoras suggests that there have been sophists from very early times in Greece, but that the negative connotation of being labelled a sophist (φοβουμένους τὸ ἐπαχθὲς αὐτῆς) due to the association with being a practitioner (μεταχειριζομένους) of the sophistic art (σοφιστικὴν τέχνην), prevented such individuals from taking on the term voluntarily.¹²⁷ Grote makes the accusation against Plato, who he argues took the term sophist out of circulation, divorcing it from its original meaning, and attaching the negative

¹²⁶ Kurke (2011) 107.

¹²⁷ Kurke (2011) takes this to be 'partly tongue-in-cheek' on Plato's part (108), while Grote sees a more 'unfriendly spirit' of Plato here (1872) volume 8, 312. On the other hand, Kerferd sees Protagoras wanting to attach himself to an honorable tradition (1981) 24. Notwithstanding these views, the passage shines light on the history and diversity of 'sophistic' practice.

connotation to it.¹²⁸ Later in the dialogue, on the other hand, Protagoras readily asserts that the term pertains to himself, even proudly stating: καὶ ὁμολογῶ τε σοφιστὴς εἶναι καὶ παιδεύειν ἄνθρώπους ‘I admit that I am a sophist and that I educate men’ (317b).¹²⁹ Here we have a key predicate – that the σοφιστὴς is a teacher.¹³⁰ Sophists were, as Jacqueline de Romilly puts it, ‘masters of thinking masters of talking,’ and as Thrasymachus put it himself, ‘wisdom is my profession,’ ἡ δὲ τέχνη σοφία (A8).¹³¹ Kerferd determines that this is significant: that Plato’s Protagoras here is using the term in its later sense of a teacher of virtue.¹³² What is important is that Protagoras traces the tradition back to the didactic roles of the poets who were expected to provide practical instruction and moral advice.¹³³

Furthermore, in the *Hippias Major*, Socrates speaks of Prodicus’ professionalism, thus adding another predicate and formalising the term σοφιστὴς: ἐπιδείξεις ποιούμενος καὶ τοῖς νέοις συνὼν χρήματα ἔλαβεν θαυμαστὰ ὅσα ‘...by giving exhibitions and associating with the young, he received a marvellous sum of money’ (282c). But, the term σοφιστὴς arguably had meanings beyond the Platonic definition of professional, and Håkan Tell contests σοφιστὴς was still applicable to groups of individuals other than those contained within the ‘artificial demarcation’ of professional teachers that Plato categorised.¹³⁴ For example, in Aristophanes’ *Clouds* (360–361), the chorus announces that Prodicus and Socrates are the pinnacle of the astrological sophists (μετεωροσοφισταί). Accordingly, as mentioned above, Kerferd notes that from the fifth century onwards – if we look beyond Plato’s later strict delineation of the term – σοφιστὴς became a broad term encompassing a diverse range of individuals.¹³⁵ The common feature is that each is a public figure with special practical skill, τέχνη or understanding, σοφία to share, while sometimes we may grant, also being a paid professional.

¹²⁸ Grote (1872, volume 8): ‘Plato not only stole the name out of general circulation in order to fasten it specially upon his opponents the paid teachers, but also connected with it express discreditable attributes, which formed no part of its primitive and recognised meaning, and were altogether distinct from, though grafted upon, the vague sentiment of dislike associated with it’ (315).

¹²⁹ Guthrie (1971): ‘his boast has an element of bravado: it needs courage to declare oneself a sophist’ (34). Compare Thrasymachus (B8).

¹³⁰ De Romilly (1992) 1.

¹³¹ De Romilly (1992) 1.

¹³² Kerferd (1950) 9.

¹³³ Guthrie (1971) 29.

¹³⁴ Tell (2011) 33.

¹³⁵ Kerferd (1981) 24.

George Grote articulates that a sophist ‘in the genuine sense of the word, was a wise man – a clever man – one who stood prominently before the public as distinguished for intellect or talent of some kind.’¹³⁶ Furthermore, Grote cautions against a broad-brush approach of categorising sophists into one camp, since their doctrines, methods, or tendencies differed; what was consistent was their commitment to teaching.¹³⁷ We might expand on this to include travellers who stood as before rulers of foreign kingdoms to present their knowledge, as well as presenting before the broader public, as I will examine as exemplary in the encounter between Croesus and Solon.

The criticism of their professionalism thus eventually differentiated the sophists as a category unto themselves, and not only that they received payment for teaching, but also for performance. Simon Goldhill describes that ‘the new intellectuals known as Sophists were celebrated for their set-piece rhetorical displays, often on paradoxical subjects, which were delivered often to large audiences.’¹³⁸ Herodotus is said to have won accolades for giving public readings in Athens in 445/4 BCE,¹³⁹ for which the council paid him ten talents.¹⁴⁰ Eusebius attests for this in his *Chronicle*: ‘Herodotus was honoured when he read his books in the council at Athens’ Herodotus,’ (*cum Athenis libros suos in consilio legisset, honoratus est*).¹⁴¹

To an extent, the notion that Herodotus too received payment for his display of knowledge aligns him to the sophists who were itinerant travellers imparting their knowledge for payment.¹⁴² It also shows two sides of Herodotus: the prose writer and the orator. In contrast, and as an implicit criticism of Herodotus, Thucydides wanted his prose to stand by itself: κτῆμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν ξύγκειται, ‘My work is not a piece of writing designed to meet the taste of an immediate public, but was done to last for ever’ *History*, 1.22.3. The pursuit of an ἀγώνισμα, a competitive prize often for athletic prowess or adept horsemanship, makes the presentation of a λόγος analogous to other public

¹³⁶ Grote (1872) Volume 8, 312.

¹³⁷ Grote (1872) Volume 8, 332–333.

¹³⁸ Goldhill (2002) 12.

¹³⁹ Provencal (2015): ‘Herodotus’ public reading in Athens occurred about the same time as Protagoras was commissioned by Pericles to compose a constitution for the Panhellenic colony of Thurii, which Herodotus is reported to have joined, and where he finished his work and life’ (31). See Lucian, *Herodotus* 1–3.

¹⁴⁰ Provencal (2015) 15. Also attested by Asheri, et al. (2007) 3–4.

¹⁴¹ This event is dated to the year 445/4 (Eusebius, *Chronicle*, book 1, 83.4).

¹⁴² Plutarch accuses Herodotus of: ‘that charge Herodotus bears of flattering the Athenians to get a lot of money from them’ ἐκείνην τὴν διαβολήν, ἣν ἔχει κολακεύσας τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἀργύριον πολλὰ λαβεῖν παρ’ αὐτῶν. *De Herodoti malignitate*, 862a.

displays of prowess, one's display of mind is equally impressive as the physical displays of cavalry and athletes.¹⁴³

Protagoras makes explicit this connection between displays of prowess of the mind and physical competitions, as it is known that an alternative title to his work *Truth*,¹⁴⁴ was also referred to as καταβάλλοντες (λόγοι), a metaphor for wrestling, meaning 'arguments that overthrow others.'¹⁴⁵ Protagoras also famously aimed to make the weaker argument stronger: καὶ τὸ τὸν ἥττω δὲ λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν τοῦτ' ἔστιν.¹⁴⁶ This notion of striving for a prize in argumentative contest became a central doctrine for Protagoras as he entitled another work *The art of controversy*, Τέχνη ἐριστικῶν.¹⁴⁷ Strife, ἐρίς is necessary to convey one's λόγος. This strife often took the metaphorical connotation of a physical competition, an ἀγών, hence Thrasymachus' work entitled *Knock-down arguments*, Υπερβάλλοντας [viz. λόγους] (B7), and, similarly, Protagoras' *Refutations*, Καταβάλλοντες [viz. λόγοι] (B1), both titles containing an overt physicality perhaps inspired by Greek wrestling. Beating one's opponent at an argument was thus very tangibly represented.

Although Herodotus does not employ sophistic techniques in the presentation of his λόγος, he is clearly aware of the Sophists' eristic technique as it is used by figures such as Xerxes in these characters' debates with others. Herodotus himself does not employ the technique as his own narrative style, but it is the voice of a character, or as Irene de Jong would see it, 'focalised' by a character in the narrative.¹⁴⁸ Consider Xerxes' debate with Artabanus in book 7:

εἰ δὲ ἐρίζων πρὸς πᾶν τὸ λεγόμενον μὴ τὸ βέβαιον ἀποδέξεις, σφάλλεσθαι
ὀφείλεις ἐν αὐτοῖσι ὁμοίως καὶ ὁ ὑπεναντία τούτοισι λέξας.

¹⁴³ For example, Xenophon outlines the aptitudes of cavalry riders who aim to present aesthetically pleasing displays of feats:

καὶ ὅτι μὲν ταῦτα οὐκ εἰθισμένοι ποιεῖν οἱ ἵππεῖς εἰσιν οἶδα· γινώσκω δὲ ὅτι ἀγαθὰ καὶ καλὰ καὶ τοῖς θεαταῖς ἡδέα ἔσται. αἰσθάνομαι δὲ καὶ ἄλλα ἀγωνίσματα τοὺς ἵππεας κεκαινουργηκότας, ἐπειδὴ οἱ ἵππαρχοι ἱκανοὶ ἐγένοντο πεῖσαι ἃ ἐβουλήθησαν.

'I know that our cavalymen are not accustomed to these movements: but I am sure that they are desirable and beautiful, and will delight the spectators. I am aware, too, that the cavalry have exhibited other novel feats of skill in days when the cavalry commanders had sufficient influence to get their wishes carried out.'

Xenophon, *On the Cavalry Commander*, 3.5. Greek and translation, E. C. Marchant (1925).

¹⁴⁴ '...in the beginning of his *Truth*,' ἀρχόμενος τῆς Ἀληθείας, Plato *Theaetetus*, 161c.

¹⁴⁵ Guthrie (1971) 183. Compare Thrasymachus' text entitled: ὑπερβάλλοντες λόγοι (B7).

¹⁴⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II.24, 1402a23.

¹⁴⁷ DK 80A1. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of eminent philosophers*, 9.52, 55.

¹⁴⁸ De Jong (2014): see the section on 'Embedded focalisation' § 3.2.

If you dispute whatever is said to you, but can never prove your objections, you are as likely to be wrong as the other man – indeed there is nothing to choose between you. (7.50.2)¹⁴⁹

In accompaniment to eristic techniques voiced by his historic character Xerxes, Herodotus utilises the technique that Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives of eminent philosophers* credits that ‘Protagoras was the first to maintain that there are two sides to every question’¹⁵⁰ Καὶ πρῶτος ἔφη δύο λόγους εἶναι περὶ παντὸς πράγματος ἀντικειμένους ἀλλήλοις (9.51), and further that Protagoras was the first to institute contests in debating, λόγων ἀγῶνας (9.52; DK 80 A1) and also that he wrote a work entitled *Opposing arguments*, Ἀντιλογιῶν (9.55). The Persian constitutional debate in book 3 won by Darius, and within which the contestants put forth arguments for and against monarchy, oligarchy and democracy demonstrates Herodotus’ familiarity with the sophistic technique of presenting arguments, while he does not make an explicit personal judgement.¹⁵¹

Fifth century intellectuals such as Protagoras – and also traditionally, poets such as Pindar – gained renown for the recitation of their works at Olympia each year to complement the displays of physical prowess performed there. Lucian of Samosata acknowledged the renown Herodotus gained from presenting his written works at the Olympic games, in a fashion identical to the sophists (*Herodotus*, 1–2). Lucian reports of the skill level of Herodotus, and how he was distinguished from his imitators, due to the myriad beautiful, μυρία καλά elements of his writing. Moreover, Lucian describes how Herodotus travelled from his Carian home to Greece with the intention that find the quickest way to win a brilliant reputation for himself and his works in front of the broadest audience, ἐπίσημος καὶ περιβόητος γένοιτο καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ τὰ συγγραμμάτια. Lucian goes further to explain that Herodotus had the ambition of impressing all of Greece at once, rather than by winning acclaim in a piece-meal fashion across the different city-states in turn. Therefore he recited

¹⁴⁹ All Greek text of the *Histories* is from the Oxford Classical Texts, *Herodoti Historiae* (2015). Unless specified, all English translations of the *Histories* are by Aubrey de Sélincourt (2003).

¹⁵⁰ Translation R. D. Hicks (2005). We of course, find debate and dissent in Homer’s *Iliad* book 1 between Achilles’ and Agamemnon.

¹⁵¹ Provencal (2015) 38. Compare Hornblower (1987): ‘He has been called the only fully surviving pre-Socratic, and there are frequent signs that he was alert to the intellectual movements of the third quarter of the fifth century, in particular to the habit of dialectical arguing and of treating debate as a ‘contest like a political or a legal ἀγὼν’ or duel’ (16). Also compare Nestle (1908): Hört man deutlich den Ton der sophistischen Eristik aus diesen Debatten heraus. ‘One often hears the tone of sophistic eristic from these debates.’ (15) My translation.

his works at the Panhellenic Olympic Games, achieving great success. Lucian describes Herodotus' intentions and the outcome of his recitation:

παρελθὼν ἐς τὸν ὀπισθόδομον οὐ θεατήν, ἀλλ' ἀγωνιστὴν παρείχεν ἑαυτὸν Ὀλυμπίων ἄδων τὰς ἱστορίας καὶ κηλῶν τοὺς παρόντας, ἄχρι τοῦ καὶ Μούσας κληθῆναι τὰς βίβλους αὐτοῦ, ἐννέα καὶ αὐτὰς οὔσας. ἤδη οὖν ἅπαντες αὐτὸν ἤδεσαν πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἢ τοὺς Ὀλυμπιονίκας αὐτοῦς.

Then he appeared in the temple hall, bent not on sight-seeing, but on bidding for an Olympic victory of his own; he recited his Histories, and bewitched his hearers; nothing would do but each book must be named after one of the Muses, to which they correspond. He was straightaway known to all, better far than the Olympic winners. (Lucian, *Herodotus* 1–2)¹⁵²

Herodotus is here also depicted as singing, and not just recounting the victories of Greece in a Panhellenic celebration, ὁ τὰς νίκας ἡμῶν ὑμνήσας. This surely exemplifies Herodotus' debt to Homer, and the desire to convey a sense of victory, in the competitive mode of Olympic athletes and intellectuals who would demonstrate their prowess as the Olympic Games, the latter category including Pindar and the Sophists.¹⁵³ It also demonstrates the impact Herodotus had on his audience, his presentation being described with the ambivalent participle κηλῶν, 'bewitching.' Herodotus' Panhellenic renown undoubtedly made its way into the Athenian intellectual conversations of the day. Asheri makes this explicit:

It is not to be denied that Herodotus' public readings were renowned in intellectual circles at Athens and that Sophocles in particular was impressed by his views on the barbarians as well as by his ethical and religious ideas. Ancient sources do not mention any contact with Pericles... it remains true, however, that Herodotus' Athens was also Pericles' Athens, as well as the Athens of Sophocles, Euripides and Protagoras.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Translation Fowler and Fowler (2014).

¹⁵³ For Pindar as agonistic poet see O'Sullivan (2015). Plutarch in his *De Herodoti malignitate* – referring to Diyllus of Athens' record (*FGrH* 73 F3) – also mentions that a certain Anytus proposed to offer Herodotus a payment of ten talents for his recitation (862b). Payment for a recitation connects Herodotus to the professional culture of the sophists.

¹⁵⁴ Asheri, et al. (2007) 4.

It cannot be denied that Herodotus ideas had an impact on the intellectual milieu of Athens, and that a connection with Sophocles was likely.¹⁵⁵ Herodotus was familiar with the prominent motifs and theological ideas inherent in tragedy, which I will analyse in terms of tragic understanding, ἀναγνώρισις, which individuals such as Croesus must endure on the way to becoming σοφός.

Indeed, the Croesus-Solon interaction in book 2 becomes the vehicle through which Herodotus can demonstrate Solon's display of σοφία.¹⁵⁶ This pays homage to the traditional notion the archetypical travelling observer exemplary in Homer's Odysseus.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, travel to distant places was synonymous with gaining a new understanding of the world,¹⁵⁸ as the seven sages travelled to consult the oracle at Delphi. Herodotus refers to σοφισταί on multiple occasions: Solon and the sages who visited Croesus at Sardis (1.29.1), Pythagoras (4.95.2), and Melampus and his followers, which individuals are said to have introduced Dionysus to the Greeks (2.49.1). As I have discussed, the original designation of the word was to one who was an exponent of knowledge.¹⁵⁹ Solon is cited by Plutarch as a figure in unbroken line of σοφισταί who became teachers of political and practical arts, τέχναι.¹⁶⁰ We see here the crystallisation of professional sophists:

μᾶλλον οὖν ἂν τις προσέχοι τοῖς Μνησιφίλου τὸν Θεμιστοκλέα τοῦ Φρεαρρίου
 ζηλωτὴν γενέσθαι λέγουσιν, οὔτε ῥήτορος ὄντος οὔτε τῶν φυσικῶν κληθέντων
 φιλοσόφων, ἀλλὰ τὴν τότε καλουμένην σοφίαν, οὔσαν δὲ δεινότητα πολιτικὴν
 καὶ δραστήριον σύνεσιν, ἐπιτήδευμα πεπονημένου καὶ διασώζοντος ὥσπερ
 αἴρεσιν ἐκ διαδοχῆς ἀπὸ Σόλωνος· ἦν οἱ μετὰ ταῦτα δικανικαῖς μίξαντες τέχναις
 καὶ μεταγαγόντες ἀπὸ τῶν πράξεων τὴν ἄσκησιν ἐπὶ τοὺς λόγους, σοφισταὶ
 προσηγορεύθησαν. τούτῳ μὲν οὖν ἤδη πολιτευόμενος ἐπλησίαζεν.

¹⁵⁵ Darbo-Peschanski (2017) 81.

¹⁵⁶ De Jong (2014) determines this direct expression of historical characters' thoughts and emotions in a text as 'embedded focalization,' which she argues Thucydides and Herodotus use amply (170).

¹⁵⁷ Compare Christopher Pelling (2006): 'Already there is an elevation of Herodotus himself as his subject: he is the new Odysseus, a man who has travelled and talks about those travels, as well as the new Homer; the 'things put on display', ἀποδεχθέντα, of the people he writes about are matched, indeed dependent on, his own 'putting on display', ἀπόδειξις. And that insertion of his own person not just into the proem but also frequently into the narrative, partly as the one with the insight and knowledge to give authority (no need for the Muse for him, then), partly as the one whose curiosity and human understanding are so infectious – that is an important new step' (79).

¹⁵⁸ Kurke (2011) 112.

¹⁵⁹ Tell (2011) 24.

¹⁶⁰ Kerferd (1950) 9.

Rather, then, might one side with those who say that Themistocles was a disciple of Mnesiphilus the Phrearrhian, a man who was neither a rhetorician nor one of the so-called physical philosophers, but a cultivator of what was then called ‘sophia’ or wisdom, although it was really nothing more than cleverness in politics and practical sagacity. Mnesiphilus received this ‘sophia,’ and handed it down, as though it were the doctrine of a sect, in unbroken tradition from Solon. His successors blended it with forensic arts, and shifted its application from public affairs to language, and were dubbed ‘sophists.’ It was this man, then, to whom Themistocles resorted at the very beginning of his public life. (Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 2.4)

Here Plutarch determines Mnesiphilus as the teacher of Themistocles, a figure that does indeed receive mention in the *Histories* (8.57). We see the differentiation between the physical philosophers, in that Mnesiphilus cultivated σοφία – although Plutarch downplays this as cleverness, δεινότητα – in political and practical sagacity. Plutarch also determines how the sophistic art has changed from focussing on public affairs to language. This is important since persuasion, πειθώ and likelihood, εἰκός become key focuses of sophistic writings.¹⁶¹ The crucial aspect, moreover, is the role of Solon instigating the communication of σοφία via Mnesiphilus to Themistocles. We see such a depiction of Solon in a different light when we see his interaction with Croesus in book 1 of the *Histories*, where we see the σοφιστής as the travelling wise man engaging in a dialectic narrative.

To look at the works of another figure, Isocrates cites Solon as the original figure to receive the title ‘sophist,’ as Isocrates also describes an earlier time when sophists were respected individuals:

οὐκ οὐν ἐπὶ γε τῶν προγόνων οὕτως εἶχεν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς μὲν καλουμένους σοφιστὰς ἐθαύμαζον καὶ τοὺς συνόντας αὐτοῖς ἐζήλουν, τοὺς δὲ συκοφάντας πλείστων κακῶν αἰτίους ἐνόμιζον εἶναι.

μέγιστον δὲ τεκμήριον· Σόλωνα μὲν γάρ, τὸν πρῶτον τῶν πολιτῶν λαβόντα τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ταύτην, προστάτην ἡξίωσαν τῆς πόλεως εἶναι,

¹⁶¹ Plato, *Gorgias* 453a; Gorgias (B82 11a).

Things were not like that in the time of our ancestors; on the contrary, they admired the sophists, as they called them, and envied the good fortune of their disciples, while they blamed the sycophants for most of their ills.

You will find the strongest proof of this in the fact that they saw fit to put Solon, who was the first of the Athenians to receive the title of sophist, at the head of the state... (Isocrates, *Antidosis*, 15.313)

In this piece, Isocrates cites Solon to be the original sophist, and an original context within which sophists were praised. In the analysis of Herodotus' Solon I hope to determine the extent to which the notion of the travelling σοφιστής reflects Herodotus' own inclinations, encompassing his own travel, collection of impressions, and subsequent desire to display his discoveries as a σοφός. Further to this, my analysis endeavours to reveal similarities in Herodotus' theological project that mirror his contemporaries'. Thus I turn now to the Croesus λόγος to analyse in more detail Solon's display of σοφία, and also roles as teacher, that makes him exemplary as σοφιστής.

2.1 Croesus and Solon – σοφιστής, travel, display and understanding

A prime example of a travelling σοφιστής in the *Histories* is Solon. Croesus recognises Solon to be wise when the Athenian visits the Lydian king in book 1. Croesus addresses Solon thus:

ξεῖνε Ἀθηναῖε, παρ' ἡμέας γὰρ περὶ σέο λόγος ἀπῖκται πολλὸς καὶ σοφίης εἵνεκεν τῆς σῆς καὶ πλάνης, ὥς φιλοσοφέων γῆν πολλὴν θεωρίης εἵνεκεν ἐπελήλυθας· νῦν ὧν ἱμερος ἐπειρέσθαι μοι ἐπῆλθέ σε εἴ τινα ἤδη πάντων εἶδες ὀλβιώτατον.

Well, my Athenian friend, I have heard a great deal about your wisdom, and how widely you have travelled in the pursuit of knowledge. I cannot resist my desire to ask you a question: who is the happiest man you have ever seen? (1.30.2)

Croesus respects Solon on account of his wisdom and wanderings: σοφίης εἵνεκεν τῆς σῆς καὶ πλάνης, and the Lydian king desires to make an impression upon Solon through his own display, ἀπόδειξις, namely of his material wealth. Herodotus intends to contrast the materialistic ideology of Croesus with the more austere, philosophical view of Solon. This

aligns with Plutarch's account of Solon, who entered a career in commerce, not to make money, but to travel the world:

καίτοι φασὶν ἔνιοι πολυπείρίας ἔνεκα μᾶλλον καὶ ἱστορίας ἢ χρηματισμοῦ
πλανηθῆναι τὸν Σόλωνα. σοφίας μὲν γὰρ ἦν ὁμολογουμένως ἐραστής,
And yet some say that he travelled to get experience and learning rather than to
make money. For he was admittedly a lover of wisdom. (Plutarch, *Solon*, 2.1)

Plutarch depicts Solon as a lover of wisdom, σοφίας ἐραστής, and also, importantly for this thesis, that he preferred learning, ἱστορίη rather than wealth, – ἱστορίη draws a parallel with Herodotus who outlines his project in the proem to be a display of inquiry: ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις (1.1).

Croesus instructs his attendants to display to Solon 'the richness and magnificence of everything,' ἐπεδείκνυσαν πάντα ἔοντα μεγάλα τε καὶ ὀλβία (1.30.2). This act does not persuade Solon, for whom the person who completes a life well, τελευτήσῃ τὸν βίον εὖ (1.32.7), must be considered the most fortunate. Solon's first candidate is Tellus the Athenian. Tellus' fortune consisted in a healthy state of his city during his lifetime, further that he had noble children and grandchildren, that he had a life of prosperity and comfort as an Athenian, and that he ended his life in battle followed by a public burial. Herodotus' use of πολλά τε καὶ ὀλβία to describe Tellus (1.31.1), echoes the description of Croesus' wealth above. This makes the contrast even stronger between the two concepts of fortune realised in either material wealth or a life that ends well.¹⁶² Solon then proceeds to grant second place to the Argive brothers Cleobis and Biton. These brothers had adequate wealth and physical strength, the latter leading them to win prizes at games. They won fame by escorting their mother by dragging her cart to the temple of Hera over a distance of five stades. After receiving acclamation from their people and lying down to die after feasting, statues of them were erected to celebrate their excellence. Croesus was offended by being judged less fortunate than these humble individuals. It is not until Croesus has encountered great misfortune, with the killing of his son Atys during a boar hunt:

¹⁶² Harrison (2000) 34.

μετὰ δὲ Σόλωνα οἰχόμενον ἔλαβέ ἐκ θεοῦ νέμεσις μεγάλη Κροῖσον, ὥς εἰκάσαι, ὅτι ἐνόμισε ἐωυτὸν εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων ὀλβιώτατον. αὐτίκα δέ οἱ εὕδοντι ἐπέστη ὄνειρος, ὅς οἱ τὴν ἀληθείην ἔφαινε τῶν μελλόντων γενέσθαι κακῶν κατὰ τὸν παῖδα.

After Solon's departure nemesis fell upon Croesus, presumably because God was angry with him for supposing himself the happiest of all men. It began with a dream he had about a disaster to one of his sons: a dream which came true. (1.34.1)

This summary beginning to the Atys/Adrastus λόγος, as a stylistic motif is, for Irene de Jong, a placeholder for a chapter heading, which would be, in the act of oral presentation, a reminder device, whether the oration be from memory or a reading.¹⁶³ This observation fits nicely with the argument that Herodotus presented his λόγος in the manner of the sophists, with markers to assist him in the flow of his speech, implying that it plausibly was recited. After losing his son and his empire, Croesus understands that Solon is truly σοφός.¹⁶⁴ But this realisation is only crystallised after the Lydian king is faced with impending death on the lit pyre, saved by divine intervention. Croesus becomes a mythical figure in the Greek imagination representing the wealthy individual who must find a new understanding of fortune based on more aspects of existence than the accumulation of wealth.¹⁶⁵ Thus, in a comparison with a poetic representation, this divine intervention at this crucial moment is articulated explicitly in the poet Bacchylides' *Ode 3* to another wealthy king, Hieron:

ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ δεινοῦ πυρὸς
λαμπρὸν διαῖ[σεν μέ]νος,
Ζεὺς ἐπιστάσα[ς μελαγκευ]θὲς νέφος
σβέννυνεν ξανθὰ[ν φλόγα].
ἄπιστον οὐδέν, ὃ τι θ[εῶν μέ]ριμνα

¹⁶³ De Jong (2014): 'The narrative begins with a summary announcement of what is to come. This is the header technique that we find throughout the history of Greek narrative and that can be considered the oral counterpart of our modern-age chapter heading. After all, Herodotus' *Histories* most likely started life as a series of public lectures, and verbal signs must structure the text for its hearers (or, even after the text had been written down, function as the paratextual apparatus which was as yet largely lacking)' (174).

¹⁶⁴ Ellis (2015): 'A prominent idea associated with divine φόβος in the fifth century [...] was that no individual, empire, dynasty, or city could enjoy perpetual good fortune without suffering some reversal' (23–24). Compare the Aeschylean notion of learning through suffering, πάθει μάθος (*Agamemnon*, 177).

¹⁶⁵ Croesus also appears on his pyre on a red figure vase by fifth-century potter and painter Myson. Paris, Musée du Louvre G197; *ARV*² 237, 238, 238.1; *Addenda*² 201; BAD 202176.

τεύχει· τότε Δαλογενῆς Ἀπόλλων
φέρων ἐς Ὑπερβορέους γέροντα
σὺν τανισφύροις κατένασσε κούραις
δὶ εὐσέβειαν, ὅτι μέγιστα θνατῶν.
But then,
just as the luminous force
of fearsome flame leapt up, Zeus
covered it over with black cloud
and the gold-red fire was suppress'd.
Nothing defies belief if care of the gods
has contrived it: next Apollo, Delian-born,
carried the old man off to Hyperborean lands,
there to live with his light-limbed girls
because of actions of piety! (3.53–62)¹⁶⁶

Zeus and Apollo are explicit agents ensuring the safety of Croesus – a reward for the king's piety. The direct reciprocity between gods and mortals is less explicit in the *Histories*, however. In *Ode 3*, the religiously pious formula for Hieron is that 'in submitting himself to the Olympic judgement of Zeus he has changed gold and pleasure into virtue and active glorification of god.'¹⁶⁷ In the fashion of the poets, Bacchylides calls on Demeter, Kore, and Klio for inspiration and authority to account for the story of Croesus. Herodotus, on the other hand, relies on his methodology *ἱστορίη* that entails referring to reports. Hence the Lydians provide the account of Croesus' salvation:

ἐνθαῦτα λέγεται ὑπὸ Λυδῶν Κροῖσον μαθόντα τὴν Κύρου μετάγνωσιν, ὥς ὥρα
πάντα μὲν ἄνδρα σβεννύντα τὸ πῦρ, δυναμένους δὲ οὐκέτι καταλαβεῖν,
ἐπιβώσασθαι τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα ἐπικαλεόμενον, εἴ τί οἱ κεχαρισμένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ
ἐδωρήθη, παραστῆναι καὶ ῥύσασθαι μιν ἐκ τοῦ παρεόντος κακοῦ. τὸν μὲν
δακρύνοντα ἐπικαλέεσθαι τὸν θεόν, ἐκ δὲ αἰθρίης τε καὶ νηνεμῆς συνδραμεῖν
ἐξαπίνης νέφεα καὶ χειμῶνά τε καταρραγῆναι καὶ ὕσαι ὕδατι λαβροτάτῳ,
κατασβεσθῆναί τε τὴν πυρὴν.

The Lydians say that when Croesus understood that Cyrus had changed his

¹⁶⁶ Translation Anne Pippin Burnett (1985).

¹⁶⁷ Burnett (1985) 75.

mind, and saw everyone vainly trying to master the fire, he called loudly upon Apollo with tears to come and save him from his misery, if any of his gifts were pleasant to him. It was a clear and windless day; but suddenly in answer to Croesus' prayer clouds gathered and a storm broke with such violent rain that the flames were put out. (1.87.1–2)

The report of the Lydians, λέγεται ὑπὸ Λυδῶν, aligns with Herodotus' general methodology and puts him at a critical distance to the event,¹⁶⁸ so that, as narrator, he can make a judgement upon the account's validity. In this instance, and in stark contrast to Bacchylides, no epiphany of the god occurs, but an abrupt change in weather directly after the prayer of Croesus. Herodotus is careful not to make the explicit connection between gods and event;¹⁶⁹ however, this does not prohibit the affirmation of the gods within the narrative. Herodotus explains that this constitutes a divine proof for Cyrus:

οὕτω δὴ μαθόντα τὸν Κῦρον ὡς εἴη ὁ Κροῖσος καὶ θεοφιλὴς καὶ ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,
This was proof enough for Cyrus that Croesus was a good man whom the gods
loved. (1.87.2)

Thus Croesus becomes in a way σοφός through his own realisation. Sophocles' maxim voiced by the chorus about human life is near identical to Solon's admonition to Croesus:

ὥστε θνητὸν ὄντα κείνην τὴν τελευταίαν ἰδεῖν
ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα μηδέν' ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν ἂν
τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ μηδέν ἀλγεινὸν παθῶν.
Look upon that last day always. Count no mortal happy till
He has passed the final limit of his life secure from pain.
(Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 1528–1530)

Compare Herodotus, where Solon recommends to the Lydian king to look to the end in all affairs:

¹⁶⁸ Dewald and Marincola (2006) 22.

¹⁶⁹ Dewald and Marincola (2006) 22.

εἰ δὲ πρὸς τούτοις ἔτι τελευτήσει τὸν βίον εὖ, οὗτος ἐκεῖνος τὸν σὺ ζητεῖς, <ὁ>
ὄλβιος κεκλησθαι ἄξιος ἐστὶ· πρὶν δ' ἂν τελευτήσει, ἐπισχεῖν, μὴδὲ καλέειν κω
ὄλβιον ἀλλ' εὐτυχέα.

Now if a man thus favoured dies as he has lived, he will be just the one you are
looking for: the only sort of person who deserves to be called happy. But mark
this: until he is dead, keep the word 'happy' in reserve. Till then, he is not
happy, but only lucky. (1.32.7)

The key here is the completion of life, *τελευταίαν/τελευτήση τὸν βίον*, and how
humankind is subject to variable fortune. Happiness *ὄλβος*, must be held in check and not be
allocated to a person until he has died and can no longer be affected by fortune. These
parallel modes of understanding reality of human suffering and fortune clearly indicate the
connection between the Sophoclean and Herodotean view of historical agency.¹⁷⁰ Catherine
Darbo-Peschanski notes the importance of this agency, where protagonists, such as Oedipus
and Croesus must find out the truth of matters through a revelation, going from ignorance to
knowledge, through inquiry.¹⁷¹ Irene de Jong also identifies this tragic element in Herodotus
when she states: 'this mortal blindness suggests that Herodotus' world is primarily a tragic
one.'¹⁷² However, in another fragment attributed to Euripides, *ἱστορίη* is attested as a method
to understand truth and is celebrated as a way to discover contentment, *ὄλβιος*, and the
'ageless order of nature,' *φύσεως κόσμον ἀγήρων*. Euripides depicts it as a peaceful process,
not meant to harm one's country. It is rather a philosophical search for meaning:

ὄλβιος ὅστις τῆς ἱστορίας
ἔσχε μάθησιν,
μήτε πολιτῶν ἐπὶ πημοσύνην
μήτ' εἰς ἀδίκους πράξεις ὀρμῶν,
ἀλλ' ἀθανάτου καθορῶν φύσεως
κόσμον ἀγήρων, πῇ τε συνέστη
καὶ ὅπη καὶ ὅπως.
τοῖς δὲ τοιούτοις οὐδέποτ' αἰσχροῶν.

Happy is he who has learned from inquiry,

¹⁷⁰ Darbo-Peschanski (2017) 82.

¹⁷¹ Darbo-Peschanski (2017) 100.

¹⁷² De Jong (2014) 191.

not because he searches for pain for his countrymen
nor some other unjust deeds,
but because he seeks out the ageless order
of immortal nature – where
it came together, where it came from
and how.
Such men never harbor
a love of shameful deeds.
(Euripides, Fragment 901, *TGrF*; Clement, *Stromata*, 4.25.157)

Thus we see the acceptance of *ἱστορίη* as a way to access contentment, *ὄλβιος*, and the benefit of nations. This parallels Solon's argument of fortune with Croesus, when the travelling statesman determined who was most fortunate, *ὄλβιος*. Knowledge gained through *ἱστορίη* is not malevolent as it was depicted by Heraclitus, namely leading to *κακοτεχνίη*.¹⁷³ The desire for *ἱστορίη* clearly defines one's project in becoming *σοφός*, as exemplary in the figures of Solon, Euripides, and Herodotus. It is now necessary to turn to the process of *ἱστορίη* itself, and what constitutes the process of research for those seeking *σοφία*. This will allow us to gauge the proximity of Herodotus to his contemporaries with respect to their empirical approach to the question concerning the nature of the divine. We will then see more clearly how Herodotus employs a specific methodology when he investigates the divine, which he also utilises in his investigations of natural phenomena. By comparing similarities and differences between Herodotus and his contemporaries, we will be in a better position to gauge the extent to which his project is exemplary of a rigorous questioning of theological assumptions synonymous with the fifth century. As a starting point, I wish to address Heraclitus' methodology, in particular his expression of *ἱστορίη* and its applications. In this way I hope to gain a new perspective on Herodotus' intentions and methodology, in the process challenging the assumption that he was simply a writer of history.

¹⁷³ See below, section 3.1

Chapter 3. ἹΣΤΟΡΙΗ AND THE DIVINE – HERODOTUS AND HERACLITUS

Ἱστορίη is an important idea that is integral to our understanding of Herodotus' central methodology in approaching the subject of the divine. I will look further at Ἱστορίη and how it is undertaken by Herodotus in accordance with his reliance on his own eyewitness account and judgement, ὅψις τε ἐμὴ καὶ γνώμη. I will go further to compare this distinct methodology with Heraclitus, who also investigates the divine in his fragments, and also the Hippocratic writers, who, although not focussing on the divine, help us understand Ἱστορίη methodology. We firstly require a definition of Ἱστορίη.

In order to understand Ἱστορίη we need to look at the related noun ἵστωρ, which is derived from ρίστωρ, believed to be etymologically linked to ἰδεῖν, 'to see,' and also εἰδέναι 'to know.' Therefore ἵστωρ is often translated as 'eyewitness.'¹⁷⁴ Alternatively, however, ἵστωρ as it appears in the *Iliad* (18.501) translates as 'one who knows law and right, judge' in LSJ⁹, a figure who is an arbitrator of judges and is represented within Hephaestus' bronze shield of Achilles:

λαοὶ δ' εἰν ἀγορῇ ἔσαν ἄθροοι· ἔνθα δὲ νεῖκος
ὠρώρει, δύο δ' ἄνδρες ἐνείκεον εἵνεκα ποινῆς
ἄνδρὸς ἀποφθιμένου· ὃ μὲν εὖχετο πάντ' ἀποδοῦναι
δήμῳ πιφάσκων, ὃ δ' ἀναίνετο μηδὲν ἐλέσθαι·
ἄμφω δ' ἰέσθην ἐπὶ ἱστορίῳ πεῖραρ ἐλέσθαι.
λαοὶ δ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἐπήπυνον ἀμφὶς ἀρωγοί·

The people were assembled in the market place, where a quarrel
had arisen, and two men were disputing over the blood price
for a man who had been killed. One man promised full restitution
in a public statement, but the other refused and would accept nothing.
Both then made for an arbitrator, to have a decision;
And people were speaking up on either side, to help both men (18.497–502).¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Floyd (1990) discusses the various etymologies.

¹⁷⁵ Translations of the *Iliad* by Richmond Lattimore (1951).

The term ἵστωρ here stands in as one who makes a final decision, in a legalistic manner, with an audience to corroborate the decision as a service for the people, λαοί. At another point in the *Iliad* a ἵστωρ becomes an eyewitness of events. In a dispute in the funeral games for Patroclus, Aias and Idomeneus have an argument about which horses are in the lead. Idomeneus decides that Agamemnon should act as a witness, ἵστωρ:

Αἶαν νεῖκος ἄριστε κακοφραδὲς ἄλλὰ τε πάντα
 δεύει Αργείων, ὅτι τοι νόος ἐστὶν ἀπηνής.
 δεῦρό νυν ἢ τρίποδος περιδόμεθον ἢ ἐλέβητος,
 ἵστορα δ' Ἀτρεΐδην Ἀγαμέμνονα θείομεν ἄμφω,
 ὁπότεραι πρόσθ' ἵπποι, ἵνα γνῶης ἀποτίνων.
 Aias, surpassing in abuse, yet stupid, in all else
 you are worst of the Argives with that stubborn mind of yours. Come
 then,
 let us put up a wager of a tripod or cauldron
 and make Agamemnon, son of Atreus, witness between us
 as to which horses lead. And when you pay, you will find out. (23.483–487)

Here then Agamemnon is not passing judgements on others' arguments but becomes the observer of events, relying on his own judgements. There is then a disparity of meanings between judgement upon opinions or statements and first-hand autopsy.¹⁷⁶ ἵστωρ does not appear in Herodotus' text, but the noun ἱστορίας appears in the proem, while the verb ἱστορέω appears 17 times along with verbs expressing similar processes, μανθάνω 'to learn' or 'to become aware of a fact' appears 149 times, and πυνθάνομαι, 'to inquire,' appears 277 times, strongly indicating that ἱστορέω has a specialised, or rarer meaning.¹⁷⁷

We have examined the root of ἱστορία in the noun ἵστωρ as it appears in epic poetry. In the fifth century ἱστορία becomes more crystallised to represent a scientific or empirical process, and ἱστορία represents the project of fifth-century writers and thinkers. For example in Plato's *Phaedo* Socrates describes his youthful learning as an 'investigation into nature,' περὶ φύσεως ἱστορίαν:

¹⁷⁶ Floyd (1990) postulates a third possibility that ἵστωρ derives from ἵζειν, 'to sit.' Thus the ἵστωρ gathers the old men and makes them sit down to hear the facts (161). However this etymology is very specific to this scene in the *Iliad* (18.501) and is less helpful for our investigation.

¹⁷⁷ Connor (1993) 4. Statistics are from J. Enoch Powell (1938 rpt. 2013).

ἐγὼ γάρ, ἔφη, ὦ Κέβης, νέος ὢν θαυμαστῶς ὥς ἐπεθύμησα ταύτης τῆς σοφίας
ἣν δὴ καλοῦσι περὶ φύσεως ἱστορίαν· ὑπερήφανος γάρ μοι ἐδόκει εἶναι, εἰδέναι
τὰς αἰτίας ἐκάστου, διὰ τί γίγνεται ἕκαστον καὶ διὰ τί ἀπόλλυται καὶ διὰ τί ἔστι.
When I was young, Cebes, I was tremendously eager for the kind of wisdom
which they call investigation of nature. I thought it was a glorious thing to know
the causes of everything, why each thing comes into being and why it perishes
and why it exists (Plato, *Phaedo*, 96a8).¹⁷⁸

There are many important points in this passage of Plato. Firstly, the term ἱστορίαν appears as part of a programmatic aim, namely to find out the original ‘causes of each thing,’ τὰς αἰτίας ἐκάστου. This parallels nicely with Herodotus’ approach. Not only is the nature of a thing important, φύσεως, but also the causes of each thing, αἰτίας, and though not mentioned here, the origin ἀρχή, of each thing is also important.¹⁷⁹ A clear methodology is explicit in ἐκάστου, in that the term implies a systematic procedure of investigating many different phenomena and their individual causes. Nature was a common interest at this time, and we know Empedocles also wrote a work entitled Περὶ φύσεως (DK 31 A1), as did Anaximander (DK 12 A7) and Heraclitus (DK 22 A1).¹⁸⁰ In these works, understanding how each thing came about, τὰς αἰτίας ἐκάστου is centrally important. I suggest that this piece of Socratic dialogue displays the methodology and intentions synonymous with how Herodotus understood ἱστορίη.

Similarly, the Hippocratic writers emphasise ἱστορίη, in outlining their methodology, appearing twice in *Precepts* 13, where personal medical observation is prized over opinions and theory.¹⁸¹ More explicitly, the Hippocratic treatise *On the art* makes a statement about the art of medicine, wherein we see the establishment of one methodology and the criticism of others, a mark of sophistic polemic, and prioritising one’s account, here rendered ‘knowledge,’ over others:

¹⁷⁸ Translation of Plato by Harold North Fowler (1996).

¹⁷⁹ Derrida (1982): ‘Is not the quest for an *archai* [sic] in general, no matter with what precautions one surrounds the concept, still the ‘essential’ operation of metaphysics?’ (63).

¹⁸⁰ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of eminent philosophers*, IX, 5. Kirk (1970 7; Kirk Raven, and Schofield (1983) 102–3).

¹⁸¹ Lateiner (1986) 11.

Εἰσὶν τινες οἱ τέχνην πεποίησιν τὸ τὰς τέχνας αἰσχροπεῖν, ὥς μὲν οἴονται οὐ τοῦτο διαπρησσόμενοι ὃ ἐγὼ λέγω, ἀλλ' ἱστορίας οἰκείης ἐπιδείξιν ποιούμενοι.
 Some there are who have made an art of vilifying the arts, though they consider, not that they are accomplishing the object I mention, but that they are making a display of their own knowledge [sic]. (Hippocrates, *On the art*, 1)¹⁸²

Here the Hippocratic writer is expressly criticising ‘others’ and their personal display of knowledge, ἱστορίας οἰκείης ἐπιδείξιν. Similarly, in the Hippocratic doctrine *On the breaths*, the writer mentions how they will ‘by the same reasoning proceed to facts and show (ἐπιδείξω) that diseases are all the offspring of air.’¹⁸³ This emphasis on display of knowledge, ἐπιδείξις echoes Herodotus’ proem almost verbatim, to which we shall turn shortly. Furthermore, against their opponents, the Hippocratic writer firmly posits his own position, ὃ ἐγὼ λέγω: ‘the thing which I say.’ This is also methodologically representative of the new turn to Ionian inquiry and the trust in human perception, in parallel with the critique of others’ use of knowledge, expressed with the very unique phrasing: τὸ τὰς τέχνας αἰσχροπεῖν.¹⁸⁴ This critique of the use of knowledge is also uncannily reflective of Heraclitus’ critique of polymathy. This modality within which an authoritative first-person narrator presents a ‘clear and uncompromising criticism’ of other perspectives is stylistically comparable to the early medical writings.¹⁸⁵ The polemical nature of the text and the assertion of one’s own knowledge also establishes a strong link to the methodology of the sophists.¹⁸⁶ Theodor Gomperz even makes a radical jump when he claims that the strong polemical nature of the medical text suggests that Protagoras was the writer.¹⁸⁷ We need not subscribe to this bold argument, however it does service to our argument that there was a shared modality of talking about knowledge in the fifth century, a modality that could be applied to various fields of inquiry.

¹⁸² Greek text and translation, Jones, W. H. S (1959).

¹⁸³ *On the breaths* 5. Translation, W. H. S. Jones (1959).

¹⁸⁴ Lloyd (1987): ‘Thus while itself an exhibition piece, this treatise attacks others who also claim to make an ἐπιδείξις’ (61).

¹⁸⁵ Thomas (2000) 243.

¹⁸⁶ Jones (1959): ‘The two most striking characteristics of *The Art* are an attenuated logic and a fondness for sophistic rhetoric’ (187).

¹⁸⁷ Gomperz (1949): ‘The conjectural identity which we have thus ventured to establish is rendered highly probable by the fact that the dialect, style, and tone of the treatise recall the very epoch, surroundings, and personality of Protagoras himself, down to countless notable echoes of his particular mode of speaking, as imitated in Plato’ (468).

The practice of ἱστορίη in Herodotus' writing has been long debated, and scholars have argued recently that Herodotus' method of ἱστορίη is derived more from the adjudication of material from sources that he has consulted, than from his own firsthand observations.¹⁸⁸ Put simply, this perspective asserts that Herodotus primarily reports on what others have seen and heard, over and above his own perceptions. We must identify for ourselves whether Herodotus writes from the vantage point of judge, or witness, based on his own statements about his method, and also based upon textual evidence from his inquiries.¹⁸⁹ One aspect that is agreed upon is the importance of travel in Herodotus' ἱστορίη. Travel was a standard practice for a new breed of intellectuals, ἱστορεῖς, who were portrayed as stepping beyond the boundaries of traditional learning.¹⁹⁰ Their process, Herbert Granger argues, was identifiable by their establishing a critical attitude towards the tradition of poetry and lithology. Furthermore, they relied on firsthand research, derived from travel to distant places and collecting information from unfamiliar cultures, thereafter integrated their discoveries into their work.¹⁹¹

Travel is crucial for these figures, ἱστορεῖς, and Hecataeus is perhaps one of the key early examples of a ἱστωρ. In their travels they may encounter first hand data through sensory impressions, or consult other individuals who have local knowledge. This is the reason for Herodotus' respect for foreign narratives that contradict the Greek versions. To use François Hartog's metaphor of a mirror to the Greeks themselves: 'The mirror of Herodotus is also the eye of the ἱστωρ who, as he travelled the world and told of it, set it in order within the context of Greek knowledge, and, in so doing, constructed for the Greeks a representation of their own recent past; the ἱστωρ became both rhapsode and surveyor.'¹⁹² In this sense Herodotus becomes a mirror to the Greeks within which they determined what it was to be Greek and also 'otherness.' Herodotus' statements at one moment reflect the extent of the Greek worldview; at the next he revises and reconsiders traditional views.

¹⁸⁸ Floyd (1990) 160–1, and Granger (2004) 238, subscribe to this bias.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas (2000) makes a pertinent point that to retain the original meaning of ἱστωρ as arbitrator from the *Iliad* may be anachronistic: 'Rather, he is distinguishing precisely his own inquiries and sources of knowledge in exactly the language that was favoured by the early Hippocratic writers and no doubt other contemporaries' (164–5).

¹⁹⁰ Granger (2004) 235.

¹⁹¹ Granger (2004) 235.

¹⁹² Hartog (1988) xxiii–xxiv.

The fact is that *ιστορίη* takes on multiple meanings; it includes both personal observation, and the corroboration of others' views. John Gould expresses a similar observation when he argues: '*Ιστορίη* meant many things for Herodotus, among them and above all perhaps travel and the active pursuit of data.'¹⁹³

The prototypical pre-Socratic, Thales exemplified learning through travel receiving an education in Egypt and returning to Greece with his new knowledge: *Θαλῆς... φιλοσοφήσας δὲ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἦλθεν εἰς Μίλητον πρεσβύτερος*, 'Thales... having practiced philosophy in Egypt came to Miletus when he was older.'¹⁹⁴ As a result, we see what was described earlier as scientific humility, and we also see a tacit acceptance that other cultures may have more specialist knowledge in particular domains than is available to the Greeks. Another example is Xenophanes who discusses his long life of extensive travel in Greece:

ἤδη δ' ἐπτά τ' ἔασι καὶ ἐξήκοντ' ἐνιαυτοὶ
βληστρίζοντες ἐμὴν φροντίδ' ἀν' Ἑλλάδα γῆν·
ἐκ γενετῆς δὲ τότε ἦσαν ἐείκοσι πέντε τε πρὸς τοῖς,
εἴπερ ἐγὼ περὶ τῶνδ' οἶδα λέγειν ἐτύμως.
Already there are seven and sixty years
tossing my thought up and down the land of Greece;
and from my birth there were another twenty-five to add to these,
if I know how to speak truly about these things (B8).

Knowledge was an assemblage of collected impressions and opinions retrieved from abroad and compiled in Ionia, as opposed to the later formulation of philosophical ideas in the Athenian school.¹⁹⁵ We might sum this up in terms of a reliance upon inductive knowledge as opposed to deductive, that is to say individual impressions and experiences lead to a conclusion about phenomena, rather than a general theory created *a priori* that is then applied to phenomena. Another aspect to consider in this approach is to understanding is

¹⁹³ Gould (1989) 11.

¹⁹⁴ Aetius 1.3.1. Compare DK 11 A 11: *Θαλῆς δὲ πρῶτον εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἐλθὼν μετήγαγεν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα τὴν θεωρίαν ταύτην* (sc. τὴν γεωμετρίαν)... 'Thales, having first come to Egypt, transferred this study [geometry] to Greece...'

¹⁹⁵ Thomas (2000): 'Modern Athenocentrism tends to underestimate the importance of East Greece. In simplified terms, such a view sees Athens not only as the center of intellectual life, as indeed it was, but also the only place where intellectual activity was thriving in the second half of the fifth century' (10).

the model of λόγοι embedded within an overarching λόγος.¹⁹⁶ In this sense ιστορίη takes the form of a final judgement of collected reports. Catherine Darbo-Peschanski thus defines ιστορίη as a ‘judged judgement.’ Sometimes this judgement is in an epistemic sense, sometimes in a judicial sense, meaning there is not one discrete way of conducting ιστορίη. Therefore, for Darbo-Peschanski, ιστορίη is an original judgement upon phenomena, which is then the object of another judgement by a second authority, ultimately leading to a judgment on the ‘just’ or ‘real.’¹⁹⁷

Here we see the multi-faceted nature of Herodotean ιστορίη. Sometimes it is epistemic, meaning relating to what is knowable, while at other times it takes the judicial meaning of passing judgement upon judgements; reports embedded within the final report, which is never really closed off. Ultimately, it relies on the judgement of the recipient of the text: ‘the reader or hearer, located outside of it.’¹⁹⁸

This is why Herodotus remains a contentious figure in the literary tradition since antiquity. Fehling voices his frustration at the lack of neat, objective facts, especially with respect to Herodotus’ sources in Egypt when the scholar says: ‘Herodotus’ ιστορίη is not scientific research.’¹⁹⁹ This critique is surely anachronistic. Fehling does, however, generously grant that Herodotus’ method is *proto-scientific*, at least. Fehling says: ‘In some of the methods ostensibly employed a vision of avenues only later opened to science.’²⁰⁰ But the Hippocratic writers, being more neatly aligned with the progress of medical science, were using the same Ionian terminology and reliance on, and understanding the limitations of the senses – all factors comparable to Herodotus.

But ιστορίη arguably goes beyond scientific research, even while utilising the same methodology. Robert Fowler excludes Herodotus from his milieu to an extent when he claims: ‘He was not a sophist, but he was a thinker, and he profited from discussions with other thinkers.’²⁰¹ Fowler determines that there was a discussion with other thinkers by

¹⁹⁶ Darbo-Peschanski (2013) 79.

¹⁹⁷ Darbo-Peschanski (2013) 79.

¹⁹⁸ Darbo-Peschanski (2013) 78–79.

¹⁹⁹ Fehling (1989) 259. Leslie Kurke (2000) cuts the Gordian knot redressing the question whether Herodotus travelled at all: ‘I would contend that this is a sterile debate, in which both sides apply to Herodotus an anachronistic standard of accuracy or truth. We must accept the fact that we simply cannot reconstruct in detail exactly where Herodotus travelled from his text’ (134).

²⁰⁰ Fehling (1989) 259.

²⁰¹ Fowler (1996) 80.

Herodotus' language, and that from such engagements Herodotus was able to bring the old science of *ιστορίη*, critical inquiry, up to date through the employment of the new critical tools he had to new subjects of inquiry. But Fowler falls into the trap of applying the distinction of the formal group of teaching professionals to Herodotus, when I have shown the term had more wide-ranging applications, but essentially referred to a public purveyor of knowledge, who was engaged in the intellectual conversations of the day. Whether or not individuals had direct contact, the similarity of their methods and goals is evident in their language.

This is crucial for our investigation, since *ιστορίη* is not moored to one particular subject matter; it rather refers to a shared language of *ιστορίη* in the fifth century. But when Fowler makes a distinction between sophist and 'thinker' he makes a weak categorical division. As I showed in chapter 2, the term 'sophist' entails certain actions and interests, namely, travel and public display of knowledge – Herodotus was arguably a key proponent of that. Burnet notes that at this early developmental stage the term *ιστορίη* simply meant a curiosity about the world, and a desire to collect 'scraps' of knowledge from the broader fifth-century Mediterranean world.²⁰² Thus the definitions of both sophist and *ιστορίη* have scope in terms of their meanings, in the broader cultural context, beyond the categorisation determined in the texts of Aristotle and Plato.

When considering how *ιστορίη* is important for Herodotus' investigation of the divine it is valuable to look at his own intentions as expressed in the proem. Herodotus begins his work by announcing his overall goals:

Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέος ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὥς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται, τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ <δὴ καὶ> δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.

Herodotus, from Halicarnassus, here displays his inquiries, that human achievements may be spared the ravages of time, and that everything great and

²⁰² Burnet (1920): 'The words *θεωρίη*, *φιλοσοφίη*, and *ιστορίη*, are, in fact, the catchwords of the time, though they had, no doubt, a somewhat different meaning from that they were afterwards made to bear at Athens. The idea that underlies them all may, perhaps, be rendered in English by the word *curiosity*; and it was just this great gift of curiosity, and the desire to see all the wonderful things – pyramids, inundations, and so forth – that were to be seen, which enabled the Ionians to pick up and turn to their own use such scraps of knowledge as they could come by among the barbarians' (14).

astounding, and all the glory of those exploits which served to display Greeks and barbarians alike to such effect, be kept alive – and additionally, and most importantly, to give the reason they went to war (1.1).

This recent translation of Tom Holland is insightful in that *ἱστορίας* adheres to a more original meaning of ‘inquiry,’ rather than the trans-literal rendition we are familiar with, ‘history.’ For the Ionian writers. *Ἱστορίη*, or inquiry, was the method of researching and understanding the world. *ἄκλεα* is important here, and clearly shows inheritance from Homer, and the desires of the Homeric heroes for *κλέος*.²⁰³ Moreover, Herodotus has, as Lloyd describes, a ‘predilection’ for the wondrous, *θωμαστά*.²⁰⁴ As we have seen, inquiry has multiple meanings ranging from relying on one’s senses and looking into matters for oneself, and making judgement upon received statements. Just as the divine has multiple representations and meanings, so too could the methodology of *ἱστορίη*, entail judgement and observation.

Herodotus therefore, in the mode of a *σοφός*, travels out around the world and collects his own impressions, and also records the reports of others; however, as a disclaimer in book 7 Herodotus makes clear that he is not obliged to believe what is told to him:

ἐγὼ δὲ ὀφείλω λέγειν τὰ λεγόμενα, πείθεσθαι γέ μὲν οὐ παντάπασιν ὀφείλω, καὶ μοι τοῦτο τὸ ἔπος ἐχέτω ἐς πάντα λόγον·

Although it is incumbent on me to state what I am told, I am under no obligation to believe it entirely – something that is true for the whole of my narrative.
(7.152.3)

This statement reveals Herodotus’ attitude and desire to collect broad reports, and it also reveals that he can position himself at a critical distance to what is reported to him.²⁰⁵ The burden of belief rests upon the reader/audience.²⁰⁶ We don’t see the credulous

²⁰³ See especially, Pelling (2006).

²⁰⁴ Lloyd (1975) 141. And in *Metaphysics* Aristotle says *διὰ γὰρ τὸ θαυμάζειν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ νῦν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἤρξαντο φιλοσοφεῖν*, ‘it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophise’ (982b).

²⁰⁵ Hartog (1988): ‘At all events, the important point is that the principal narrator is alone mobile. He may at one time or another occupy any positions of the discourse. From being the narrator, he can turn himself into the recipient of the narrative and then, when he feels so inclined, switch back to being the narrator’ (292).

²⁰⁶ Darbo-Peschanski (2013): ‘The situation becomes clearer when the researcher leaves the task of judging to his reader-auditors, after having *explicitly* judged the reported stories himself.’ Darbo-Peschanski’s italics (84).

traditionalist in Herodotus here. Further, he states that this applies to his whole narrative, so we discover a general methodology to his inquiry. As a result of this method, τὰ λεγόμενα, the λόγοι of others, regardless of their veracity, are an object of ἱστορίη.²⁰⁷ Herodotus' obligation is to state what is told, in a truly inclusive and encyclopaedic fashion, but he is not obliged to believe it 'entirely.' Herodotus' reservation to believe reports shows the Aristotelian discernment mentioned above, specifically the ability to apply domain-specific exactness to λεγόμενα, reports, entailing a certain extent of acceptance, or challenge to these received reports, as made explicit by Herodotus in his statement above (οὐ παντάπασιν ὀφείλω, 7.152.3).

Herodotus' methods of inquiry are articulated most clearly at the start of book 2 where Herodotus is investigating the gods of Egypt. Here he places highest importance upon his own eyewitness account, judgement and inquiry (ὄψις τε ἐμὴ καὶ γνώμη καὶ ἱστορίη, 2.99); of secondary accuracy, if he cannot be an eye-witness, Herodotus draws on hearsay evidence (ἀκοή, 2.29). Direct perception then, and one's own judgement are the primary guides, while others' accounts can be taken into consideration, but not without intellectual scrutiny. The full passage is worthy of analysis:

μέχρι μὲν τούτου ὄψις τε ἐμὴ καὶ γνώμη καὶ ἱστορίη ταῦτα λέγουσα ἐστὶ, τὸ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦδε Αἰγυπτίους ἔρχομαι λόγους ἐρέων κατὰ τὰ ἤκουον· προσέσται δέ τι αὐτοῖσι καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ὄψιος.

Up to this point I have confined what I have written to the results of my own direct observation and research, and the views I have formed from them; but from now on the basis of my story will be the accounts given to me by the Egyptians themselves – though here, too, I shall put in one or two things which I have seen with my own eyes. (2.99.1)

Here inquiry, ἱστορίη, is combined with Herodotus' own assertion of his judgement, or opinion, γνώμη, and observation ὄψις. In this case γνώμη refers to the limited, human capacity to judge what is perceived, τὰ αἰσθητά, often for Herodotus judgement takes the

Compare Hartog assuming the voice of Herodotus (1988): 'I am neither over-credulous nor a liar, so you can believe me. I am free, but equally, so is the addressee' (293).

²⁰⁷ Darbo-Peschanski (2013): 'As for accounts other than his, attributed more or less precisely to specific sources, they may aspire to the truth, but once they are taken up by the narration, they are never given categorically as true. Even when they are debated and the narrator intervenes to pass a favorable judgment on one or another among them, this is not enough to proclaim them as true' (83).

form: ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκέει, that is to say, what ‘seems’ to his judgement the most reliable account, when he critiques different perspectives (for example when Herodotus explores the causes of Cleomenes’ madness in book 7).²⁰⁸ Research into both the ability and limitations of judgement, γνώμη is clearly a concern for fifth-century thinkers. Compare Herodotus’ predecessor, Heraclitus who also determines that γνώμη is important, but for whom there is a higher judgement associated with wisdom:

ἐν τὸ σοφόν· ἐπίστασθαι γνώμην, ὅκη ἐκυβέρνησε πάντα διὰ πάντων.

The wise is one thing, to be acquainted with true judgement, how all things are steered through all. (DK B41)²⁰⁹

Reliance on one’s own judgement is paramount for inquirers. For example, at times when Herodotus also grants the Egyptians room to provide him accounts, Herodotus will, however, once again, add his own observations: τῆς ἐμῆς ὄψιος. This is in a sense a hybrid method of collecting and comparing data from one’s own observations and the accounts of others. How this method plays out in terms of approaching the divine as an object of inquiry must importantly be addressed in this thesis, in particular, how the things reported are confirmed or refuted by eyewitness accounts. Also the ramifications of ὄψις in personal fate become significant in key narratives in the *Histories*. We must recall that the primary intention of Herodotus’ writing the *Histories* is that human achievements not be forgotten ὥς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, and similarly that deeds of human beings alike achieve lasting renown, κλέος (1.1). Therefore the divine may arguably play a specific role in the remembrance of human achievements. To draw parallel evidence to many of these notions, including remembrance, reliance on the senses, and the nature of inquiry into the divine I will compare the methodology and theological outlook of another Ionian writer, Heraclitus of Ephesus. This is a significant way to determine the role of personal observation and how epistemological evidence affects theology in the fifth century. In this way I hope to shine a new light on Herodotus’ methodology and aims in his own investigation of the divine. This is important as I aim to determine Herodotus’ proximity to the theologians of his own time.

²⁰⁸ Compare Xenophanes B34.

²⁰⁹ Compare B32: ἐν τὸ σοφόν μόνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα. One thing, the only truly wise, does not and does consent to be called the name of Zeus. The key distinction of the fragments here is that in B41 wisdom is the thing to be possessed, while in B32 τὸ σοφόν refers to the possessor (Kirk, 1970, 393–394). According to Charles Kahn, the wise, τὸ σοφόν is for Heraclitus, the unique divine principle of the universe (Kahn, 2001, 115).

3.1 Heraclitus – ιστορία, ὄψις, γνώμη

Herodotus and Heraclitus share the Ionic prose writing form, although they differ in many ways. On the one hand Herodotus wrote the first wholly preserved, extensive prose work in the Western world, while on the other hand Heraclitus wrote pithy, esoteric maxims, for the latter gaining him the title ‘the obscure’ – σκοτεινός, and later *obscurus*.²¹⁰ Both figures, however, represent an important break with the tradition of poetry, inspired by the muses being the traditional and authoritative vehicle for articulating ideas about the divine and the world.²¹¹ Both writers are comparable for their methodology of ιστορία, and Heraclitus readily applies this to the divine as an object of inquiry.

In similar fashion to Herodotus, Heraclitus puts great importance on human senses, and he also defines his distinct, but similar methodology. He states: ‘The things of which there is seeing and hearing and perception, these I do prefer’ (ὅσων ὄψις ἀκοή μάθησις, ταῦτα ἐγὼ προτιμέω, B55). Heraclitus asserts himself emphatically as the one making judgements on ὄψις, ἀκοή and μάθησις, just as Herodotus himself emphasises the importance of his own eye-witness accounts (τῆς ἐμῆς ὀψιός, 2.99). The emphasis on ὄψις and ἀκοή echoes Herodotus, and the key idea that becomes apparent is the centrality of the writer who is also the judge in relation to the inquiry object. Heraclitus furthermore places great importance on his systematic account of the world, the λόγος, in his opening statement:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόασι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγέσθαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει. τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται.

Of the Logos which is as I describe it men always prove to be uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and when once they have heard it. For although all things happen according to this Logos men are like people of no experience, even when they experience such words and deeds as I explain, when I distinguish each thing according to its constitution and declare how it is; but the

²¹⁰ Aristotle, *De mundo*, 5,396b 20; Cicero *De finibus* II, 5, 15. See Kirk (1970) 8.

²¹¹ Granger (2007) 404.

rest of men fail to notice what they do after they wake up just as they forget what they do when asleep (B1).

Heraclitus shows a high level of criticism about human beings' perception of his account, his λόγος, while we saw earlier that he emphasises the importance of the senses. Heraclitus also accuses human beings of forgetting the λόγος, despite claiming that he gives a comprehensive account of 'each thing' (ἕκαστον). The term διαίρεων also draws an important parallel with Herodotus. Kirk recognises that Herodotus uses διαίρεω 12 times in a literal sense of dividing up, and more importantly 6 times in passages where Xerxes is engaged with an interlocutor – here the term refers to making judgements.²¹² Although sensory perception is important one must have judgement and understanding too, therefore Heraclitus states:

κακοὶ μάρτυρες ἀνθρώποισιν ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ὄτα βαρβάρους ψυχὰς ἔχόντων.

Evil witnesses are eyes and ears for men, if they have souls that do not understand their language. (B107)

Heraclitus then determines that sense perception must not only inform, but also accompany understanding. Ethnographic difference is implicit in the expression βαρβάρους ψυχὰς, which strongly suggests Heraclitus' exposure to non-Greek cultures and ways of thinking about the world synonymous with the travelling intellectual of the Ionian enlightenment; however, Heraclitus himself did not pursue ethnographic research at length, and was in fact critical of those who did. He chose a more introspective object of inquiry, when he focussed on the ψυχή. Fragment 107 also expresses the important notion that the senses and one's judgement, the ψυχή must operate closely together, and not be foreign faculties to one another.²¹³ There must be a unity of perception and cognition/emotion concerning what one perceives. There is a clear interest in the effect of seeing on the mind in the fifth century, as displayed in Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen*, when the sophist states, in his argument about the powerful effect seeing is capable of producing: διὰ δὲ τῆς ὀψεως ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τοῖς τρόποις τυποῦται, 'through sight the soul receives an impression even in its inner features' (B82 11a.15).²¹⁴ A further example, and in competition to Gorgias, Isocrates wrote his own rhetorical piece, *Helen*, and here again the primacy of vision is very important. What is also significant, and

²¹² Kirk (1970) 41–2.

²¹³ Nussbaum (1972): 'ψυχή as the connecting and knowing faculty, λόγος as the primary object of knowledge' (14).

²¹⁴ Translations of Prodicus, Protagoras, and Gorgias by Rosamond Kent Sprague (2001)

echoes Heraclitus, is the same use of μάρτυς, witness, for the one who sees. Isocrates extols both Helen's virtue, and also that of the mythical-heroic founder of Athens, Theseus:

τὴν δὴ γεννηθεῖσαν μὲν ὑπὸ Διός, κρατήσασαν δὲ τοιαύτης ἀρετῆς καὶ σωφροσύνης, πῶς οὐκ ἐπαινεῖν χρὴ καὶ τιμᾶν καὶ νομίζειν πολὺ τῶν πάποτε γενομένων διενεγκεῖν· οὐ γὰρ δὴ μάρτυρά γε πιστότερον οὐδὲ κριτὴν ἱκανώτερον ἔξομεν ἐπαγαγέσθαι περὶ τῶν Ἑλένη προσόντων ἀγαθῶν τῆς Θησέως διανοίας.

As for Helen, daughter of Zeus, who established her power over such excellence and sobriety, should she not be praised and honoured, and regarded as far superior to all the women who have ever lived? For surely we shall never have a more trustworthy witness or more competent judge of Helen's good attributes than the opinion of Theseus. (*Helen*, 10.38)²¹⁵

In contrast to Heraclitus' κακοὶ μάρτυρες 'evil witnesses,' here μάρτυρά γε πιστότερον, and 'more trustworthy witness.' In both cases the writers consider the reliability of the senses and the disposition of one who perceives. This is significant since the arguments make explicit the notion of epistemological veracity, that is to say whether one perceives clearly or not. The analogies of both the mythical figures Theseus and Alexander travelling and receiving impressions of foreign people, notably the overpowering beauty of Helen, are apt analogies for the notion of the fifth-century travelling inquirer gaining impressions of other culture, and thus acquiring new knowledge.

Heraclitus goes further to explain the ideal scope of inquiry:

χρὴ γὰρ εὖ μάλα πολλῶν ἱστορας φιλοσόφους ἄνδρας εἶναι.

Men who love wisdom must be inquirers into many things. (B35, Clement, *Stromata*, V, 140, 6.)

We see here again the terminology and goals of the Ionian inquiry culture, human beings must be ἱστορας, inquirers, and we also see how curiosity exploring different subject matter is important, hence the connection of ἱστορας as predicate with φιλοσόφους. Herodotus clearly aligns with this statement with his diversity of subject matter. In terms of practitioners

²¹⁵ Translation, George Norlin (1980).

of ἱστορίη, Heraclitus acknowledges Pythagoras to be the one who practices ἱστορίη above all, and what it taught the mathematician:

Πυθαγόρης Μνησάρχου ἱστορίην ἥσκησεν ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα πάντων καὶ ἐκλεξάμενος ταῦτα ἐποίησατο ἑαυτοῦ σοφίην, πολυμαθείην, κακοτεχνίην.

Pythagoras, son of Mnesarchus, practiced inquiry beyond all other men and selecting these made them his own – wisdom, the learning of many things, artful knavery. (B129)

Paradoxically then for Heraclitus, inquiry produces wisdom (σοφίη), learning of many things (πολυμαθίη), but also the ability to deceive (κακοτεχνίη).²¹⁶ This critique of individuals who acquire broad learning pre-empts Plato's critique of the sophists, where the philosopher critiques the sophists' avarice and desire for moneymaking,²¹⁷ showmanship (*Hippias minor* 363c–d), and their use of knowledge. For example, Plato creates a character of Protagoras who then accuses Hippias of defrauding his students by teaching them arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music and poetry, instead of excellence (*Protagoras*, 381e). Broad learning is spurious, exploitative, or even seen as dangerous. Moreover, Lucian in his critique of Alexander of Abonoteichus, a Greek mystic and Pythagorean, identifies this same cultivation of κακοτεχνίη:

ὅλως γὰρ ἐπινόησόν μοι καὶ τῷ λογισμῷ διατύπωσον ποικιλωτάτην τινὰ ψυχῆς κρᾶσιν ἐκ ψεύδους καὶ δόλων καὶ ἐπιπορκιῶν καὶ κακοτεχνιῶν συγκειμένην, ῥαδίαν, τολμηράν, παράβολον, φιλόπονον ἐξεργάσασθαι τὰ νοηθέντα, καὶ πιθανὴν καὶ ἀξιόπιστον καὶ ὑκοκριτικὴν τοῦ βελτίονος καὶ τῷ ἐναντιωτάτῳ τῆς βουλήσεως ἐοικυῖαν.

In sum, imagine, please, and mentally configure a highly diversified soul-blend, made up of lying, trickery, perjury, and malice; facile, audacious, venturesome, diligent in the execution of its schemes, plausible, convincing, masking as good, and wearing an appearance absolutely opposite to its purpose.

(Lucian, *Alexander the false prophet*, 4)

²¹⁶ Compare above the Hippocratic writer's (*On the art*, 1) criticism of the misuse of τέχνην: Εἰσὶν τινες οἱ τέχνην πεποιήνται τὸ τὰς τέχνας αἰσχροεπεῖν, 'Some there are who have made an art of vilifying the arts' when they have made it their own language.

²¹⁷ *Apology* 19d, *Euthydemus* 304b–c, *Hippias Major* 282b–e, *Protagoras* 312c–d, *Republic* 10.600d, and *Sophist* 222d–224d.

Lucian identifies κακοτεχνίη as one of the attributes of the mystic, who has pursued polymathy and is ‘masking as good,’ ὑποκριτικὴν τοῦ βελτίονος. This scathing critique of chameleon individuals who have multiple talents, but who also deceive others is strikingly similar to Plato’s derision of the sophists. The use of knowledge becomes the focus of the critics, and a suspicion and fear of diverse learning and skill, particularly in persuasion. The mystical and secretive context of Pythagorean learning arouses suspicion.

In similar fashion, Heraclitus is highly critical of too broad a scope of inquiry. He directly critiques other individuals whom he sees as generalists. That is not to say he didn’t respect their skill as inquirers, but the fact that they are generalists. A further point of contention is the manner of learning ‘many things,’ that Heraclitus is critiquing. Kirk, Raven and Schofield read ταῦτα to be a general overarching term, but for other scholars ταῦτα reverts to ταύτας τὰς συγγραφάς, as per the original manuscript, thus the teaching refers to studying prose texts, rather than pursuing one’s own inquiry.²¹⁸ However it is ambiguous which texts are referred to, the earliest known prose texts being those of Anaximander, and Anaxamines of Miletus and Pherecydes of Syros.²¹⁹ Despite this argument in scholarship, Heraclitus goes on to dismiss ‘much learning,’ πολυμαθίη.

Heraclitus therefore says:

ἡ πολυμαθίη νόον (ἔχειν) οὐ διδάσκει· Ἡσίοδον γὰρ ἂν ἐδίδαξε καὶ Πυθαγόρην αὖτις τε Ξενοφάνεά (τε) καὶ Ἑκαταῖον.

The learning of many things does not teach understanding; if it did, it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, and again Xenophanes and Hecataeus.

(B40; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of eminent philosophers*, 9.1)

This passage demonstrates the ability of fifth-century writers to criticise each other’s methodology, and keep each other accountable, just as earlier writer Hecataeus critiques his predecessors Homer and Hesiod in the opening fragment of his own work (*FGrH* 1 F 1), and as Thucydides implicitly criticises Herodotus when the later historian announces at the beginning of the *History of the Peloponnesian War* that the accuracy (ἀκρίβεια) of the reports

²¹⁸ Granger (2004) 246, and Kahn (1979) 113, support this version; Kirk, Raven and Schofield amend the manuscript to ταῦτα, as they believe the phrase ταύτας τὰς συγγραφάς ‘sounds un-Heraclitean and spoils the rhythm of the sentence’ (1983) 217.

²¹⁹ Kahn (1979) 113.

he collated for his *History* have been ‘checked with as much thoroughness as possible,’ δυνατόν ἀκριβείᾳ περὶ ἐκάστου ἐπεξελθών (1.22.2), while maintaining the absence of storytelling, τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες, (1.22.4). Egotism and the assertion of one’s λόγος over and against competitors was synonymous with the fifth-century intellectual climate.²²⁰ This primacy of the ἐγὼ is further emphasised when writers refer to themselves by their proper names when they introduce their work, an authorial technique inherited from the poets.²²¹ Heraclitus criticises writers who acquire their learning from traveling and encountering other cultures in ethnographic research, particularly Xenophanes and Hecataeus whose methods of travelling inquiry correspond with Herodotus. Heraclitus’ inquiry, on the other hand, is of the self: (ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτόν) ‘I searched out myself’ (B101, Plutarch *adv. Colotem* 20, III 8c). In a Sophocles fragment we see a similar philosophical perspective about inquiry and the divine that expresses a recognition of human epistemological limitations: ἀλλ’ οὐ γὰρ ἄν τὰ θεία, κρυπτόντων θεῶν, καὶ μάθοις ἄν, οὐδ’ εἰ πάντ’ ἐπεξέλθοις σκοπῶν, ‘Since the gods conceal all things divine, you will never understand them, not though you go searching to the ends of the earth’ (Fragment 919, *TGrF*)²²². Heraclitus also expressed a similar sentiment, indicating that true ‘nature,’ φύσις is concealed from human perception: φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ, ‘the real constitution of things is accustomed to hide itself’ (B123). Thus similar sentiments exist about what can be concluded from inductive inquiry about the divine, that is to say collected perceptions of the world. For Heraclitus, it is sufficient to conduct self-inquiry.

Heraclitus’ inquiries into theological matters lead him to boldly conclude:

ἓν τὸ σοφὸν μόνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα.

One thing, the only true wise, does not and does consent to be called by the name of Zeus. (B32; Clement, *Stromata*, 5.115.1)

This is a radical shift from polytheistic thinking as it demythologises the divine, for he loosens the name Zeus from the ‘one thing, the only true wise.’ This one wise thing is at other times associated with the thunderbolt (τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίζει κεραυνός ‘Thunderbolt

²²⁰ Lloyd (1987): ‘Egotism, to be sure is not necessarily connected with innovativeness, but the two often go together in early Greek philosophy, especially in claims to set forth the truth that had eluded everyone else’ (60).

²²¹ Lloyd (1987) 58–9.

²²² Translation, Iorwerth Eiddon Stephen Edwards (1984).

steers all things,' B64, Hippolytus *Refutation of all heresies* IX, 10, 6) and at other times with the λόγος (B1). Naming then only gestures at the real 'one thing.'

Heraclitus acknowledges the existence of the Olympian gods and their respective domains, but he differentiates these from ἐν τὸ σοφὸν μόνον – thus he also displays a clear henotheistic tendency. Of these gods he theorises:

εἰ μὴ γὰρ Διονύσῳ πομπὴν ἐποιοῦντο καὶ ὕμνεον ᾄσμα αἰδοίοισιν, ἀναιδέστατα
εἴργαστ' ἄν· ὧν τὸς δὲ Αἰδῆς καὶ Διόνυσος, ὅτερ μαίνονται καὶ ληναῖζουσιν.

For if it were not to Dionysus that they made the procession and sung the hymn to the shameful parts, the deed would be most shameless; but Hades and Dionysus, for whom they rave and celebrate Lenean rites, are the same. (B15)

Here Heraclitus acknowledges conventional notions of the gods and traditional religious practices. From his perspective the gods validate these practices. In B15 too Heraclitus enigmatically equates Dionysus, the god of life, with Hades, the god of death.²²³ Again Heraclitus is revising the traditional importance of names by making the two gods replaceable. There is also a strong parallel with Xenophanes who claims εἷς θεὸς ἐν τε θεοῖσι... μέγιστος (B23). Thus both figures acutely recognise cultural practices that surround the divine, without doing away with the divine itself.

As shown above, Heraclitus' method of inquiry is founded on reliance on the senses accompanied by understanding and focussed searching of oneself. Yet we gain little understanding into what Heraclitus accepts and rejects in his working process of inquiry. This is where a comparison with Herodotus' method is of great value. We know now that Herodotus is similarly reliant upon his own judgement, and what he sees and hears and thinks, just as Heraclitus did, and a method that we have seen is intrinsic to ἱστορίη. In Herodotus we get extensive passages of prose that reveal his process of inquiry as he goes, and we get a clear sense of his critical acumen in rejecting and accepting his source material. This is perhaps the best evidence of ἱστορίη as a process, particularly in the sense of how evidence is corroborated, measured up, and how this evidence is refined towards a final judgement.

²²³ Kirk (1970) 121. Kirk, Raven & Schofield (1983) 209–10.

3.2 The ambiguous status of Salmoxis

A key example of Herodotus' judgement at work is identifiable in the story of Salmoxis in book 4. This story is optimal for our investigation since it encompasses ethnography with ethnocentric bias and considerations about divinity in a succinct story. For instance, Hartog argues that in this story is instrumental in Herodotus displaying 'otherness' as determined by the Black Sea Greeks in the story.²²⁴ Burkert also argues that there is an ethnocentric bias to the story towards the opinions of the colonist Black Sea Greeks as they display pride in Greek cleverness of Salmoxis' deeds.²²⁵ Herodotus in recounting Darius' conquest of the Thracians focuses his attention on a people called the Getans, who are obstinate to Darius' conquest but end up being enslaved. Herodotus proceeds to discuss the features of the Getans' belief system: firstly, they believe in no god but their own and that that they taunt Zeus by waving their fists and shooting arrows into the sky when there is lightning, and, secondly, they suppose that they are immortal and that upon death they do not die but go to a divine spirit named Salmoxis. According to Herodotus, the Getans sacrifice one of their people to Salmoxis by impaling the sacrificial victim, who is thrown into the air by two men and who lands on three spears held by specially nominated individuals. This victim becomes a messenger and if he should die as a result of his skewering the Getans believe it is a favourable portent. On the other hand, if the messenger survives he is considered to be of low moral character.

Herodotus brings in another report about Salmoxis, when he recounts that certain Greek people who live beside the Hellespont and Euxine had informed him that Salmoxis was just a human being, in particular a slave on the island of Samos, and also a student of Pythagoras. Herodotus reports this counter story of the Greeks who tell that this very human Salmoxis held banquets for the Getans, and having plied them with wine and food, told them they would be immortal, before retiring to a secretly constructed underground lair for three years, only to appear again after this time and display his fabricated rebirth. Herodotus' final judgement of the story is important in displaying how he inquires into the divine here:

ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ μὲν τούτου καὶ τοῦ καταγαίου οἰκήματος οὔτε ἀπιστέω οὔτε
ὤνπιστεύω τι λίην, δοκέω δὲ πολλοῖσι ἔτεσι πρότερον τὸν Σάλμοξιν

²²⁴ Hartog (1988) 61–2.

²²⁵ Burkert (1972) 157.

τοῦτον γενέσθαι Πυθαγόρεω. εἴτε δὲ ἐγένετό τις Σάλμοξις ἄνθρωπος, εἴτ’
ἐστὶ δαίμων τις Γέτησι οὗτος ἐπιχώριος, χαιρέτω.

I do not myself, however, feel particularly strongly about the credibility or otherwise of the underground lair – indeed I actually think Salmoxis lived long before the time of Pythagoras. But no matter whether he really was of mortal origin, or a native deity of the Getans, I take my leave of him. (4.96.1–2)

The passage exemplifies *ιστορίη* as we have been defining it and shows how Herodotus practices it. Firstly, there is a lack of eyewitness evidence for Herodotus so he must rely on hearsay when he notes his source who supersede the account of the Getae themselves:

ὥς δὲ ἐγὼ πυνθάνομαι τῶν τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον καὶ Πόντον οἰκεόντων Ἑλλήνων,
I myself have heard a very different account of Salmoxis from the Greeks who live on the Hellespont and the Black Sea (4.95.1).

Herodotus’ process is identified in the verb πυνθάνομαι. His ability to compare the accounts of the Getae with Greek sources allows Herodotus to reach his own conclusion. Herodotus lays out the possibilities: (A) Salmoxis is immortal, a δαίμων;²²⁶ (B) he is a student of Pythagoras and a human being imitating an immortal, and (C) his own perspective: Salmoxis in fact lived before Pythagoras and may or may not have been divine. χαιρέτω, ‘I take my leave of him,’ is contentious and frustrating for scholars as Herodotus does not desire to pursue the topic at length, and what we are left with is a broad investigation, weighing up different possibilities. There is clearly both scepticism here and belief contained within an open-minded consideration of options. The divine is not excluded from historical action, but it is not considered the source of resolute truth either. Darbo-Peschanski makes the astute point about these multi-possibility λόγοι, presented by Herodotus, namely, that he does not reach a synthesis or conclusion point, and the open-ended nature of the possibilities essentially implicates the audience as the final judge, or ἵστωρ.²²⁷

What I intend to focus on here is what the story reveals about the culture of Ionian travel and the propagation of new ideas. According to Herodotus’ report, Salmoxis travelled firstly to his native country Thrace where he found the people living in ‘great poverty and

²²⁶ Hartog (1988) notes that δαίμων assigns an ambiguous status locating one in a space between gods and humans, which somewhat downplays his status as opposed to θεός (86).

²²⁷ Darbo-Peschanski (2013) 78–9.

ignorance' (κακοβίων... καὶ ὑπαφρονεστέρων, 4.95). Thereafter he travelled to Greece and associated with Pythagoras, a figure described as σοφιστής, where he gained 'an insight into Ionian ideas and a wiser way of living than was to be found in Thrace' (τὸν Σάλμοξιν τοῦτον ἐπιστάμενον δίαίταν τε Ἰάδα καὶ ἥθεα βαθύτερα ἢ κατὰ Θρήικας, 4.95). This experience ultimately leads Salmoxis to construct his hall and begin entertaining the Thracians and teaching them about their immortality. Herodotus is happy here to report of Salmoxis' propagating ideas about immortality, while preferring to exclude the names of Greek proponents of immortality doctrines from his own inquiries in Egypt (τῶν ἐγὼ εἰδὼς τὰ οὐνόματα οὐ γράφω, 2.123.2–3). Herodotus candidly describes Salmoxis' exploits but does not pass strong judgement upon the mysterious historical character's use of religious knowledge.

In order to take into full account I find it important to consider Herodotus' open-ended conclusion about Salmoxis in the light of Heraclitus' criticisms of Pythagoras. Heraclitus claimed that Pythagoras was a key practitioner of ἱστορίη, which taught him σοφίη, πολυμαθίη, but also κακοτεχνίη. The accusation of deception, κακοτεχνίη, that Pythagoras learnt may, by Heraclitus' terms, arguably be represented in the story where Salmoxis in the mode of a charlatan presents himself as immortal to the Thracians, a result of travel and broad learning, πολυμαθίη.²²⁸ Herodotus also describes Pythagoras as σοφιστῇ Πυθαγόρῃ (4.95.2). Herodotus does not make any accusations, and through his own practice of ἱστορίη and πολυμαθίη gains broad learning of cultural practices and beliefs without subscribing to or rejecting them; despite that, we see him applying a cultural bias towards Greek ways of life and teaching traditions of the non-Greeks.

The above discussion leaves a few questions unanswered: was Heraclitus xenophobic? Did he reject Pythagoras' ideas about immortality, or did he simply criticise the manner in which these ideas were propagated? While Herodotus, Pythagoras, Salmoxis, or even Xenophanes seek knowledge from travel and consulting human sources of knowledge, Heraclitus argues that the ψυχή is an inexhaustible object for ἱστορίη, when he says:

²²⁸ Compare Lucian's critique of Alexander of Abonoteichus, whom the ancient historian considers to be a charlatan posing as a divine figure: Alexander made predictions and gave oracles, employing great shrewdness in it and combining guesswork with his trickery (*Alexander the false prophet*, 22). Translation, A. M. Harmon (1936).

ψυχῆς πείρατα ἰὼν οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροιο πᾶσαν ἐπιπορευόμενος ὁδόν· οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει.

You would not find out the boundaries of the soul, even by travelling along every path: so deep a measure does it have. (B45)

Fragment B45 makes explicit that exploration is important for Heraclitus, but that it is done in an introverted, reflective way, rather than through ethnographic research, or travel abroad.²²⁹ In fact, true judgement would not need to extend to the outer world when study of the ψυχή is essentially the same as study of the outside world. In some way this reflects one possible reading of Protagoras' assertion that man is the measure of both being and non-being (DK 80 B1).²³⁰ Thus Heraclitus says:

ἔν τὸ σοφόν, ἐπίστασθαι γνώμην, ὅκη ἐκυβέρνησε πάντα διὰ πάντων.

The wise is one thing, to be acquainted with true judgement, how all things are steered through all. (B41)

Here Heraclitus asserts his own notion of wisdom, ἔν τὸ σοφόν, that judgement, γνώμη, sees the universality of all things, and their interrelation. Thus for him πολυμαθίη may merely be quibbling with minutiae when the ψυχή is sufficient enough. For Heraclitus the ψυχή represents the capacity for self-knowledge and learning, to develop the ψυχή means language is important: βαρβάρους ψυχᾶς (B107) do not comprehend the world, so learning the language of the soul – how the mind works – the senses then make the world intelligible to the understanding.²³¹ When knowledge is used to deceive others, then it is dangerous κακοτεχνίη (B129).

3.3 Rhampsinitus' descent into the underworld

The story of the ruler Rhampsinitus provides further evidence of Herodotus' attitude to the divine and an instance where he explores reports of a figure with alleged divine powers. According to the report, he periodically descended into the underworld to play dice with

²²⁹ Granger (2004) notes that Heraclitus' ethnographic scope only ever extends to his kinsfolk from Ephesus in fragment B121 (256).

²³⁰ Kirk, Raven and Schofield (1983) 203.

²³¹ Nussbaum (1972) 15.

Demeter and Hades. A festival was thus instituted to mark this event. The full account runs as follows:

μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἔλεγον τοῦτον τὸν βασιλέα ζῶν καταβῆναι κάτω ἐς τὸν οἱ Ἕλληνες Ἄϊδην νομίζουσι εἶναι, καὶ κεῖθι συγκυβεῦν τῇ Δήμητρι, καὶ τὰ μὲν νικᾶν αὐτὴν τὰ δὲ ἐσσοῦσθαι ὑπ’ αὐτῆς, καὶ μιν πάλιν ἄνω ἀπικέσθαι δῶρον ἔχοντα παρ’ αὐτῆς χειρόμακτρον χρύσειον. ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς Ῥαμψινίτου καταβάσιος, ὡς πάλιν ἀπῖκετο, ὁρτὴν δὴ ἀνάγειν Αἰγυπτίους ἔφασαν, τὴν καὶ ἐγὼ οἶδα ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ ἐπιτελέοντας αὐτούς· οὐ μέντοι εἴ γε διὰ ταῦτα ὀρτάζουσι ἔχῳ λέγειν. φᾶρος δὲ αὐτημερὸν ἐξυφάναντες οἱ ἱερεῖς κατ’ ὧν ἔδησαν ἐνὸς ἐωυτῶν μίτρη τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, ἀγαγόντες δέ μιν ἔχοντα τὸ φᾶρος ἐς ὁδὸν φέρουσιν ἐς ἱρὸν Δήμητρος αὐτοὶ ἀπαλλάσσονται ὀπίσω· τὸν δὲ ἱερεῖα τοῦτον καταδεδεμένον τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς λέγουσι ὑπὸ δύο λύκων ἄγεσθαι ἐς τὸ ἱρὸν τῆς Δήμητρος ἀπέχον τῆς πόλιος εἴκοσι σταδίου, καὶ αὖτις ὀπίσω ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἀπάγειν μιν τοὺς λύκους ἐς τὸ αὐτὸ χωρίον.

Another story I heard about Rhampsinitus was, that at a later period he descended alive into what the Greeks call Hades, and there played dice with Demeter, sometimes winning and sometimes losing, and returned to earth with a golden cloth which she had given him as a present. I was told that to mark his descent into the underworld and subsequent return, the Egyptians instituted a festival, which they certainly continued to celebrate in my own day – though I cannot state with confidence that the reason for it is what it is said to be. The priests weave a robe, taking one day only over the process; then they bandage the eyes of one of their number, put the robe into his hands, and lead him to the road which runs to the temple of Demeter. Here they leave him, and it is supposed that he is escorted to the temple, twenty furlongs from the city, by two wolves which afterwards bring him back to where they found him. (2.122.1–3)

There is a parallel with the Salmoxis story where a figure descends into the underworld and returns to benefit his people. Herodotus distances himself from the account of Hades, referring to his own peoples’, the Greek, account thus: Ἕλληνες Ἄϊδην νομίζουσι εἶναι, ‘...what the Greeks call Hades.’ In this way of describing the account the Greek belief is

framed as the belief of ‘the other.’ Herodotus thus recognises ethnographic bias, even in his own peoples’ beliefs.²³² Herodotus then expresses ambivalent emotions:

τὴν καὶ ἐγὼ οἶδα ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ ἐπιτελέοντας αὐτούς, οὐ μέντοι εἴ γε διὰ ταῦτα
ὀρτάζουσι ἔχω λέγειν.

...which they certainly continued to celebrate in my own day – though I cannot
state with confidence that the reason for it is what it is said to be (2.122.2).

Herodotus is emphatic about the continued celebration of the festival: ἐγὼ οἶδα, but he then expresses uncertainty about the events upon which the festival is celebrated. In this case, compared with the account of Salmoxis, Herodotus does not have access to a contrasting account, against which he can make his own final judgement. Herodotus’ certain knowledge about the formal proceedings of the festival suggests that he may have attended the festival or that he had an unnamed source from whom he gained the knowledge. In both the narratives of Rhampsinitus and Salmoxis parallel motifs appear: firstly, the κατάβασις and return of a special individual, and secondly, the detailed description of a rites surrounding the figure that must be performed by an elected member of the worshippers; for Salmoxis it was a sacrificial victim who would become a messenger into the spiritual world, here it is a blind-folded figure that is lead to the temple and back by wolves. Herodotus again expresses a degree of incredulity at this account, or rather leaves it to his sources: λέγουσι.²³³ Ultimately, Herodotus takes leave of the whole account, as he does at the end of the Salmoxis narrative:

τοῖσι μὲν νυν ὑπ’ Αἰγυπτίων λεγομένοισι χάσθω ὅτεω τὰ τοιαῦτα πιθανά ἐστι·
ἐμοὶ δὲ παρὰ πάντα τὸν λόγον ὑπόκειται ὅτι τὰ λεγόμενα ὑπ’ ἐκάστων ἀκοῇ
γράφω.

Anyone may believe these Egyptian tales, if he is sufficiently credulous; as for
myself, I keep to the general plan of this book, which is to record the traditions
of the various nations just as I heard them related to me. (2.123.1)

If we return to the Ionian methodology we have established and apply it to this case
about the divine we see Herodotus rely mainly on hearsay, here ἀκοῇ from reports. Autopsy,

²³² Nestle (1908) 36.

²³³ Fehling (1989) credits Herodotus to have travelled to sites when a religious structure is linked in the account to what different races of people say, λέγουσι: ‘When they [namely, λέγουσι reports] are linked to a monument they can also be taken as part of Herodotus’ own eye-witness observations (ὄψις)’ (73).

ὄψις is implicit in the mention of the temple, and the final judgement γνώμη, is left for the audience. Darbo-Peschanski makes the importance of this explicit:

Herodotus does not give his opinion explicitly, which is perhaps a way of showing that he does not at all favour the story put forward, but invites us to think that the version he has chosen to report is meant not only to be read or heard but also to be judged. The story functions as πίστις (a word that suggests the adjective πιθανός, cited above, which belongs to the same lexical field, and to the legal vocabulary as well), that is to say, as a proof meant to induce belief in the reality of what it states, because it will be judged to be convincing.²³⁴

Thus Darbo-Peschanski establishes that Herodotus is an impartial presenter of his results of inquiry. But he is not dogmatically presenting a view. The very openness asks the audience to apply their own γνώμη, based on presented evidence. Accordingly, the audience becomes the establisher of the final λόγος. Herodotus here maintains his sense of purpose: to record, γράφω. He does not shy away from the task of engaging with reports of the divine, τὰ λεγόμενα, and his encyclopaedic, Ionian imperative is seen in the noun ἐκάστων. Here again, ἀκοή is the primary source of data. The more concrete data obtained from ὄψις are the continuation of the ceremony as it is traditionally practiced, and also the monuments associated with the religious customs, the residue of the divine origin of the story. Knowledge obtained from ὄψις is ideal, but reports form a secondary source of data. This resonates with Heraclitus, for whom the ‘eyes are more accurate witnesses than the ears,’ ὀφθαλμοὶ [τῶν] ὥτων ακριβέστεροι μάρτυρες (B101A). Furthermore, Gorgias recognises the power of ὄψις to make impressions on the mind, and strike great fear or desire in the seer: διὰ δὲ τῆς ὄψεως ἡ ψυχὴ κὰν τοῖς τρόποις τυποῦται, ‘through sight the soul receives an impression even in its inner features’ (B82 11.15). For Gorgias, the impression left on the mind (ψυχὴ), can be fear (φόβος), or desire (ἔρως). Gorgias concludes about these two effects that even the impact art has on men:

²³⁴ Darbo-Peschanski (2013) 84. Compare Harrison (2000): ‘Herodotus speculates over ‘divine matters’ in the same breath as he expresses concern over the validity of such speculation. It is not then that Herodotus considers any attempt to venture an opinion concerning the divine worthless [...] only that such an opinion requires some accompanying statement of reservation, that speculation should be attempted in the sure belief that certain knowledge is impossible’ (190).

Οὕτω τὰ μὲν λυπεῖν τὰ δὲ ποθεῖν πέφυκε τὴν ὄψιν. Πολλὰ δὲ πολλοῖς πολλῶν ἔρωτα καὶ πόθον ἐνεργάζεται πραγμάτων καὶ σωμάτων.

Thus it is natural for the sight to grieve for some things and to long for others, and much love and desire for many objects and figures is engraved in many men.

(B82 11a.18)

The awareness of the effect of seeing and being seen as a powerful force to persuade becomes an important theme in the fifth century.²³⁵ Thus direct perception is the most reliable, and powerful – although still inherently flawed – way to obtain data for inquirers.

3.4 Cleomenes' madness – judgement upon causes

A third case in which Herodotus employs critical acumen γνώμη, a crucial element of ιστορίη, is when he analyses the λόγος of a Spartan king, Cleomenes, who reportedly goes mad (ὑπέλαβε μανίη νοῦσος, 6.75.1). Herodotus makes judgements upon the potential causes of this madness.

Herodotus determines multiple ethnocentric biases on the story before making his own judgement. They are as follows:

ὥς μὲν οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσι Ἑλλήνων, ὅτι τὴν Πυθίην ἀνέγνωσε τὰ περὶ
Δημαρήτου {γενόμενα} λέγειν, ὥς δὲ Ἀθηναῖοι λέγουσι,
διότι ἐξ Ἐλευσῖνα ἐσβαλὼν ἔκειρε τὸ τέμενος τῶν θεῶν, ὥς δὲ Ἀργεῖοι,
ὅτι ἐξ ἱεροῦ αὐτῶν τοῦ Ἄργου Ἀργείων τοὺς καταφυγόντας ἐκ τῆς μάχης
ἐξαγινέων κατέκοπτε καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἄλσος ἐν ἀλογίῃ ἔχων ἐνέπρησε.

Most people in Greece say that that was a punishment for having corrupted the Priestess at Delphi and inducing her to say what she did about Demaratus; the Athenians, however, put it down to his devastating the sacred land of Demeter and Peresphone, when he marched to Eleusis; while the Argives maintain that it was the punishment for his sacrilege when, after a battle, he fetched the Argive

²³⁵ As a further comparison, Isocrates, in his *Helen*, depicts Theseus, the founder of Athens as the superior beholder μάρτυρά γε πιστότερον of excellence, ἀρετή and sobriety, σωφροσύνη; accordingly, Isocrates sees image as important in political action, namely for a politician putting oneself on display in a community. See Kampakoglou, and Novokhatko (2018).

fugitives from the holy ground of Argos, and cut them to pieces, and then showed such contempt for the grove itself that he burnt it down. (6.75.3)

Herodotus begins with a popular account, what ‘most people’ [sic], οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσι say was the case,²³⁶ namely, that Cleomenes corrupted an oracle against his enemy, Demaratus. The Athenians attribute it to him committing sacrilege of the goddesses’ shrine ἔκειρε τὸ τέμενος τῶν θεῶν – a common pattern of behaviour that demands retribution in the *Histories* – and finally the report of the Argives demonstrates the conclusion that Cleomenes’ madness resulted from the slaughter of fugitives seeking refuge in a sanctuary, in which act Cleomenes also caused double sacrilege by destroying the site. The common thread in all of these arguments is that Cleomenes committed some kind of sacrilegious act, ἀλογία either against the gods, θεοί or the cultural institutions that surround the gods, namely the sanctuary, ἱρός. Cleomenes’ own people deny the role of the divine in the λόγος. The Spartan story runs:

αὐτοὶ δὲ Σπαρτιῆταί φασι ἐκ δαιμονίου μὲν οὐδενὸς μανῆναι Κλεομένεα,

Σκύθησι δὲ ὁμιλήσαντά μιν ἀκρητοπότην γενέσθαι καὶ ἐκ τούτου μανῆναι.

His own countrymen, however, deny that his madness was a punishment from heaven; they are convinced, on the contrary, that he lost his wits because, in his association with the Scythians, he had acquired the habit of drinking his wine neat. (6.84.1)

This argument denies any sacrilegious behaviour, obviously in a nationalistic attempt to clear the reputation of their ruler. Rather, the Spartan opinion places blame on cultural influence of the Scythians and the uncultured custom of drinking unwatered wine, usually associated with barbarians or satyrs.²³⁷ This rationalisation removes any attribution to divine causes and does not allow for double-causes of the divine and another cause, as is sometimes the case in Herodotus’ λόγος. Herodotus takes a stance on the matter and makes a judgement that it was in fact a result of a divine retribution, ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκέει τίσιν, for what Cleomenes did to Demaratus (6.84.3). Herodotus presents λόγοι from different perspectives. These perspectives present ethnocentric biases. The Spartans prefer to place blame on the Scythians, and clear their ruler of any impious action that may be the cause, thus they use rationalised causes in a

²³⁶ Both Tom Holland and Aubrey De Sélincourt translate οἱ πολλοὶ to be ‘most,’ whereas ‘many’ would seem more accurate, thus granting a broader range of perspectives to the Greeks.

²³⁷ As partaken by Silenus, in Euripides’ *Cyclops*.

biased way. Both the Argives and Athenians cite transgressions of religious customs. Holland sees this as Herodotus displays ‘piously favouring’ the divine explanation over against the Spartans’ ‘secular explanation,’ in Herodotus’ recognition of the importance for universal respect for oracles. It is difficult, however, to extricate the final judgement from ethnocentric bias or socio-political context.²³⁸

Herodotus does not cite one specific god, but attributes the cause to a more general form of divine retribution, *τίσις*, proceeding from his observation of what happens to people in general in the world, what it *seems* to Herodotus, *ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκέει*,²³⁹ and crystallising these observations into a general theory of causality. The notion of *νόμος* is important here, where different people identify causes in accordance with their biases. Herodotus, however, sees the defilement of sanctuaries and corruptions of the Pythia to be a transgression of a universal *νόμος*. We are reminded of Heraclitus’ pronouncement about a universal divine law that nurtures mankind: *τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι ὑπὸ ἐνὸς τοῦ θείου*, ‘for all the laws of men are nourished by one law, the divine law’ (B114). This demonstrates a clear impulse of Ionian thinking where the divine and *νόμος* are intertwined and not mutually exclusive. Herodotus’ result of inquiry is over and above cultural relativism.²⁴⁰

In comparing Herodotus’ methodology, consisting of reliance on his own eyewitness account, judgement and inquiry, *ὄψις τε ἐμὴ καὶ γνώμη καὶ ἱστορίη*, with both Heraclitus and the Hippocratics it is clear that personal observation was crucial in the process of inquiry, whether the object of inquiry be medical topics or the divine. This comparison has intended to make explicit the more general methodology of the fifth century.

Furthermore, the analysis of the accounts of Salmoxis, Rhampsinitus, and Cleomenes clearly demonstrated Herodotus’ willingness to apply his critical acumen to what is reported

²³⁸ Holland (2014) 686, footnote 67. Harrison (2000): ‘That Herodotus offers, even if only to reject, a non-divine explanation for Cleomenes’ end in parallel to the divine causes still has important implications; the conclusion that a vengeful deity lies behind a particular misfortune is made as a result of a process of deduction that could easily have ended in an exclusively human cause; a disaster that is divinely motivated looks no different than one that is not’ (106–107). In contrast, compare Lateiner (1989) who sees Herodotus to be more reluctant in presenting a divine cause: ‘Herodotus positions himself somewhere in between, endorsing the concept that Cleomenes ‘got what he deserved’ for abusing Demaratus, but not endorsing the hypothesis of divine intervention’ (204).

²³⁹ Also in Xenophanes B34.

²⁴⁰ See Harrison (2000) on the discussion between moral and ethnocentric relativism – they are not identical (217). However, I have discussed how there is an ethnocentric bias in some of Herodotus’ accounts.

to him. He here showed impartiality to different accounts, both mundane and divine, before making his final judgement.

The notion of a universal divine νόμος, gestured at by Heraclitus, is explored further in Herodotus' Egypt excursus, where Herodotus' investigations offer him data from his own observations and also from interviewing the Egyptian priests. Chapter 4 therefore focuses on Herodotus' ἱστορίη of Egypt. This is valuable for our investigation, as Herodotus is able to gain understanding of the Egyptian view of the gods, patterns in the animal kingdom, narratives of figures such as Helen of Troy and Heracles, and also of the Nile's flooding. The investigation of animals and the Nile is useful for my argument, as it demonstrates Herodotus' methodology and kinship to pre-Socratic thinkers, who endeavoured to see universal patterns in both theology and the study of nature. The Egyptian excursus also offers Herodotus the opportunity to reformulate existing Greek narratives, since he gains an awareness of ethnographic bias. Ultimately, the analysis of Herodotus' Egyptian inquiries in chapter 4 will ideally offer more evidence to further edify my thesis that Herodotus was an exemplary travelling intellectual who relied on his own perceptions and formulated a personal judgement about the divine. This ultimately aims to demonstrate that self-aware judgement is a key aspect of fifth-century theology, and that Herodotus is a practitioner of this nuanced way of investigating the divine.

Chapter 4. PATTERNS OF ΤΙΣΙΣ AND ΦΥΣΙΣ IN THE IONIAN WORLD

Herodotus' Egyptian journey further displays his inquiry methodology and his willingness to challenge both existing accounts of natural phenomena and also cultural narratives of historic individuals. His observations of animals in Egypt reveal universal laws, νομοί, of nature, φύσις, closely resembles the theories posited by the Ionian φυσιολόγοι. Following Herodotus' consideration of universal laws of nature, the chapter discussion then encompasses Herodotus' challenge to the Hellenocentric narratives of the Nile, Helen of Troy, and Heracles. Thus we see Herodotus as aware of ethnocentric bias, and important consideration when determining him to take a lucidly critical, rather than credulous stance on the reports conveyed to him. This all adds to our understanding of Herodotus' research methodology.

The integration of τίσις in the order of the world is clearly evident in the theories of Anaximander (B1) and Heraclitus (B94). This is important to investigate because judgement and observation are of equal importance to both Heraclitus and Herodotus. And my argument is that Herodotus is actively engaging in inquiry culture, and applying this methodology to the divine and how it operates in his λόγος. The Ionian inquirer and the scientist similarly recognise patterns in the world, although those individuals categorised as pre-Socratic philosophers assert a universal, *a priori* theory of patterns. Herodotus utilises the same vocabulary, but prefers to describe unique events where he deems cyclical patterns are present. His intention is not to create a theological metaphysics, but primarily to describe human deeds, where the divine plays into these deeds it is considered, and each case is treated in turn.²⁴¹ In the case of Cleomenes, a general sense of justice, τίσις, does not require Herodotus to cite a particular Olympian god, rather the divine in general is present as a force. In this account Herodotus demonstrates his ability to consider both secular and divine causes of Cleomenes' madness, demonstrating that to Herodotus either cause is feasible. According to Harrison, Lateiner grants that dual causes are acknowledged by Herodotus but Harrison accuses Lateiner of considering Herodotus to use the divine to pander to a pious audience: 'Explanations based on 'divine vengeance' have symbolic value for any god-fearing

²⁴¹ Gould (1987): 'But these are specific cases and do not constitute a 'theory' of human historical experience at large' (81).

audience, but they always allow and often coexist with other, non-theological causes.’²⁴² I disagree with Lateiner’s main premise where the divine is seemingly used decoratively for audience appeal. This undermines the role of the divine as a ‘real’ cause that Herodotus can consider critically. At times divine and non-divine causes co-exist, that is true, but at other times Herodotus favours one cause over another.

Herodotus and his contemporaries perceive the physical universe describing it in moral or judicial terms, although, as Lateiner notes, Herodotus does not search for a single mythical or theological root cause.²⁴³ Observations that have tragic overtones are often voiced by characters in narrated scenes such as Croesus who advises Cyrus about the cycle of fortune, based on his own experience, but the whole sequence does not have fatalistic overtones. Croesus maintains agency to act and make decisions, many of which are for the Greeks morally acceptable, such as Croesus demonstrating proper ξενία towards Adrastus, and also when Croesus shows respect to Delphi. In Croesus’ particular case though, a tragic outcome plays out and he acutely perceives the cycle of fate. In Aeschylean fashion, Croesus’ warning to Cyrus is derived from an ἀναγνώρισις the former Lydian king has undergone: τὰ δὲ μοι παθήματα ἐόντα ἀχάρिता μαθήματα γέγονε, ‘I have learned much from my cruel misfortunes’ (1.207.1).²⁴⁴ Croesus then proceeds to warn the ruler about the nature of human fortune:

εἰ μὲν ἀθάνατος δοκέεις εἶναι καὶ στρατιῆς τοιαύτης ἄρχειν, οὐδὲν ἂν εἴη
 πρῆγμα γνώμας ἐμέ σοι ἀποφαίνεσθαι· εἰ δ’ ἔγνωκας ὅτι ἄνθρωπος καὶ σὺ εἶς
 καὶ ἐτέρων τοιῶνδε ἄρχεις, ἐκεῖνο πρῶτον μάθε ὥς κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπείων
 ἐστὶ πρηγμάτων, περιφερόμενος δὲ οὐκ ἔῃ αἰεὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς εὐτυχέειν.

Doubtless, if you think that you and your men are immortal, there is little point in my telling you my opinion; but if you recognise the fact that both you and the troops under your command are merely human, then the first thing I would tell you is that human life is like a revolving wheel and never allows the same people to continue long in prosperity. (1.207.2)

²⁴² Harrison (2000) 107. Compare Lateiner (1989): 203.

²⁴³ Lateiner (1989) 204.

²⁴⁴ Echoing the Aeschylean notion πάθει μάθος (*Agamemnon*, 177).

Croesus' reflection is not one that determines the world to be highly moralistic; rather, he recognises that fortune is cyclical, κύκλος. On this, de Jong argues: 'his downfall therefore is not simply the result of culpable behaviour, and this makes it difficult to call Herodotus a moralist.'²⁴⁵ Similarly, Immerwahr states: 'The pattern of such order is neither theological nor moral, but existential.'²⁴⁶ With Herodotus this terminology becomes the tools to describe the process of change in the world, but the overtly moral, didactic element to it recedes.

In similar fashion in terms of the use of terminology, Heraclitus identifies strife as the force that ensures an ordered universe. He says: εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔοντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεών. 'One must know that war is the common, and justice is strife, and that all things come into being according to strife and need' (B80). War is identified as the explicit articulation of strife and order amongst mankind: Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους. 'War is of all things the father, and of all things the king; some he makes gods and some again men; some he makes slaves and some again freemen' (B53). Furthermore, he identifies a reciprocal justice in war amongst beings: ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες. 'Immortals–mortals, mortals–immortals, they live each other's death and die each other's life' (B62). Even nature is subject to the same order: Ἥλιος γὰρ οὐχ ὑπερβήσεται μέτρα· εἰ δὲ μή, Ἐρινύες μιν Δίκης ἐπικούροι ἐξευρήσουσιν. 'The Sun will not overstep his measure; if he does, the Erinyes, the handmaids of Justice will find him out' (B94). This justice ensures a flow of worldly phenomena that Heraclitus likens to fire: κόσμον τόνδε, τὸν αὐτὸν ἀπάντων, οὔτε τις θεῶν, οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' ἦν ἀεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται πῦρ ἀείζωνον, ἀπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα. 'This world-order [the same of all] did none of the gods or men make, but it always was and is and shall be: an everliving fire, kindling in measures and going out in measures' (B30). Heraclitus' notion of justice develops upon Anaximander's.

Anaximander says that the origin of things is: [...] ἑτέραν τινὰ φύσιν ᾗπειρον, ἐξ ἧς ἅπαντας γίνεσθαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς κόσμους· ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὐσί, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεών· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν

²⁴⁵ De Jong (2014) 191.

²⁴⁶ Immerwahr (1986) 307. But compare Lattimore (1939): 'But Croesus is wise only after the event, when he has suffered, and his expression of this, as has often been pointed out, is Aeschylean, the thought is also Herodotean'(31).

ἀλλήλοισι τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν. ‘...some other *apeiron* nature, from which come into being all the heavens and the worlds in them. And the source of coming-to-be for existing things is that into which destruction, too, happens, according to necessity; for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the assessment of Time’ (B1).²⁴⁷ Anaximander and Heraclitus determined cyclical patterns where justice δίκη, are intertwined with strife, ἔρις and retribution, τίσις, all in accordance with necessity, κατὰ τὸ χρεών.

These pre-Socratics have distilled these terms that have moral, human overtones into universal forces of nature, just as the modern notion of gravity is universal and irrefutable, retribution, τίσις, is universal to the Ionian outlook. Such principles, Eric Voegelin postulates, were ‘transferred by Herodotus to the process of history.’²⁴⁸ We clearly see that these terms such as τίσις are almost scientific for the Ionian mindset when Herodotus describes balance in nature, such as in the mating habits of flying serpents to be discussed presently.

4.1 The divine and balance in nature

To Ionian thinkers, retribution, τίσις, and strife, ἔρις, are simply principles of nature, φύσις – growth and decay. The divine ensures that balance is maintained in nature. The divine does not disrupt natural processes but alternately limits and facilitates them. For example, Heraclitus observes the functions the sun, that it has a determined time to shine daily and a set proximity to the earth. If the sun were to overstep his measures ὑπερβήσεται μέτρα, then strife, personified here as the Ἐρινός would bring the sun back to its natural place, doing service to Justice, Δίκη; order and balance implies divine sanction. Such thinking suggests direct observation of natural processes articulated in the language of tragedy. The presence of the Ἐρινός implies that if the sun were to present phenomena differently it would require retribution, τίσις. But here the workings of the divine that provide a moral function in tragedy become aspects of nature; the Ionians are concerned with the way things show themselves in the natural world. The divine is more of a function ensuring continuity and order in both human and cosmological affairs: ‘the main concern of the divine is the maintenance of

²⁴⁷ Voegelin (2000): ‘The names of Anaximander and Heraclitus are never mentioned by Herodotus. Nevertheless, it will be appropriate to recall them now, for the conception of historical dynamics emerging from Herodotus clearly continues the conception of cosmic dynamics developed by the Ionian philosophers’ (410–411).

²⁴⁸ Voegelin (2000) 411.

balance.²⁴⁹ The phrase Herodotus uses in the speech of Miltiades is θεῶν τὰ ἴσα νεμόντων, ‘if God gives fair play’ (6.109.5), in this context applying to the fate of armies in war; but the principle of balance is determined as a universal in nature and culture. Thus in his observations of the animal kingdom in Egypt Herodotus observes:

καί κως τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ προνοίη, ὥσπερ καὶ οἶκός ἐστι, <φαίνεται> ἐοῦσα σοφίη,
ὅσα μὲν γὰρ ψυχὴν τε δειλὰ καὶ ἐδώδιμα, ταῦτα μὲν πάντα πολύγωνα πεποίηκε,
ἵνα μὴ ἐπιλίπη κατεσθιόμενα, ὅσα δὲ σχέτλια καὶ ἀνηρά, ὀλιγόγωνα.

And indeed it is hard to avoid the belief that divine providence, in the wisdom that one would expect of it, has made prolific every kind of creature which is timid and preyed upon by others, in order to ensure its continuance, while savage and noxious species are comparatively unproductive. (3.108.2)

According to Herodotus, divine providence, θεοῦ ἡ προνοίη ensures balance amongst the various species of the animal kingdom.²⁵⁰ He goes so far as to posit the likely involvement of the divine in nature: οἶκός ἐστι. Furthermore, this divine providence, προνοίη has the very human attribute of sentience, σοφίη. Likelihood (οἶκός/εἰκός) as a measure is a common trope in the persuasive writings of fifth-century figures, where propositional arguments relied on likelihood as a means to convince the reader/listener of an argument, or at least impress them with the intellectual prowess displayed in the formulation of the argument.²⁵¹ This process is exemplary in Gorgias’ *Encomium for Helen* where the writer outlays his project stating: καὶ προθήσομαι τὰς αἰτίας, δι’ ἃς εἰκός ἦν γενέσθαι τὸν τῆς Ἑλένης εἰς τὴν Τροίαν στόλον, ‘I shall set forth the causes through which it was likely that Helen’s voyage to Troy should take place’ (B84 11a.4). Gorgias cites powers beyond human control: τύχη and ἔρος. Utilising deductive reasoning, Gorgias gives two options:

Ἡ γὰρ Τύχης βουλήμασι καὶ θεῶν βουλευμασι καὶ Ἀνάγκης ψηφίσμασιν
ἔπραξεν ἢ ἔπραξεν, ἢ βίαι ἀρπασθεῖσα, ἢ λόγοις πεισθεῖσα, <ἢ ἔρωτι ἀλοῦσα>.

²⁴⁹ Immerwahr (1986) 312.

²⁵⁰ Immerwahr (1986) 324.

²⁵¹ Provencal (2015) 78. Antiphon also appealed to εἰκός in his arguments, for example *First tetralogy*, 2.1.2. Aristotle formulated that the probable is that which generally happens and this is the basis of persuasion (πιθανός), the goal of rhetoric: τὸ μὲν γὰρ εἰκός ἐστι τὸ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ γινόμενον, ‘for that which is probably is that which generally happens’ (*Rhetoric* 1.2.1; 1.2.15)

For either by will of Fate and decision of the gods and vote of Necessity did she do what she did, or by force reduced or by words seduced (or by love possessed). (B82 11a.6)

Gorgias ultimately defends Helen, concluding: ἦλθε γάρ, ὥς ἦλθε, τύχης ἀγρεύμασιν, οὐ γνώμης βουλευμασιν, καὶ ἔρωτος ἀνάγκαις, οὐ τέχνης παρασκευαῖς, ‘for she came, as she did come, caught in the net of Fate, not by the plans of the mind, and by the constraints of love, not by the devices of art’ (DK84 11a.19). Gorgias thus determines the likelihood (εἰκός) that forces that acted upon Helen are more powerful than human contrivances. Furthermore, Gorgias outlays a more general law of nature, one common in sophistic thought, that the stronger, by nature, rule the weaker:

Πέφυκε γὰρ οὐ τὸ κρεῖσσον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἥσσονος κωλύεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἥσσον ὑπὸ τοῦ κρεῖσσονος ἄρχεσθαι καὶ ἄγεσθαι, καὶ τὸ μὲν κρεῖσσον ἡγεῖσθαι, τὸ δὲ ἥσσον ἔπεσθαι. Θεὸς δ’ ἀνθρώπου κρεῖσσον καὶ βίαι καὶ σοφίαι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις. Εἰ οὖν τῇ Τύχῃ καὶ τῷ θεῷ τὴν αἰτίαν ἀναθετέον, (ἢ) τὴν Ἑλένην τῆς δυσκλείας ἀπολυτέον.

For it is the nature of things, not for the strong to be hindered by the weak, but for the weaker to be ruled and drawn by the stronger, and for the stronger to lead and the weaker to follow. God is a stronger force than man in might and in wit and in other ways. If then one must place blame on Fate and on a god, one must free Helen from disgrace. (B82 11a.6)

Gorgias’ conclusion – according to likelihood, εἰκός – and also his appeal to perceived laws of nature, πέφυκε, facilitate his argument about the power of ἔρος on the ψυχή. This leads to Gorgias’ acquittal of Helen. This habit to theorise about the hierarchy of nature was a common philosophical trope, wherein the divine ordered nature in an intentional way, and accordingly distributed numbers of creatures according to each’s natural capacity. We can draw a strong parallel concerning the idea of balance in nature between the *Histories* and Plato’s *Protagoras*²⁵² when Protagoras describes Epimetheus’ distribution of attributes to each species:

²⁵² Nestle (1908) 16.

καὶ τοῖς μὲν ὀλιγογονίαν προσῆψε, τοῖς δ' ἀναλίσκομένοις ὑπὸ τούτων
πολυγονίαν, σωτηρίαν τῷ γένει πορίζων.

And some he made to have few young ones, while those who were their prey
were very prolific; and in this manner the race was preserved.

(Plato, *Protagoras*, 321B)

What is important is the notion that an overarching *προνοίη* that is *σοφίη* has determined the balance of different species.²⁵³ In Plato it is very schematic, substantiating the workings of an intelligence that plans out the shape of nature. In contrast, Herodotus proceeds in accordance with the empirical principles of *ιστορίη* – the observable and the mechanisms of nature, as it were for other Ionian thinkers who relied on sensory information. For instance the Hippocratic writer of *On the sacred disease* establishes that the divine element of the disease does not differentiate it significantly from other diseases: τὸ δὲ νόσημα τοῦτο οὐδὲν τί μοι δοκεῖ θεϊότερον εἶναι τῶν λοιπῶν, ἀλλὰ φύσιν ἔχει ἣν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα νοσήματα, καὶ πρόφασιν, ‘But this disease is in my opinion no more divine than any other; it has the same nature as other diseases, and the cause that gives rise to individual diseases.’²⁵⁴ What is important to the Ionian mindset is what data is available about each particular phenomenon; from the collation of this data one can conjecture about the unity. For Herodotus, the interactions of animals he observes, or learns about from reports, affirm to him that there is some overarching ordering principle that he calls providence, *προνοίη*. Thus for Ionian thinkers the notion that natural and divine causes could be co-existent sat happily in their theories. It was

²⁵³ Emmons (1991): ‘Herodotus, whether he drew directly on Protagoras or merely repeated ideas that educated people were debating in his time, accepted a teleological view according to which a balance of physical strength and population is maintained in the animal kingdom by a system of complementary strengths and weaknesses’ (207). Compare Kerferd (1981): ‘It seems certain that Herodotus either drew on what Protagoras had written, or at least upon the source used by Protagoras, when he mentions the prolific nature of animals liable to destruction in contrast with strong and courageous animals such as lions which produce relatively few offspring’ (150).

Also, see Immerwahr (1986) 324.

Hesiod described the natural law of the stronger ruling the weaker in his *Works and days*, with his story of the hawk ruling the nightingale. Hesiod concludes on this example of the stronger ruling the weaker:

ἄφρων δ', ὅς κ' ἐθέλη πρὸς κρείσσονας ἀντιφερίζειν·
νίκης τε στέρεται πρὸς τ' αἴσχεσιν ἄλγεα πάσχει.

He is a fool who tries to withstand the stronger,

for he does not get the mastery and suffers pain besides his shame (*Works and days*, 210–211).

Compare Callicles’ argument in Plato’s *Gorgias*, where he argues that the strong should not have restrictions on their power:

ἀλλὰ ταῦτ' ἔστιν ἃ λέγω. τοῦτο γὰρ οἶμαι ἐγὼ τὸ δίκαιον εἶναι φύσει, τὸ βελτίω ὄντα καὶ φρονιμώτερον καὶ ἄρχειν καὶ πλεον ἔχειν τῶν φαυλοτέρων. ‘Why, that is my meaning. For this is what I regard as naturally just – that being better and wiser he should have both rule and advantage over the baser people’ (*Gorgias*, 490b).

²⁵⁴ *On the sacred disease* V. in Jones (1959) 150–1.

entirely possible to combine causal factors in a theory; namely, the gods could be present as a cause in harmony with natural causes.²⁵⁵

Thus inquiry into natural causes does not diminish the effect of the gods/divine in natural processes. In this instance the divine plays a role in maintaining the balance of species, although the phraseology has a moralistic tone echoing tragedy. A clear example is Herodotus' descriptions of the winged serpents. Their population is regulated through their specific mating habits. In this account the language echoes Anaximander's broad notion of justice. Being a predatory creature, nature must necessarily keep their population restricted. Hence once the male and female have mated the female bites through the neck of the male, which is in turn avenged by the female's young who gnaw out her insides: ἡ δὲ θήλεα τίσιν τοιγύνη ἀποτίνει, '...and the female, too, has to pay for her behaviour' (3.109.2). Retribution, τίσις, parallels Anaximander's notion that all beings pay each other justice δίκη, in due time (B1).²⁵⁶

Although this appears as a form of retribution, similar to the moral device in tragedy, we must remember that this is the context of animals, for which the moral notions inherent to tragedy do not apply, more important is the recognition of cycles in nature and how the divine plays into these cycles. According to his account, Herodotus observed some data about the serpents through his own autopsy: ἀπικόμενος δὲ εἶδον ὅστέα ὀφίων, 'On my arrival I saw skeletons of winged serpents' (2.75.1).²⁵⁷ Furthermore the λόγος of the serpents and the balance of animal populations in general relies on implicit sources in Arabia: λέγουσι δὲ καὶ τόδε Ἀράβιοι (3.108.1).²⁵⁸ Thus we have dual evidence of ἱστορίη in sight and

²⁵⁵ Lloyd G. E. R. (1979) 29. Dodds (1951 rpt. 2004) also notes that to the ancient mind there could be the simultaneous acceptance of a 'direct' and an 'indirect' cause, i.e. a physical cause and a divine cause. He uses the example of Patroclus in the *Iliad* 16.816 – Homer attributing his death to Euphorbus (direct) and also Apollo (indirect). Dodds terms this 'overdetermination' (7).

²⁵⁶ How and Wells, vol. I. (1991): 'Herodotus' vivid imagination conceives the serpent pair as a sort of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra' (291).

²⁵⁷ Compare the list of attributes of the winged serpents including: sacred attributes related to Zeus, physical description, observation of the snakes' remains, and accounts of the snakes' interactions with Ibises in the pass from Arabia to Egypt (2.74–76).

²⁵⁸ These source citations do not satisfy Fehling (1989) who believes this assumption that the whole account comes from the Arabians is a disingenuous tactic: 'From all the evidence collected here we may conclude that Herodotus intends his audience to understand his source citations as in principle extending over his whole account. We can also see that his general remarks on obtaining information, in which he speaks only of ἱστορίη, inquiry, and never of reading, fit in with this view. Remarks of this sort, like other source-citations, are made in conformity with the same fiction' 154. I argue that this does not deter us from investigating the extent to which Herodotus is carrying out the methods of ἱστορίη as he has outlaid them. He would arguably mention ancient textual sources if they were relevant to his own writing, and indeed he implicitly refers to Hecataeus' accounts, for instance Herodotus' critique of Hecataeus' map of Ocean (4.10).

sound, and a result of inquiry that the divine is likely, οἰκός ἐστι, at play in observable patterns in nature.

In the context of large-scale human endeavours the divine also plays a role in pattern formation. Historical action reaches a heightened level in book 8 in the naval battles at Artemisium and Salamis, and at the same time divine activity is a prevalent feature of the narrative. At the beginning of book 8, before the naval battle commences, nature ensures that the Persian does not outweigh the Greek fleet:

καὶ τούτοις μὲν τοιαύτη <ή> νύξ ἐγένετο, τοῖσι δὲ ταχθεῖσι αὐτῶν περιπλῶειν
Εὐβοίαν ἢ αὐτὴ περ ἐοῦσα νύξ πολλὸν ἦν ἔτι ἀγριωτέρη, τοσούτῳ ὅσῳ ἐν
πελάγει φερομένοις ἐπέπιπτε, καὶ τὸ τέλος σφί ἐγένετο ἄχαρι. ὥς γὰρ δὴ
πλώουσι αὐτοῖσι <ό> χειμών τε καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ ἐπεγίνετο ἐοῦσι κατὰ τὰ Κοῖλα τῆς
Εὐβοίης, φερόμενοι τῷ πνεύματι καὶ οὐκ εἰδότες τῇ ἐφέροντο ἐξέπιπτον πρὸς
τὰς πέτρας· ἐποιέετό τε πᾶν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ὅπως ἂν ἐξισωθεῖν τῷ Ἑλληνικῷ τὸ
Περσικὸν μηδὲ πολλῷ πλεον εἶη.

For the Persians at Aphetae it was bad enough at night, but it was far worse for the squadron which had been ordered to sail round Euboea, for they were at sea when the storm caught them. Their fate was miserable: just as they were off the Hollows of Euboea the wind and rain began, and every ship, overpowered and forced to run blind before it, piled up on the rocks. God was indeed doing everything possible to reduce the superiority of the Persian fleet and bring it down to the size of the Greeks. (8.13)

This seemingly miraculous culmination of natural events results in circumstances that have a tragic overtone for the Persians: καὶ τὸ τέλος σφί ἐγένετο ἄχαρι.²⁵⁹ However, the overall function of the divine on a national scale of peoples is also to maintain balance.²⁶⁰ Similarly, narrators within the dialogue themselves acknowledge this role of the divine. For instance, the formulaic expression used before both the battle of Lade and Marathon echo shared cultural beliefs that the divine serves the function of equalising. Before Lade, the Phocaean commander Dionysius makes a speech to hearten the Ionians thus:

²⁵⁹ For example ἄχαρι appearing in the chorus' lament in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, line 1545. Compare ἄχαρι appearing also in Orestes' lament to Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, line 566.

²⁶⁰ Immerwahr (1986) 307.

Ἐπὶ ξυροῦ γὰρ ἀκμῆς ἔχεται ἡμῖν τὰ πρήγματα, ἄνδρες Ἴωνες, ἢ εἶναι ἐλευθέροισι ἢ δούλοισι, καὶ τούτοις ὡς δρηπέτησι· νῦν ὧν ὑμεῖς ἦν μὲν βούλησθε τάλαιπωρίας ἐνδέκεσθαι, τὸ παραχρῆμα μὲν πόνος ὑμῖν ἔσται, οἷοί τε δὲ ἔσεσθε ὑπερβαλόμενοι τοὺς ἐναντίους εἶναι ἐλεύθεροι· εἰ δὲ μαλακίῃ τε καὶ ἀταξίῃ διαχρήσησθε, οὐδεμίαν ὑμέων ἔχω ἐλπίδα μὴ οὐ δώσιν {ὑμέας} δίκην βασιλεῖ τῆς ἀποστάσιος. ἀλλ' ἐμοί τε πίθεσθε καὶ ἐμοὶ ὑμέας αὐτοὺς ἐπιτρέψατε· καὶ ὑμῖν ἐγώ, θεῶν τὰ ἴσα νεμόντων, ὑποδέκομαι ἢ οὐ συμμίζιν τοὺς πολεμίους ἢ συμμίσγοντας πολλὸν ἐλασσωθήσεσθαι.

‘Fellow Ionians,’ he said, ‘our fate balances on a razor’s edge between being free men or slaves – and runaway slaves at that. Come then: if you are willing to submit for a while to strict discipline and to spend a few laborious days, you will thereby be enabled to defeat the Persians and keep your liberty. If, on the other hand, you continue to live soft and to go as you please, then I see no hope whatever of your escaping punishment at the king’s hands for your revolt. Now take my advice; put yourselves under my orders, and, if heaven gives us a fair deal, I promise you either that the enemy will refuse battle altogether, or, if he fights, that he will be soundly beaten’ (6.11.2–3).

This speech is powerful in many ways and is indicative of Greek ideology. Dionysius puts it to the Ionians that the result of the choice for them, is to be free men (ἐλευθεροῖ) or slaves (δουλοῖ). Their subsequent action is also reliant on the gods’ willingness to maintain fairness (θεῶν τὰ ἴσα νεμόντων). This is a key rebalancing function of the gods in the *Histories*, and one that features in moments of crisis, where the gods usually favour those who are reverent over high-spirited human beings.

Homer similarly employs this phrase in Nestor’s speech in *Iliad* book 10:

ἀλλὰ μάλα μεγάλη χρεῖω βεβίηκεν Ἀχαιοῦς.

νῦν γὰρ δὴ πάντεσσιν ἐπὶ ξυροῦ ἴσταται ἀκμῆς

ἢ μάλα λυγρὸς ὄλεθρος Ἀχαιοῖς ἢ ἐβιῶναι.

But this difficulty is very great that has come to the Achaeans,

Since for all of us the decision now stands on the edge of a razor

Whether the Achaeans shall have life or sorry destruction. (*Iliad*, 10.172–4)

The employment of the phrase ἐπὶ ξυροῦ ἀκμῆς is used by both writers to add gravity to each character's speech, with great focus on the importance of human decision in determining the fate of the people. Herodotus is consciously employing poetic style in order to heighten the drama of the situation. Direct reference to Homer is difficult to establish, but the parallel between Homer and Herodotus here is striking.²⁶¹ To a strong degree Herodotus is a traditional story-teller, and is versed in the techniques that compelled the powerful plots that embed in social memory and give the Greeks their strong sense of identity. Compare Miltiades who makes a similar speech to Callimachus before the battle of Marathon, concluding:

ἦν δὲ συμβάλωμεν πρὶν τι καὶ σαθρὸν Ἀθηναίων μετεξετέροισι ἐγγενέσθαι,
θεῶν τὰ ἴσα νεμόντων οἷοί τε εἰμὲν περιγενέσθαι τῇ συμβολῇ.

But if we fight before the rot can show itself in any of us, then, if God gives us
fair play, we can not only fight but win. (6.109.5)

These parallel remarks, then, coming from different speakers in the text voice the commonly held belief concerning the divine in large-scale military engagements. The important point is that the notion of balance, θεῶν τὰ ἴσα νεμόντων, generated by the divine plays into human group affairs, just as it did in the animal kingdom. In the human accounts there is more of a tragic, emotional tone. The issue for our investigation of ἱστορίη methodology is that there is no personal observation or account of oral sources, to which Herodotus refer. Thus these accounts do not align as closely with ἱστορίη, in spite of the light they shine on Herodotus' general worldview, and desire to amplify acts that bestow glory on the Greeks. Rather, in this case, Herodotus utilises the divine as a potent literary device to underscore his accounts of particularly dramatic historical events.²⁶²

On the level of personal actors in the narrative, the divine can also have a levelling effect, manifesting as divine φθόνος. Most famously is the hubristic ambition of Xerxes that leads to retribution.

²⁶¹ On the parallels of these passages see Hornblower (1987) 29. Compare Boedeker (2012) 101. Also see Pelling (2006) 80.

²⁶² Immerwahr (1986): 'Herodotus' belief in 'the divine' does not exclude his conventional belief in religious traditions, although he does not believe in such traditions fully, nor blindly. At the same time, the dramatic use of religious stories has a function quite separate from the author's faith [sic], in that it raises the level of action in the last battles above the rationally comprehensible' (312).

ὄρῳς τὰ ὑπερέχοντα ζῶα ὡς κεραυνοῖ ὁ θεὸς οὐδὲ ἔῃ φαντάζεσθαι, τὰ δὲ σμικρὰ οὐδέν μιν κνίζει· ὄρῳς δὲ ὡς ἐς οἰκήματα τὰ μέγιστα αἰεὶ καὶ δένδρεα τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀποσκήπτει τὰ βέλεα. φιλέει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὰ ὑπερέχοντα πάντα κολούειν. οὕτω δὲ καὶ στρατὸς πολλὸς ὑπὸ ὀλίγου διαφθείρεται κατὰ τοιόνδε· ἐπεὶ σφί ὁ θεὸς φθονήσας φόβον ἐμβάλη ἢ βροντήν, δι' ὧν ἐφθάρησαν ἀναξίως ἐωυτῶν. οὐ γὰρ ἔῃ φρονέειν μέγα ὁ θεὸς ἄλλον ἢ ἐωυτόν.

You know, my lord, that amongst living creatures it is the great ones that god smites with his thunder, out of envy of their pride. The little ones do not vex him. It is always great buildings and the tall trees which are struck by lightning. It is God's way to bring the lofty low. Often a great army is destroyed by a little one, when God in his envy puts fear into the men's hearts, or sends a thunderstorm, and they are cut into pieces in a way they do not deserve. For God tolerates pride in none but Himself. (7.10.1ε)

In the personal warning of Artabanus the important message that one best not overstep one's bounds becomes apparent. This warning also echoes Heraclitus when he claims: 'Ἡλιος γὰρ οὐχ ὑπερβήσεται μέτρα· εἰ δὲ μή, Ἑρινύες μιν Δίκης ἐπίκουροι ἐξευρήσουσιν. 'The Sun will not overstep his measure; if he does, the Erinyes, the handmaids of Justice will find him out' (B94). Furthermore we are reminded about Heraclitus' critique of those who ignore his λόγος (B1), and also those who have barbarian souls that cannot hear: 'Ἐπὶ μαρτυρεῖς ἀνθρώποισιν ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ὄτα βαρβάρους ψυχὰς ἐχόντων (B107). Not to listen to wise advice leads to one's demise.

We have looked at the divine playing a balancing role in nature, on a militaristic level between the forces of the Greeks and Persians; the divine also plays a role of rebalancing the actions of individuals. This is where the retributive force of the divine, τίσις, comes into play. Pheretima is an individual who commits reprehensible deeds against the people of Barca, brutally mutilating the men and women of that city. Thus Herodotus describes the unhappy end of her life that she receives as a consequence:

οὐ μὲν οὐδὲ ἡ Φερετίμη εὖ τὴν ζόην κατέπλεξε. ὡς γὰρ δὴ τάχιστα ἐκ τῆς Λιβύης τεισαμένη τοὺς Βαρκαίους ἀπενόστησε ἐς τὴν Αἴγυπτον, ἀπέθανε κακῶς· ζῶσα γὰρ εὐλέων ἐξέζεσε, ὡς ἄρα ἀνθρώποισι αἱ λίην ἰσχυραὶ τιμωρίαι

πρὸς θεῶν ἐπίφθονοι γίνονται· ἡ μὲν δὴ Φερετίμης τῆς Βάπτου τοιαύτη τε καὶ
τοσαύτη τιμωρίῃ ἐγένετο ἐς Βαρκαίους.

Peretima's web of life was also not woven happily to the end. No sooner had she returned to Egypt after her revenge upon the people of Barca, than she died a horrible death, her body seething with worms while she was still alive. Thus this daughter of Battus, by the nature and severity of her punishment of the Barcaeans, showed how true it is that all excess in revenge draws upon the anger of the gods. (4.205)

Here, τίσις takes the form τεισαμένη. Beyond the traditionally didactic message embedded in the story, we can see the more general concept of balance that the Ionian inquirer mind could see as present in different subject matter. Just as the Ἐρινύες checks the Sun for Heraclitus, Pheretima is subject to τίσις for her deeds. In human affairs portent dreams transmit the same message, as to Hipparchus in a dream with a foreboding message about his subsequent assassination by Harmodius and Aristogeiton:

τλήθι λέων ἄτλητα παθὼν τετλήοτι θυμῷ·

οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων ἀδικῶν τίσιν οὐκ ἀποτεῖσει.

Oh lion, endure the unendurable with an enduring heart;

no man does wrong and shall not pay the penalty. (5.56.1)²⁶³

This pithy and axiomatic statement rings of the cycle of retribution determined by Anaximander: διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν. '...for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the assessment of Time' (B1). The divine merely brings behaviour back into its proper place, whether that is the meteorological behaviour of the sun or the moral agency of a human being. In the light of our investigation into ἱστορίη culture, and the desire of writers to make a cohesive λόγος, scholars argue that Herodotus at times leans towards an over-schematisation of phenomena, especially in cases where sense data is not as readily available. As Lateiner puts it: 'Although Herodotus can fall victim to the probable or the neatly schematic, he

²⁶³ Note the Homeric resonances of retribution here:

εὔρεν ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆα μετὰ κταμένοισι νέκυσιν,
αἵματι καὶ λύθρῳ πεπαλαγμένον ὥστε λέοντα,
There she found Odysseus among the slaughtered dead men,
Spattered over with gore and battle filth, like a lion. (22.401–2)

prefers what can be seen or heard.²⁶⁴ In terms of the inquiring Greek mind, Lloyd argues that ‘it had a marked predilection for rational order which tended to find expression in terms of balance, antithesis and symmetry. It also liked linear patterns and, where possible, sought out a single source for multiple phenomena.’²⁶⁵

Herodotus, however consistently relies on inductive processes of inquiry and observation, and avoids reductionist schematisation.²⁶⁶ The rational order, λόγος, is embodied in δίκη, which maintains the ‘physical and moral order of the universe,’²⁶⁷ as is clearly seen in Heraclitus’ account to the sun (B94). Perhaps in certain accounts of individuals such as Pheretima, Herodotus’ programmatic desire for a cohesive λόγος overrides a stringent comparison of sense data and reports received.

We can argue that Herodotus is basing his judgement on analogies of the functioning of balance as perceived similarly in nature, large-scale groups of people, and for hubristic individuals such as Pheretima or Xerxes. As Lateiner puts it: ‘Τὸ ἴσον, or τίσις, the most common historical principle voiced by the author, applies as much to the historical realm as to nature.’²⁶⁸ Lateiner expands on this notion further when he says: ‘the correspondence among the sub-human, human, and supra-human world is a coherent ‘demonstration’ of how things happen, of the processes that we witness.’²⁶⁹ Seeing cause and effect in certain instances is different from imposing a general theory of *a priori* cause and effect on the world. Herodotus sometimes falls prey to the latter tendency in a desire for over-schematisation, symptomatic of the pre-Socratic desire to map out causes and rules that describe all phenomena.²⁷⁰ More consistently, however, his conclusions follow his results of inquiry.

On the one hand we have Herodotus, who is for the main part acting as an empiricist, while working with shared cultural understandings of the world; while on the other hand, we have Heraclitus making bolder, more philosophical and axiomatic claim – still maintaining

²⁶⁴ Lateiner (1989) 193.

²⁶⁵ Lloyd (1975) 151.

²⁶⁶ In contrast, H. D. F. Kitto (1991) saw the Greeks imposing patterns of thought over observation: ‘Therefore the Greek tended to impose pattern where it is in fact not to be found, just as he relied on Reason where he would have been better advised to use observation and deduction’ (187).

²⁶⁷ Lloyd (1975) 150.

²⁶⁸ Lateiner (1989) 195.

²⁶⁹ Lateiner (1989) 195–6.

²⁷⁰ Lloyd (1975) 152.

the importance of sense perceptions, with the proviso that our minds, ψυχαί, are receptive. Both observation – with cognizance of the epistemological limitations observation – and theorising about the world come into play for the Ionian mindset,²⁷¹ but as we see with Herodotus, more examples of evidence are available for us to examine his overall methodology of observing events in the world, involving consulting experts, considering cultural accounts, and making a final judgement, or leaving the final judgement open to the audience. The collection and display of evidence is most strongly seen in Herodotus' Egyptian excursus.

4.2 The divine in the ἱστορίη of Egypt – Heracles, Helen, the Nile

Egypt provides a rich source of ἱστορίη for Herodotus, in terms of the divine, and the role of the divine in the development of Greek and Egyptian religion, and also the importance of the divine in relation to natural phenomena in the Egypt region. Here, Herodotus' concerns are with sameness and difference, specifically to Greek culture. His point of reference is the Greek. Thus the reader must be aware of ethnocentric bias.²⁷² Herodotus' key sources here are the Egyptian priests, however, as is his fashion, Herodotus also adds his own observations. Herodotus has multiple sources to draw on for his inquiry, mainly the priestly class. Herodotus then conducts his inquiry towards religion, based on his meetings with the priests:

οἱ γὰρ Ἡλιοπολῖται λέγονται Αἰγυπτίων εἶναι λογιώτατοι. τὰ μὲν νυν θεῖα τῶν ἀπηγημάτων οἷα ἤκουον, οὐκ εἰμὶ πρόθυμος ἐξηγέσθαι, ἔξω ἢ τὰ οὐνόματα αὐτῶν μόνον, νομίζων πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἴσον περὶ αὐτῶν ἐπίστασθαι· τὰ δ' ἂν ἐπιμνησθῆω αὐτῶν, ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου ἐξαναγκαζόμενος ἐπιμνησθήσομαι.

It is at Heliopolis that the most learned of the Egyptians are to be found. I am not anxious to repeat what I was told about the Egyptian religion, apart from the mere names of their deities, for I do not think that any one nation knows much more about such things than any other; whatever I shall mention shall be due to the exigencies of my story. (2.3.1–2)

²⁷¹ Empedocles (B3), Xenophanes (B34), Democritus (B125).

²⁷² Vasunia (2001) 94.

The omission of information in book 2 is significantly more prominent than the rest of the *Histories*,²⁷³ the book in which divine matters are discussed the most. Herodotus puts a lot of trust in these particular sources, namely, those from Heliopolis, but the extent to which he chooses to report on divine matters, *θεῖα*, reaches only the surface level, the names of the gods.²⁷⁴ The power of the *λόγος* is evident in this passage, as the most learned Egyptians are *λογιώτατοι*, which is a significant term, since they are the most erudite, or skilful with the *λόγος*, and we have seen how Herodotus is compelled by the contingencies of his own *λόγος*: ‘ὕπὸ τοῦ λόγου.’²⁷⁵ This reminds one of Heraclitus’ emphasis on his own *λόγος* (B1). Herodotus’ omission is based upon the assumption that his contemporaries/readers have an existing understanding of religious practice, and that there exists a universal knowledge about such affairs. Herodotus continues to report from his sources that the Egyptians first brought into use the names of the twelve gods, which the Greeks inherited, and also that the Egyptians established altars, images, stone carvings, and temples to these gods (2.4). The evidence then is the physical representations of the gods in physical cultural artefacts, and also the religious practices that persist to his day.

4.2.1 Revising the Heracles narrative

Herodotus demonstrates his inquiry method clearly in the case of the (multiple versions of) Egyptian Heracles.²⁷⁶ Herodotus reports that a certain Heracles attached to an Egyptian ceremony where the Thebans slaughter a ram to Zeus is considered a member of the pantheon of 12 gods (2.43.1). Moreover, Herodotus makes explicit that he cannot glean any information from Egypt concerning the Heracles with whom the Greeks are familiar (τοῦ ἑτέρου δὲ περὶ Ἡρακλέος, τὸν Ἕλληνας οἶδασι, οὐδ’ αὖτε Αἰγύπτου ἐδυνάσθη ἀκοῦσαι, 2.43.1). In an inversion of the Hellenocentric view, Herodotus concludes that Greeks took the name for their Heracles from the Egyptians. He accepts as evidence, *τεκμήρια*, the mythological genealogy – that Heracles’ parents, Amphitryon and Alcmene, were both Egyptian (2.43.2). The account goes further to explain that the Egyptians included Heracles in their pantheon of twelve for seventeen thousand years before the reign of Amasis. Herodotus edifies his conclusions by consulting various priests about the age of temples to

²⁷³ Harrison (2000) 184.

²⁷⁴ Compare Protagoras (B4) and Xenophanes (B34).

²⁷⁵ Lloyd (1976): ‘Λόγιος in pre-Socratic philosophy may be used of the outstanding intellects who have furthered man’s progress along the road to civilisation’ (16).

²⁷⁶ Lloyd (1976): ‘The entire excursus is of great interest in revealing Herodotus’ methods’ (200).

Heracles in three locations: Tyre in Phoenicia (2300-years old, ἱρὸν Ἡρακλέος ἅγιον, 2.44.1), a Thasian-built temple, and a Phoenician-built temple. He draws the conclusion that a cult to the god Heracles did in fact exist five generations before, Herodotus claims, Heracles the son of Amphitryon came to Greece:

τὰ μὲν νυν ἱστορημένα δηλοῖ σαφέως παλαιὸν θεὸν Ἡρακλέα ἔοντα.

What my researches clearly demonstrate is that Heracles is a very ancient god indeed (2.44.5).²⁷⁷

The results of his inquiry, τὰ ἱστορημένα, reveal proof that Heracles was in fact an ancient god, while Herodotus also challenges the traditional Greek timeframe stating that this Heracles existed five generations before Heracles, the son of Amphitryon came to Greece. Herodotus goes even further to critique the stories of the Greeks about Heracles:

λέγουσι δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλα ἀνεπισκέπτως οἱ Ἕλληνες· εὐήθης δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ ὅδε ὁ μῦθος ἐστὶ τὸν περὶ τοῦ Ἡρακλέος λέγουσι, ὥς αὐτὸν ἀπικόμενον ἐς Αἴγυπτον στέψαντες οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι ὑπὸ πομπῆς ἐξῆγον ὥς θύσοντες τῷ Δίῃ·

The Greeks tell many stories with no thought. One of the silliest is the story of how Heracles came to Egypt and was taken away by the Egyptians to be sacrificed to Zeus. (2.45.1)²⁷⁸

Herodotus dismisses this story, on evidence that the Egyptians only restrict sacrifice to certain animals, and that they clearly do not endorse human sacrifice. This critique clearly echoes Herodotus' predecessor, Hecataeus when the earlier logographer critiqued the Greeks for their telling ridiculous stories. The important term in Herodotus' rebuke of the Greeks is the adverb ἀνεπισκέπτως, the Greeks tell stories 'with no thought.'²⁷⁹ This lack of critical acumen does not align with Herodotus' fifth-century ideal of personal observation, looking

²⁷⁷ I prefer the Holland translation here. De Sélincourt translates: 'The result of these researches is a plain proof that *the worship of Heracles* is very ancient' (my italics). This misses the mark for παλαιὸν θεὸν Ἡρακλέα ἔοντα, which is clearly defining the status of Heracles as a god.

²⁷⁸ Compare Protagoras B4.

²⁷⁹ Vasunia (2001) suggests this shows Herodotus' 'clear and unambiguous denial' of any possibility of human sacrifice (187). Vasunia also sees literary reversal in Herodotus' account: 'Herodotus thus reverses the ethnic logic of the story, not only by repudiating the likelihood of human sacrifice in the socio-religious context of Egypt, but also by imputing to a Greek hero the very actions that the canonical narrative, despite his history, represents as characteristically Egyptian' (188). Vasunia thus sees more than a pure historic account here, and more innovation on Herodotus' part.

closely at matters which is the definition of σκέψις – a term closely akin to ἱστορίη. The Hippocratic writers also considered σκέψις important in defining the medical art. The writer of *On ancient medicine* states: ἐπεὶ τό γε εὔρημα μέγα τε καὶ πολλῆς σκέψιος τε καὶ τέχνης, ‘Nevertheless the discovery was a great one, implying much investigation and art’ (*On ancient medicine*, 4). Furthermore, the trend in the fifth century was to revise and challenge traditional narratives, often individuals would reformulate traditional narratives to become a display piece. In a comparative – although pardoic – example here, Isocrates defends Busiris, the king that was to sacrifice Heracles, in a sophistic treatise, where Isocrates recounts all the benefits to society the would-be human sacrificing king provided such as the caste system, government, advanced civilisation, religion and philosophy.²⁸⁰ Thus intellectuals challenge the truth-value of traditional narratives. In the context of the Hippocratics and the pre-Socratics the reliability of an account is challenged; in the case of the sophists a traditional narrative is reinterpreted as a thought experiment, and a display of intellectual prowess displaying encomia and paradox, as seen in Isocrates’ *Busiris* and also in Gorgias’ *Encomium of Helen*.

This shared sense of a critical vantage establishes the role of ἵστωρ as the judge of all preceding λόγοι, and of one who asserts a new λόγος.²⁸¹ Ultimately Herodotus sums up his ἱστορίη of Heracles with a plea for forgiveness:

καὶ περὶ μὲν τούτων τοσαῦτα ἡμῖν εἰποῦσι καὶ παρὰ τῶν θεῶν καὶ παρὰ τῶν
 ἡρώων εὐμένεια εἶη.

And now I hope that both gods and heroes will forgive me for saying what I
 have said on these matters! (2.45.3).

This plea by Herodotus is of interest since it at first glance portrays traditional piety and respect for the gods, and it also implies that Herodotus has overstepped what is appropriate to mention in these matters, although in a perhaps ironic tone. This contrasts with his overly cautious approach when he only desired to mention the names of Egyptian gods, and not the

²⁸⁰ Wooten and Kennedy (2001) 73–74.

²⁸¹ Ἑκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται· τάδε γράφω, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοὶ τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὥς ἐμοὶ φαίνονται, εἰσίν.
 ‘Hecataeus of Miletus thus speaks: I write down what I think is true, because the stories told by the Greeks are, in my opinion, ridiculous and countless’ (*FGrH* 1 F 1).

surrounding religious practices concerning these deities.²⁸² The extent to which there was a transgression is unknown to a modern audience. In the *ιστορίη* of Heracles Herodotus demonstrates a desire to extend research by consulting multiple sources in order to corroborate his knowledge about the subject. The god version of Heracles cannot himself become an object of inquiry, and the passage of time is also prohibitive. Herodotus does note outright that the human hero Heracles did appear in Greece, and in this statement he accepts the historical facticity of the hero. Herodotus presents *τεκμήρια* in the fashion of a judicial argument, while also meeting the limits of his inquiry, due to time, source knowledge, and also his own reticence about certain matters.²⁸³ These limitations of inquiry prove frustrating for some scholars.²⁸⁴ Yet, these scholars are too stringent in their demands for systematic and consistent evidence. We have seen the extent of *ιστορίη* here, where Herodotus does not settle on one source but travels to seek more learned individuals, *λογιώτατοι* as we saw earlier. Furthermore, this account does not suggest agnosticism on Herodotus' part, but rather an enrichment of the history of religious practice and understanding. However the challenge to the nationalist discourses, even when Herodotus goes so far as to mock the Greeks, and on the other hand, his appreciation of foreign accounts gained him the pejorative *φιλοβάρβαρος* from later writer pseudo-Plutarch (*De Herodoti malignitate* 12; *Moralia* 857a).

This approach to knowledge, based on discovery and consultation of sources, is synonymous with the new understandings, with travel and the active pursuit of data.²⁸⁵ And Herodotus does not shy away from challenging the traditional narratives of Heracles.²⁸⁶

4.2.2 Helen of Troy – challenging the mythical past

Another key instance of Herodotus challenging the accepted mythology results from his consultation with the priests at the Phoenician temple of foreign Aphrodite in Tyre, where he received an alternative account about Paris and Helen's voyage to Troy from Sparta. The alternative story runs that Helen and Paris were located in Egypt, rather than Troy upon the

²⁸² Compare Herodotus' reluctance to mention the reason behind the Egyptians representing the god Pan as a goat in paintings (2.46.2).

²⁸³ Compare Protagoras B4.

²⁸⁴ Bakker (2012) argues about this particular result of *ιστορίη*, that it is 'not first degree, absolute knowledge based on perception, but relative knowledge, an approximation of the facts of the matter, based on the *pretended* first-hand knowledge of others' (my italics) 16. Fehling (1989) goes further to present a complete dismissal of the veracity of Herodotus' sources in Egypt. These scholars are too stringent in their demands for systematic and consistent evidence. They do not take into account Herodotus' own admission of source limitation at times.

²⁸⁵ Gould (1989) 11.

²⁸⁶ Lloyd (1976) 203.

arrival of the Greeks at the Trojan citadel (2.118). Thereafter, according to the account Menelaus travelled to Egypt and committed sacrilege by sacrificing Egyptian children in order to obtain favourable winds out of the country (2.119).²⁸⁷ Herodotus organises this report within an inquiry framework:

τούτων δὲ τὰ μὲν ἱστορίῃσι ἔφασαν ἐπίστασθαι, τὰ δὲ παρ' ἐωυτοῖσι γεγόμενα
ἀτρεκέως ἐπιστάμενοι λέγειν.

They told me that they had learned of some of these events by inquiry, but spoke
with certain knowledge of those which had taken place in their own country.
(2.119.3)

Herodotus places significant trust in the sources here to 'speak knowing accurately' ἀτρεκέως ἐπιστάμενοι λέγειν, about the phenomena, γεγόμενα, of their own country. Herodotus demonstrates his readiness to challenge the accepted history, based upon his own inquiry and judgement derived from his sources. In the particular case of Helen, the reader might readily think of Stesichorus' *Palinode* (in Plato's *Phaedrus*, 243a) and also Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen* in the manner in which this other prominent fifth-century writer, Gorgias challenged the historico-mythic tradition of blaming Helen articulated in the sophist's own thought experiment.²⁸⁸ The blame in Herodotus' story is placed upon both the Greeks and Trojans: firstly Paris, whom Proteus addresses as 'villain,' ὃ κάκιστε ἀνδρῶν, for stealing Helen from Menelaus, betraying ξενία and 'committing a most profane deed': ξεινίων τυχὼν ἔργον ἀνοσιώτατον ἐργάσασθαι (2.115.4). Secondly, Menelaus is blamed, who despite being offered great hospitality, ξεινίων ἤντησε μεγάλων (2.119.1), proved himself to be an 'unjust man towards the Egyptians,' by conducting human sacrifice, Μενέλεως ἀνὴρ ἄδικος ἐς Αἰγυπτίους (2.119.2).²⁸⁹ Therefore Herodotus makes a summary statement that reminds one of traditional reverence towards customs sanctioned by the divine, and the consequences of hubris. Herodotus concludes that the besieged Trojans did not have Helen in their city and so he concludes:

ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ εἶχον Ἑλένην ἀποδοῦναι οὐδὲ λέγουσι αὐτοῖσι τὴν ἀληθεῖν ἐπίστευον οἱ
Ἕλληνες, ὥς μὲν ἐγὼ γνώμην ἀποφαίνομαι, τοῦ δαιμονίου παρασκευάζοντος, ὅπως

²⁸⁷ A clear parallel narrative is Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia in the Trojan War myth.

²⁸⁸ Compare Euripides' *Helen*, in which text Helen pines away in Egypt while a phantom of her is in Troy, a similar desire to revise the traditional narrative as Gorgias.

²⁸⁹ In the literature Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia is a notable parallel transgression.

πανωλεθρίῃ ἀπολόμενοι καταφανὲς τοῦτο τοῖσι ἀνθρώποισι ποιήσωσι, ὥς τῶν
μεγάλων ἀδικημάτων μεγάλαι εἰσὶ καὶ αἱ τιμωρίαι παρὰ τῶν θεῶν. καὶ ταῦτα μὲν
τῇ ἐμοὶ δοκέει εἵρηται.

The fact is, they did not give Helen up because they had not got her; what they told the Greeks was the truth, and I do not hesitate to declare that the refusal of the Greeks to believe it came of divine volition in order that their utter destruction might plainly prove to mankind that great offences meet with great punishments at the hands of God. This, then, is my own interpretation (2.120.5)

Herodotus relies on his γνώμη here in this particular inquiry into the history of the origin of the Trojan War, namely, the abduction and displacement of Helen, which he takes as historical. The Histories, of course begin with the abduction of women as the cause of the fighting between Greeks and barbarians, firstly Io, then Medea, then Helen (1.1–3). Herodotus, however re-establishes the account of Helen based on his deduction and from reports from his sources, resulting in his presenting a specific role of the divine, that is to say the divine sanction of ξενία, and divine punishment of its transgression, exemplified in Homer's *Odyssey*.²⁹⁰ In addition to revising the narratives of historico-mythic individuals, Herodotus also turns his critical acumen to theories of nature.

4.2.3 Herodotus' critique of accounts of the Nile's flooding

Another important instance where Herodotus revises an explanation of worldly phenomena historically determined by the poets, is when he considers the various causes of the Nile's annual flooding, in which passages he applies his γνώμη to various accounts. Divine causes are not mentioned per se, but his critique of the poets, and implicitly, other thinkers is useful for our argument, since this revisionism and testing of ideas is a common fifth-century *modus operandi*. This chapter of book 2 demonstrates Herodotus' awareness of the various theories in circulation at the time, and his willingness to challenge existing theories. Daniel W. Graham describes Herodotus as a key proponent of this methodology: 'Herodotus should be interesting to us because he was not just a chronicler, but a researcher well-versed in the philosophy and science of his time.'²⁹¹ Lateiner also suggests the same when he proposes that Herodotus' investigations in Egypt in book 2, resulting in revisions of existing accounts,

²⁹⁰ Provencal (2015) notes that although Herodotus does not use the phrase explicitly the Homeric notion of a violation of the universal νόμος of Ζεὺς ξείνιος is evident (85–86).

²⁹¹ Graham (2003) 291.

are ‘by far the most polemical.’²⁹² We see this acumen clearly when Herodotus begins his inquiry, critiquing the absence of source information. Regarding the annual flooding of the delta, Herodotus comments:

ἐπέρχεται δὲ ὁ Νεῖλος, ἐπεὰν πληθύη, οὐ μόνον τὸ Δέλτα ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ
Λιβυκοῦ τε λεγομένου χωρίου εἶναι καὶ τοῦ Ἀραβίου ἐνιαχῇ καὶ ἐπὶ δύο
ἡμερέων ἐκατέρωθι ὁδόν, καὶ πλεῦν ἔτι τούτου καὶ ἔλασσον. τοῦ ποταμοῦ δὲ
φύσιος περὶ οὔτε τι τῶν ἱρέων οὔτε ἄλλου οὐδενὸς παραλαβεῖν ἐδυνάσθη.
πρόθυμος δὲ ἔα τάδε παρ’ αὐτῶν πυθέσθαι, ὅ τι κατέρχεται μὲν ὁ Νεῖλος
πληθύνων ἀπὸ τροπέων τῶν θερινέων ἀρξάμενος ἐπὶ ἑκατὸν ἡμέρας, πελάσας δὲ
ἐς τὸν ἀριθμὸν τουτέων τῶν ἡμερέων ὀπίσω ἀπέρχεται ἐπιλείπων τὸ ῥέεθρον,
ὥστε βραχὺς τὸν χειμῶνα ἅπαντα διατελεῖ ἐὼν μέχρις οὗ αὖτις τροπέων τῶν
θερινέων. τούτων ὧν περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδὲν οἶός τε ἐγενόμην παραλαβεῖν {παρὰ}
τῶν Αἰγυπτίων, ἱστορέων αὐτοὺς ἦντινα δύναμιν ἔχει ὁ Νεῖλος τὰ ἔμπαλιν
πεφυκέναι τῶν ἄλλων ποταμῶν· ταῦτά τε δὴ τὰ λελεγμένα βουλόμενος εἰδέναι
ἱστόρεον καὶ ὅ τι αὔρας ἀποπνεούσας μόνος πάντων ποταμῶν οὐ παρέχεται.

About why the Nile behaves precisely as it does, I could get no information from the priests or anyone else. What I particularly wished to know was why the water begins to rise at the summer solstice, continues to do so for a hundred days, and then falls again at the end of that period, so that it remains low throughout the winter until the summer solstice comes around again in the following year. Nobody in Egypt could give me any explanation of this, in spite of my constant attempts to find out what was the peculiar property which made the Nile behave in the opposite way to other rivers, and why – another point on which I hoped for information – it was the only river to cause no breezes. (2.19.1–3)

Thus Herodotus cannot rely on either ‘informed’ reports of priests or of the general local people and therefore must pursue his own inquiry. Herodotus’ inquiry process is explicit here in the repetition of the verb: ἱστορέων–ἱστόρεον, as is his zeal to find out causes: πρόθυμος. The object of his inquiry is the nature of the Nile: φύσις. Herodotus is critical of ‘certain Greeks,’ Ἑλλήνων μὲν τινὲς who wish to display their cleverness σοφίη (2.20.1), with three

²⁹² Lateiner (1987) 97.

theories they put forward about the Nile's flooding, the first parallels Thales' theory about the Nile, the second stems from Hecataeus, and the third, Anaximander. Herodotus critiques these theories in turn based on his own deductive process.

Herodotus begins by systematically refuting one of the theories of the flooding that was created by the pre-Socratic figure Thales, namely that the summer north winds (τοὺς ἔτησίαις ἀνέμους) cause the water to rise by checking the flow of the current towards the sea (2.20.2)²⁹³ However, when Thales cites the winds as the cause, they are merely a coincidental seasonal occurrence at the same time as the Nile rises, and Herodotus notes that on some occasions the winds have failed to blow yet the Nile still rises, and also that the other rivers in Syria and Libya are not affected by the winds. There is, here, a clear instance here of one inquirer critiquing the conclusion of his predecessor. Lloyd notes that Thales' account 'is the first sign of the application of Greek rationalism to the problem.'²⁹⁴

The second theory that Herodotus critiques is Hecataeus,' that Herodotus dismisses due to its, non-empirical, mythical basis.²⁹⁵ This theory postulates that the Nile behaves in the way it does because the great mythical Ocean, Ὠκεανός that encircles the world affects it thus. Herodotus dismisses this theory due to the lack of observable evidence. For him it is both 'less rational,' ἀνεπισημονεστέρα (namely, than Thales' above), and 'legendary,' θωμασιωτέρα (2.21).²⁹⁶ This process clearly demonstrates Herodotus criticising the γνώμη of other inquirers.²⁹⁷

The third theory, in contrast, is grounded in purely natural explanation, for Herodotus, 'most plausible,' ἐπιεικεστάτη but nevertheless, 'furthest from the truth,' μάλιστα ἔψευσται (2.22.1). It essentially posits the notion that the Nile swells on account of melting snow. This theory derived from Anaxagoras,²⁹⁸ and adopted by the tragedians,²⁹⁹ which indicates the shared currency of ideas at this time regarding theories of natural processes the pre-Socratic

²⁹³ Θαλῆς τοὺς ἔτησίαις ἀνέμους οἶται πνέοντας τῇ Αἰγύπτῳ ἀντιπροσώπους ἐπαίρειν τοῦ Νείλου τὸν ὄγκον διὰ τὸ τὰς ἐκροὰς αὐτοῦ τῇ παροιδήσει τοῦ ἀντιπαρήκοντος πελάγους ἀνακόπτεσθαι.

'Thales thinks that the Etesian winds, blowing straight on to Egypt, raise up the mass of the Nile's water through cutting off its outflow by the swelling of the sea coming against it.' (DK 11 A16; Aetius IV, I, I)

²⁹⁴ Lloyd (1976) 98.

²⁹⁵ Lloyd (1976) 100; Lateiner (1987) 97; *FGrH* 1 F 302.

²⁹⁶ Lateiner (1987) 97.

²⁹⁷ Lloyd (1975) 87.

²⁹⁸ DK 59 A91.

²⁹⁹ The theory is alluded to in Aeschylus *Suppliant Maidens* 559, and fragment 300; Sophocles fragment 797; and Euripides *Helen* 3, and fragment 288.

researchers developed, and which Herodotus was clearly engaging with while through inductive processes he comes to his own conclusion. Herodotus' focussed refutation of this theory of the melting snow causing the flooding demonstrates his willingness to challenge the accepted status quo doctrine of the tragedians and the currency of this particular model of the flooding of the Nile in circulation in Athens at the time.³⁰⁰ Herodotus refutes the theory arguing with reference to his own evidence, simply that the winds blow hot from that region: οἱ ἄνεμοι παρέχονται πνέοντες ἀπὸ τῶν χωρέων τουτέων θερμοί (2.22.2).

Here Herodotus cites climate as the greatest proof, μέγιστον μαρτύριον – presenting evidence being a key fifth-century method of advancing one's argument, in the refutation of one's predecessors/contemporaries. The argument of melting snow does not meet criteria of likelihood: οὐδὲ οἰκός. Herodotus is thus collating and presenting source evidence as he is able and as it appeals to his sense of likelihood, οἰκός (Attic: εἰκός), a common fifth-century manner of structuring an argument utilised by Gorgias in his *Encomium of Helen*.

Herodotus goes on to systematically dismantle the argument by providing multiple pieces of evidence. In addition to the warm winds, he argues that the region is devoid of ice, and that when it snows it usually rains within five days, which never happens in Egypt; moreover, that the native people are black, because of the hot climate; and lastly, that hawks and swallows remain there throughout the year, not migrating away from the cold, while cranes migrate to Egypt to escape the cold of Scythia.

All of these factors lead Herodotus to conclude that the outer edges of the known world in this direction towards Ethiopia must be hot, which made it impossible for Herodotus to imagine a more temperate zone beyond this region,³⁰¹ displaying the convictions of the time and the limits of knowledge. Lloyd argues: 'this does not, in any way, detract from Herodotus' claim to rationalism; for rationalism is nothing but the establishment of a point by self-consistent argument from principles which induction leads one to accept as sound.'³⁰² What is important about Lloyd's statement is that he shines a light on the rational process that Herodotus is undertaking, and the way in which Herodotus gathers data and constructs an argument he can test against others' theories.

³⁰⁰ Lloyd (1976) 101–102. Nestle (1908) 11.

³⁰¹ Lloyd (1976) 103.

³⁰² Lloyd (1976) 103.

No one individual has access to the ultimate empirical truth about the flooding of the Nile. Knowledge is still axiomatic at this time, meaning certain views were presented and subscribed to different degrees or challenged and rejected. The entire investigation demonstrates Herodotus' practice of *ἱστορίη*: 'drawing on observations, local information, and 'obvious' inferences to evaluate theories.'³⁰³ Herodotus then returns to refute the Ocean theory again. This theory has a mythical basis from Hecataeus' geographical conception of the world.

ὁ δὲ περὶ τοῦ Ὠκεανοῦ λέξας ἐς ἀφανὲς τὸν μῦθον ἀνενείκας οὐκ ἔχει ἔλεγχον· οὐ γάρ τινα ἔγωγε οἶδα ποταμὸν Ὠκεανὸν ἔοντα, Ὅμηρον δὲ ἢ τινα τῶν πρότερον γενομένων ποιητέων δοκέω τοῦνομα εὐρόντα ἐς ποίησιν ἐσενείκασθαι.

As to the writer who mentions the Ocean in this connexion, his account is a mere fairy-tale depending upon an unknown quantity and cannot be disproved by argument. I know myself of no river called Ocean, and can only suppose that Homer or some earlier poet invented the name and introduced it into poetry (2.23).

This refutation demonstrates important innovations in Herodotus' technique. Hecataeus' *μῦθος* relies on unapparent factors, *ἀφανές*. Herodotus is unable to fully refute the account, but it is 'unfalsifiable,' *ἔλεγχος*. David Furley posits that this is a rare usage of the term on Herodotus' part, the only instance in fifth-century literature or earlier where the term *ἔλεγχος* appears to establish unfalsifiability as a criterion for demarcating scientific theories from others.³⁰⁴ What survived a process of judgement, against the *λόγος*, was to be considered unfalsifiable, that is to say what is consistent with one's observations.³⁰⁵ In this instance, for Herodotus, the existence of Ocean is falsifiable, since his travels and inquiries have not displayed evidence that the mythical Ocean does indeed exist. Herodotus' use of *ἔλεγχος* clearly reflects fifth-century trends of argumentative techniques. Gorgias employs the term in his defence of Palamedes:

³⁰³ Graham (2003) 295.

³⁰⁴ Furley (1989) 7. Also, Thomas (2000) 168.

³⁰⁵ Furley (1987) 166.

Καὶ γὰρ οὐδ' αὐτὸς ὁ κατήγορος οὐδεμίαν ἀπόδειξιν εἴρηκεν ὧν εἴρηκεν· οὕτως
λοιδορίαν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἔλεγχον ὁ λόγος αὐτῷ δύναται.

For not even the accuser himself has provided any evidence of what he has said.

Thus his speech has the impact of abuse lacking proof. (B84 11.29)

And furthermore:

μηδὲ τὰς αἰτίας τῶν ἐλέγχων προκρίνειν,

...avoid paying more attention to words than to actions [viz. 'the unfalsifiable'],

(B84 11.34)³⁰⁶

Ultimately, for Gorgias, the term most clearly refers to testing a thing's nature, or a person's truthfulness.³⁰⁷ Gorgias utilises the term as part of his argumentative rhetoric. Parmenides utilises the term earlier than both Herodotus and Gorgias, here strictly as refutation of opinions that oppose truth:

κρῖναι δὲ λόγῳ πολύδηριν ἔλεγχον

ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα.

μοῦνος δ' ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο

λείπεται ὥς ἔστιν·

Judge by reason the strife-encompassed refutation spoken by me. There still
remains just one account of the way, that it is. (DK28 B 7.5–8.2)

Here, for Parmenides, there is clear establishment of the truth, that refutation, ἔλεγχος clears the way for, by utilising λόγος as a measure. Herodotus, on the other hand can only establish unfalsifiability, in his own use of ἔλεγχος when he addresses the story of Ocean. Inasmuch as it is μῦθος, the account loses its value for ἱστορίη.³⁰⁸ Herodotus never endeavours to establish the ultimate truth;³⁰⁹ rather he establishes a conclusion based on

³⁰⁶ Alternative, more literal translation by me: 'Do not choose the causes before the unfalsifiable.'

³⁰⁷ Leshner (1984) defines the development of the usage of the term: 'In the philosophers of the late fifth and early fourth century, ἔλεγχος shows a full range of applications, from contests and testings, to cross-examinations, proofs, and refutations' (9–12).

³⁰⁸ Wardman (1960) 404.

³⁰⁹ Graham (2003): 'Herodotus takes a critical stance to meteorological theories, geographical reports, and schematic cosmology. But he does not have any systematic theory of his own to replace the philosophical theories with' (302).

likelihood, οἰκός, fully aware of the limitations of the human senses and judgement. Herodotus does, however assert a challenge to other thinkers, his contemporaries and predecessors, and revises their theories. In this way we can think of intellectual culture as a conversation, or a competition, an ἀγών or contest of ideas of which the pre-Socratics, sophists, and medical writers, undertook alike in their respective fields of inquiry.³¹⁰ Compare another attack by Herodotus on the theory of Ocean in book 4:

τὸν δὲ Ὠκεανὸν λόγῳ μὲν λέγουσι ἀπὸ ἡλίου ἀνατολέων ἀρξάμενον γῆν περὶ
παῖσαν ῥέειν, ἔργῳ δὲ οὐκ ἀποδεικνῦσι.

Legend says that Ocean is a great river running from the east all round the world; but there is nothing to prove this. (4.8.2)

Here again there is the clear distinction between merely expressing an idea, and demonstrating a proof of it.³¹¹ The very use of the verb ‘to display’ here, ἀποδεικνῦσι, echoes the proem and Herodotus’ intention to present an ἀπόδειξις of his inquiries. This is a conscious intention of fifth-century individuals. Consider Gorgias’ *Encomium of Helen* where the writer states: δεῖ δὲ καὶ δόξῃ δεῖξαι τοῖς ἀκούουσιν, ‘It is necessary to offer proof to the opinion of my hearers’ (11a 9). To demonstrate, δεῖξαι, knowledge is important, not just to record facts.

When Herodotus does advance his own idea about the Nile he therefore uses the same ἀποδέξασθαι to indicate that he will demonstrate rather than just ‘say,’ λέγω. However, he also advances with caution and an awareness of the limitations of human understanding:

εἰ δὲ δεῖ μεμψάμενον γνώμας τὰς προκειμένας αὐτὸν περὶ τῶν ἀφανέων γνώμην
ἀποδέξασθαι, φράσω δι’ ὃ τι μοι δοκεῖ πληθύνεσθαι ὁ Νεῖλος τοῦ θέρους· τὴν
χειμερινὴν ὥρην ἀπελαυνόμενος ὁ ἥλιος ἐκ τῆς ἀρχαίης διεξόδου ὑπὸ τῶν
χειμώνων ἔρχεται τῆς Λιβύης τὰ ἄνω.

If, after criticising these theories, I must express an opinion myself about such a matter so obscure as the reason why the Nile floods in summer, I would say (to put the whole thing in the fewest words) that during winter the sun is driven out of his course by storms towards the upper part of Libya. (2.24.1)

³¹⁰ Lloyd (1987) 90–91. Thomas (2000) 170.

³¹¹ Thomas (2000) 224.

Herodotus leads into his own definition with an apology and an awareness of epistemological difficulties regarding the subject.³¹² Herodotus goes further to explain his position, namely that the sun evaporates the water as it passes over Egypt as there are no breezes to counter the heat. Therefore Herodotus takes the inundation period to be the norm, while when the Nile evaporates that is the change to its normal state. Herodotus goes on to state that the evaporated water becomes rain in neighbouring countries, while it does not rain in Egypt in summer so that river evaporates, while the others swell. Furthermore the Nile is more susceptible to evaporation in the winter than the other countries. Therefore the Nile is lower in winter than other prominent rivers in the region.

This section has addressed geographical theories, more than theories about the divine. But for the thesis it offers valuable evidence and insight explicating how Herodotus actively engages with the trends of intellectual culture of the fifth century, and how the mythological perspective is not rejected outright, but proven to be unfalsifiable. What is important is that Herodotus is not merely inventing stories, but demonstrating his methodology, while consciously acknowledging the limitations of human knowledge. Herodotus also demonstrates the revisionist approach synonymous with the fifth-century milieu.

This revisionist approach of course gained fifth-century writers much criticism from later writers, most explicitly visible in Plato's attack on the sophists (for example, *Protagoras*, 381e), and Aristotle (*The generation of animals*, 756b7) and Plutarch's (*De Herodoti malignitate*) attacks against Herodotus. The important feature of the research of these fifth-century individuals is their re-examination of traditional views, and their establishment of new perspectives distilled from multiple sources.

Herodotus possessed the critical acumen to turn his ἱστορίη into a novel form that would encompass new subject matter, in the case of Heracles, and Helen respectively Herodotus focuses on gathering and making new judgments upon λόγοι are understood in various forms across the Mediterranean, and in the case of Heracles this results in determining a more ancient origin and broader geography of hero-worship practices. In the case of Helen of Troy, Herodotus sums up the story as told by Homer, compares it against his

³¹² Lloyd (1976) 104.

sources in Egypt, and concludes that Homer excluded the story intentionally since it was less ‘suitable’ εὐπρεπής, for epic poetry (2.116.1). Herodotus therefore passes a judgment about what is appropriate for different media – poetry/prose.³¹³ Herodotus then establishes his final judgement about the divine, τοῦ δαιμονίου and τῶν θεῶν, where he deems appropriate for his ἱστορίη, largely based upon the reports of the priests, rather than Herodotus’ own observations. The particular names of gods are not mentioned, other than in the context of when Herodotus outlays a history of the religious practice of gods. Herodotus tends towards what Provencal describes as ‘belief and a certainty of divine participation in human affairs based partly on reason, partly on belief.’³¹⁴ In terms of fifth-century thought of Heraclitus, we can see a similar abstraction of the divine and an association with law, νόμος. In part of fragment 114 Heraclitus proclaims:

ξὺν νόφ λέγοντας ἰσχυρίζεσθαι χρή τῷ ξυνῷ πάντων, ὅκωσπερ νόμφ πόλις καὶ πολὺ ἰσχυροτέρως· τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι ὑπὸ ἐνὸς τοῦ θείου· κρατεῖ γὰρ τοσοῦτον ὁκόσον ἐθέλει καὶ ἐξαρκεῖ πᾶσι καὶ τεριγίνεται.

Those who speak with sense must rely on what is common to all, as a city must rely on its law, and with much greater reliance. For all the laws of men are nourished by one law, the divine law; for it has as much power as it wishes and is sufficient for all and is still left over. (B114)

In Heraclitus’ view there exists a dynamic process where a singular, universal divine law feeds and keeps alive all laws of human beings.³¹⁵ Therefore in this example νόμος does not entail cultural relativism but points towards a universal principal that all human beings are reliant on. This perspective reflects the thinking of the sophistic *Anonymus Iamblichi* treatise, wherein law is crucial to social order (εὐνομία) and power (κράτος): οὕτω φαίνεται καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ κράτος, ὅπερ δὴ κράτος ἐστί, διὰ τε τοῦ νόμου καὶ διὰ τὴν δίκην σωιζόμενον. ‘Accordingly, it appears that power itself, the real power, is preserved by law and justice’ (DK82, 6 p. 100, 5.5).

In contrast, the famous investigation of νόμος performed by Darius reveals details about different νόμοι concerning death rituals of two different peoples, specifically Greeks

³¹³ Compare Stesichorus’ defense of Helen in his *Palinode*.

³¹⁴ Provencal (2015) 272–273.

³¹⁵ Compare Heraclitus’ henotheism in B32. See also the divine νόμοι in the chorus of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus* that are of god, which no human being created or can put to sleep (863–871).

whom he asked what payment it would require for them to eat their dead parents, which proposition disgusted them, and then according to the account certain Indians, who do eat their dead, would not think of cremating their own dead when Darius asked them (3.38.3–4). This incident leads Herodotus to reference Pindar:

οὕτω μὲν νυν ταῦτα νενόμισται, καὶ ὀρθῶς μοι δοκᾷ Πίνδαρος ποιῆσαι νόμον
πάντων βασιλέα φήσας εἶναι.

One can see by this what custom can do, and Pindar, in my opinion was right when he called it ‘king of all.’ (3.38.4)

Here νόμος is attributed the status of king, βασιλεύς,³¹⁶ in contrast above for Heraclitus and Herodotus’ view from inquiry, νόμος is associated with the universal and god. Herodotus does not challenge the traditional religious views but researches the origins of cultural practices surrounding the religions, thus substantiating new meanings to the traditional views of the gods. This revisionist approach included investigating the origin of the names of the Greek gods in Egypt. For Herodotus, travel and personal observation leads to his revision of previous narratives, but with this reliance on personal inquiry the inquirers realise the limits of personal observation in supplying a total understanding of the world – the humanness of knowledge about the divine becomes apparent.

This chapter aimed to reveal the systematic approach that Herodotus utilises in his inquiry, ἱστορίη, that is to say, gathering evidence, τεκμήρια from one’s observations and sources; questioning what is unapparent, ἀφανές and others’ theories, γνώμας; striving to advance what is unfalsifiable ἔλεγχος; and ultimately establishing the primacy of one’s λόγος. In the broader context I examined how this is a culture of argumentation and challenging others – what is ἀφανές, does not stand up to refutation. Therefore, with Herodotus’ reliance on empirical knowledge in mind, I intend to discuss the limitations of human understanding in the investigation of the divine in the next chapter.

³¹⁶ In Plato’s *Gorgias* (484B), this Pindar quote is utilised by Callicles in an appeal to nature that the stronger rule over the weaker.

Chapter 5. SENSORY LIMITATIONS AND SOURCE RELIABILITY IN ἹΣΤΟΡΙΗ

5.1 Deducing the origins and forms of the gods

In the previous chapter I pinpointed how Herodotus revised in turn the Greek narratives of both the genealogy of Heracles, Helen's abduction to Troy, and also the flooding of the Nile. Herodotus' ἱστορίη established these conclusions through consultation with local, so-called learned individuals, λογιώτατοι. With respect to the divine in particular Herodotus deduced from inquiry that there were two versions of Heracles in Egypt. There was one version that was a divinity, and another that was a human being. With respect to Helen of Troy, Herodotus determined from the priests that she was in fact waylaid in Egypt, rather than Troy, and the divine punished the Trojans for Paris' transgression of universal νόμος pertaining to the practice of ξενία. ἱστορίη was enacted through consultation and judgement, rather than direct perception of the divine. This inability to perceive the divine first-hand is clearly a limitation of ἱστορίη into the divine as an object of inquiry. This is mainly due to the separation of time between Herodotus' inquiry and the ancient occurrences accounts that his sources provide him with. However, in the process of consultation Herodotus placed trust in particular sources. This reiterates the importance of critical acumen in the fifth-century culture wherein one accepts or rejects the λόγοι of others. More often than not we see criticism of others and the establishment of a new λόγος to be the dominant trend. The author emphatically asserts his own presence as an authority. Herodotus' predecessor, Hecataeus offers such a criticism:

Ἑκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται· τάδε γράφω, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὥς ἐμοὶ φαίνονται, εἰσίν.

Hecataeus of Miletus thus speaks: I write down what I think is true, because the stories told by the Greeks are, in my opinion, ridiculous and countless.

(*FGrH* 1 F 1)³¹⁷

This criticism of stories relates not only to the nature of the stories as laughable, γελοῖοι, but also the excessive quantity of the stories, λόγοι πολλοί. This is also very evident

³¹⁷ Compare Herodotus: λέγουσι δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλα ἀνεπισκέπτως οἱ Ἕλληνες, εὐήθης δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ ὅδε ὁ μῦθος ἐστὶ τὸν περὶ τοῦ Ἡρακλέους λέγουσι (2.45).

in Heraclitus' critique of Hesiod, Xenophanes,³¹⁸ Pythagoras and Hecataeus (B40), and also Heraclitus' critique of much learning πολυμαθίη, κακοτεχνίη (B129). This vitriol of Heraclitus takes the learning of these other individuals as a target, and I suggest it implies Heraclitus is criticising the misuse of knowledge, and that the accumulation of knowledge also gives one the power to deceive others, perhaps in cases when one presents false accounts. Heraclitus of course asserts that one must listen to his own λόγος (B1). These are the clear signs of intellectual engagement between writers and their respective λόγοι. While with Heraclitus and Hecataeus there is a clear critique of others in the establishment of one's own λόγος, in contrast Herodotus cites sources upon whom he relies due to their expertise, thus expressing some humility of personal knowledge. Furthermore, Herodotus often refutes a source in favour of another, and also excludes certain results of inquiry from his λόγος. In these ways Herodotus comes up against limits of inquiry or establishes his own boundaries based on what is appropriate to include in a λόγος, demonstrating his discernment and preferences.

Fifth-century thinkers agree upon these common limitations of knowledge in the investigation of the divine in general, yet they encounter limits in different ways. Herodotus relies on the expertise of priestesses in his investigation into the origin of the gods in book 2. The passages concerning the origins of the gods are important and worth quoting in full:

ἔθνον δὲ πάντα πρότερον οἱ Πελασγοὶ θεοῖσι ἐπευχόμενοι, ὥς ἐγὼ ἐν Δωδώνῃ οἶδα ἀκούσας, ἐπωνυμίην δὲ οὐδ' οὐνομα ἐποιεῦντο οὐδενὶ αὐτῶν· οὐ γὰρ ἀκηκόεσάν κω. θεοὺς δὲ προσωνόμασάν σφεας ἀπὸ τοῦ τοιούτου ὅτι κόσμῳ θέντες τὰ πάντα πρήγματα καὶ πάσας νομὰς εἶχον. ἔπειτα δὲ χρόνου πολλοῦ διεξελθόντος ἐπύθοντο ἐκ τῆς Αἰγύπτου ἀπικόμενα τὰ οὐνόματα τῶν θεῶν τῶν ἄλλων, Διονύσου δὲ ὕστερον πολλῶ ἐπύθοντο· καὶ μετὰ χρόνον ἐχρηστηριάζοντο περὶ τῶν οὐνομάτων ἐν Δωδώνῃ· τὸ γὰρ δὴ μαντήιον τοῦτο νενόμισται ἀρχαιότατον τῶν ἐν Ἑλλήσι χρηστηρίων εἶναι, καὶ ἦν τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον μῦθον. ἐπεὶ ὧν ἐχρηστηριάζοντο ἐν τῇ Δωδώνῃ οἱ Πελασγοὶ εἰ ἀνέλωνται τὰ οὐνόματα τὰ ἀπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων ἦκοντα, ἀνεῖλε τὸ μαντήιον χρεῖσθαι. ἀπὸ μὲν δὴ τούτου τοῦ χρόνου ἔθνον τοῖσι οὐνόμασι τῶν θεῶν χρεώμενοι· παρὰ δὲ Πελασγῶν Ἕλληνες ἐξεδέξαντο ὕστερον.

³¹⁸ Compare, in turn, Xenophanes' critique of Hesiod and Homer (B11). We have a critical dialogue of voices in the texts.

In ancient times, as I know from what I was told at Dodona, the Pelasgians offered sacrifices of all kinds, and prayed to the gods, but without distinction of name and title – for they had not yet heard of any such thing. They called the Gods by the Greek word *theoi* – ‘disposers’ – because they had ‘disposed’ and arranged everything in due order, and assigned each thing to its proper division. Long afterwards the names of the gods were brought into Greece from Egypt and the Pelasgians learnt them – with the exception of Dionysus, about whom they knew nothing till much later; then, as time went on, they sent to the oracle at Dodona (the most ancient and, at that period, the only oracle in Greece) to ask advice about the propriety of adopting names which had come into the country from abroad. The oracle replied that they would be right to use them. From that time onward, therefore, the Pelasgians used the names of the gods in their sacrifices, and from the Pelasgians the names passed to Greece (2.52.1–3).

In this passage Herodotus acknowledges that religious practices precede the names and the recognition of human beings of the offices of the gods. The general term that human beings use for the beings to whom they worship is θεοί. Herodotus etymologically traces the general name of the gods, θεοί, to θέντες, and that these gods had put everything in its correct order.³¹⁹ Thereafter the gods are represented more individually with names, associated offices, and more specific practices of reverence connected to each god. At this moment in cultural memory the key point is that the Greeks understand individuality and separateness of the gods,³²⁰ since Herodotus, in a contradictory fashion obviously knew that the Egyptians have equivalent, and not identical names to the Greek gods, a fact made clear later in book 2:

Αἰγυπτιστὶ δὲ Ἀπόλλων μὲν Ὡρος, Δημήτηρ δὲ Ἴσις, Ἄρτεμις δὲ Βούβαστις.

In Egyptian, Apollo is Horus, Demeter is Isis, Artemis is Bubastis. (2.156.5)

This ambiguity reflects a broader fifth-century concern with the names and nature of the gods, and importantly, the limits of human beings’ abilities to know about them. In particular it is important to mention Prodicus, for whom correctness of names was an

³¹⁹ See below on an analysis of Prodicus B5.

³²⁰ Lattimore (1939) 359–360.

important part of understanding.³²¹ On the other hand, the pre-Socratic Democritus believed that names were assigned according to chance, and that natural names are non-existent (DK 68 B 26).³²² Heraclitus attacks this problem in his own unique way:

ἐν τὸ σοφὸν μούνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα.

One thing, the only true wise, does not and does consent to be called by the name of Zeus. (B32, Clement, *Stromata*. V, 115, 1)

Heraclitus prefers the paradox that the one wise thing, ἐν τὸ σοφὸν μούνον, does and does not want to be called Zeus. In this way the divine is at one moment ineffable, but at another a name may stand in to identify it and make it intelligible, Ζηνός. The name remains, but the anthropomorphic details have been sheared off. We see the question of naming paper in Psammetichus' experiment in book 2 where the ruler isolates children and ensures they are not exposed to language in order to discover what language might come to them naturally when they utter their first word. The result is βεκός, which is Phrygian for 'bread,' thus Psammetichus believes that Phrygians are the original people of the land (2.2). Herodotus takes this as the account from the priests, and rejects Greek accounts that Psammetichus had the tongues of the mothers cut out: Ἕλληνες δὲ λέγουσι ἄλλα τε μάταια πολλὰ (2.2.5).

Herodotus goes further to explain how the Greeks came to know the origins and forms of the gods, namely, through the descriptions made by the epic poets:

ἐνθεν δὲ ἐγένοντο ἕκαστος τῶν θεῶν, εἴτε αἰεὶ ἦσαν πάντες, ὁκοῖοί τε τινες τὰ εἶδεα, οὐκ ἠπιστάτο μέχρι οὗ πρώην τε καὶ χθὲς ὥς εἰπεῖν λόγῳ. Ἡσίοδον γὰρ καὶ Ὅμηρον ἡλικίην τετρακοσίοισι ἔτεσι δοκέω μεν πρεσβυτέρους καὶ οὐ πλέοσι· οὗτοι δὲ εἰσι οἱ ποιήσαντες θεογονίην Ἑλληνισι καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσι τὰς ἐπωνυμίας δόντες καὶ τιμάς τε καὶ τέχνας διελόντες καὶ εἶδεα αὐτῶν σημῖναντες. οἱ δὲ πρότερον ποιηταὶ λεγόμενοι τούτων τῶν ἀνδρῶν γενέσθαι

³²¹ πρῶτον γάρ, ὥς φησι Πρόδικος, περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος μαθεῖν δεῖ 'First of all, as Prodicus says, you have to learn the correct use of words' (Plato, *Euthydemus*, 277e; DK84A A16). Similarly, according to Plato, Protagoras also allegedly taught correctness of names as part of his repertoire: λιπαρεῖν χρῆ τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ δεῖσθαι αὐτοῦ διδάξαι σε τὴν ὀρθότητα (τῶν ὀνομάτων) περὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἦν ἔμαθεν παρὰ Πρωταγόρου 'you [Socrates to Hermogenes] must entreat your brother and ask him to teach you the correctness [viz., of names] in such matters which he learned from Protagoras' (Plato *Cratylus* 391 B–C; DK80 A24). Furthermore, Protagoras asserts that the greatest part of a man's education in poetry is: ἔστιν δὲ τοῦτο τὰ ὑπὸ τῶν ποιητῶν λεγόμενα οἷόν τ' εἶναι συνιέναι ἅ τε ὀρθῶς πεποιήται καὶ ἅ μὴ 'being able to understand the utterances of the poets, whether correctly or incorrectly expressed...' (Plato *Protagoras* 339A; DK80 A25).

³²² τύχηι ἄρα καὶ οὐ φύσει τὰ ὀνόματα, 'therefore, names are due to chance, not nature.'

ὕστερον, ἔμοιγε δοκέειν, ἐγένοντο. τούτων τὰ μὲν πρῶτα αἱ Δωδωνίδες ἱρεῖαι λέγουσι, τὰ δὲ ὕστερα τὰ ἐς Ἡσίοδόν τε καὶ Ὅμηρον ἔχοντα ἐγὼ λέγω.

But it was only – if I may so put it – the day before yesterday that the Greeks came to know the origin and forms of the various gods, and whether or not all of them had always existed; for Homer and Hesiod³²³ are the poets who composed theogonies and described the gods for the Greeks, giving them all their appropriate titles, offices and powers, and they lived, as I believe, not more than four hundred years ago. The poets who are said to have preceded them were, I think, in point of fact later. This is my personal opinion, but for the former part of my statement on these matters I have the authority of the priestesses of Dodona. (2.53.1–3)

Once again, Herodotus cites his local sources on sacred matters, the priestesses, ἱρεῖαι, in order that he might collate ethnographic perspectives on matters. Herodotus' new view then contradicts the previous account of the poets being the creators of the names of the gods, and he supplements the account in which the Pelasgians simply consult the oracle at Dodona about the appropriation of Egyptian gods for themselves. Perhaps this demonstrates the active impulse to determine origins and make causal connections, synonymous with the goals of fifth-century inquiry.³²⁴ Myres acknowledges this general trend of Herodotus to search for the beginning, ἀρχή, namely the search for causes.³²⁵ And this search necessarily meets its limits when the divine is the object of inquiry.

Herodotus' trust in localised sources differentiates him from some of his contemporaries who made the limits of inquiry very explicit when these individuals talk about the limitations of all human beings' capability to perceive and know the truth. Take as a strong example the agnosticism of Protagoras when this fifth-century sophist proclaimed:

περὶ μὲν θεῶν οὐκ ἔχω εἰδέναι οὔθ' ὥς εἰσίν, οὔθ' ὥς οὐκ εἰσίν· πολλὰ γὰρ τὰ κωλύοντα εἰδέναι, ἢ τ' ἀδηλότης καὶ βραχύς ὢν ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

³²³ See below Xenophanes' (B11) critique of Homer and Hesiod's creation of the gods.

³²⁴ Lloyd (1975) sees this as a potential *post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy*, that is to say the assumption that because b comes after a, a must have caused b. therefore if the Egyptians had a more ancient pantheon of gods, then the Greeks necessarily must have inherited these (147–148).

³²⁵ Myres (1999) 54.

Concerning the gods I cannot know either that they exist or that they do not exist, or what form they might have, for there is much to prevent one's knowing: the obscurity of the subject and the shortness of human life. (DK 80 B4)

This admission by Protagoras rings of agnosticism due to very defined constraints. Time is clearly a constraint for Protagoras with respect to the investigation of the divine: βραχὺς ὢν ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. We saw this enacted with Herodotus who consulted priestesses who have expertise in such matters, but the original object of inquiry is beyond the reach of a human lifespan. Protagoras also admits that the subject is too obscure to investigate, ἀδηλότης. Similarly, another significant pre-Socratic fifth-century figure Xenophanes, discusses these limitations similarly:

καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφὲς οὔτις ἀνὴρ ἴδεν οὐδέ τις ἔσται
εἰδὼς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἅσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων·
εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπών,
αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε· δόκος δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται.
No man knows, or ever will know,
the truth about the gods and about everything I speak of:
for even if one chanced to say the complete truth,
yet oneself knows it not; but seeming is wrought over all things. (B34)

Time is an important theme in Xenophanes' reflections, in terms of the present and future, an inquirer cannot know, nor ever will know clearly, σαφές, about the divine, ἀμφὶ θεῶν. Xenophanes grants the possibility that one might be able to say the complete truth, τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπών, yet he argues that this will not grant the speaker knowledge. Perhaps he is alluding to the utterances of oracles here, or the poets.³²⁶ The universal principal in all human perceptions/conceptions of the divine is δόκος.³²⁷ Thus there are comparable elements of agnosticism and determined limitations in both Protagoras' admission of ἀδηλότης καὶ βραχὺς and Xenophanes' admission of δόκος. To these figures, the poets' formulations of the gods are not formulated from the self-aware vantage of one who takes into full account the limitations of the human perceptive faculties. The poets may

³²⁶ Compare Plato's critique of the rhapsodes in the *Ion*.

³²⁷ δόκος appears as instrumental in Gorgias' methods too: δεῖ δὲ καὶ δόξῃ δεῖξαι τοῖς ἀκούουσι· 'It is necessary to offer proof to the opinion of my hearers' (*Encomium of Helen* 11a 9).

create a beautiful semblance of the gods, but this is still δόκος. Xenophanes' admission of human limitation does not mean that the poet may embellish human understanding about the gods, when they anthropomorphise them. Thus he states:

πάντα θεοῖς ἀνέθηκαν Ὅμηρός θ' Ἡσίοδος τε,
ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποισιν ὀνείδεα καὶ ψόγος ἐστίν,
κλέπτειν μοιχεύειν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεύειν.

Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods everything that is a shame and reproach among men, stealing and committing adultery and deceiving each other. (B11)

Despite Xenophanes' own practice as a poet who composed in hexameter, he determines that the traditional approach to the gods is unacceptable. This proclaimed agnosticism on both Xenophanes' – while he is dogmatic at other points (B23) – and Protagoras' part bars the divine as an object of investigation due to both time, and the inadequacy of human beings' perceptions, essentially undermining human expertise in this field.

This recognition of what can and cannot be understood is expressed famously in Protagoras' dictum:

πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν.

Of all things man is the measure of all things, of the existence of the things that are and the non-existence of the things that are not. (B1)

This fragment essentially admits of human limitation; where the poets could invoke the muse for higher knowledge, human beings' understanding proceeds from the sensory world. Heraclitus goes further to claim that the senses are in fact deceptive 'Evil witnesses are eyes and ears for men, if they have souls that do not understand their language,' κακοὶ μάρτυρες ἀνθρώποισιν ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ὄτα βαρβάρους ψυχὰς ἐχόντων (B107). However, he also states: 'The things of which there is seeing and hearing and perception [sic], these I do prefer' ὅσων ὄψις ἀκοὴ μάθησις, ταῦτα ἐγὼ προτιμέω (B55).³²⁸ We also saw Heraclitus' pointed criticism about human beings forgetting ἐπιλανθάνονται (B1) the λόγος when they hear it as if they are

³²⁸ I prefer the translation of μάθησις as 'learning.'

asleep. Likewise in B107 the senses are even foreign to the mind, speaking a different language: βαρβάρους ψυχὰς. Nevertheless, Heraclitus is committed to inquiry and reliance upon the senses. More specifically, for Heraclitus the ‘eyes are more accurate witnesses than the ears,’ ὀφθαλμοὶ [τῶν] ὥτων ακριβέστεροι μάρτυρες (B101A).

Alcmaeon, another pre-Socratic figure would go further to bar human beings completely from understanding of the divine.

περὶ τῶν ἀφανέων [περὶ τῶν θνητῶν] σαφήνειαν μὲν θεοὶ ἔχοντι, ὥς δὲ
 ἀνθρώποις τεκμαίρεσθαι...
 Concerning things unseen the gods see clearly, but so far as men may
 conjecture... (B1)

This admission of Alcmaeon dismisses the human ability to make judgements, reflecting Parmenides’ assertion of an ‘unshaken heart of well-rounded truth’ (Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ), which sits diametrically opposed to human beings’ opinions based on their perceptions (βροτῶν δόξας).³²⁹ Similarly, Xenophanes asserts his henotheistic view, that is to say his belief prioritising one god over against other acknowledged gods, differentiating this primary god from human beings:

εἷς θεὸς ἔν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος,
 οὔτι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοῖος οὐδὲ νόημα.
 One god, greatest among gods and men,
 in no way similar to mortals either in body or in thought. (B23)

Xenophanes’ god is inconceivable since the deity’ mind and form are so different than human beings: ‘All of him sees, all thinks, all hears’ οὔλος ὅρᾳ, οὔλος δὲ νοεῖ, οὔλος δέ τ’ ἀκούει (B24). Notably, Xenophanes’ god still maintains a masculine aspect, while Heraclitus’ is

³²⁹ Χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι
 ἡμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμὲς ἦτορ
 ἢ δὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθείης.
 It is proper that you should learn all things, both
 the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth,
 and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true reliance (B1.28–30).
 Compare Lloyd (1975): ‘The philosophy is, therefore, adamantly opposed to the empiricist elements in Heraclitus and the thoroughgoing empiricism of Herodotus’ (158).

neuter: τὸ σοφὸν μόνον (B32). Thus for Heraclitus the divine has become more abstract in this fragment, while for Xenophanes there is still a trace of the notion of a male, the father of gods, Zeus. However, at other times Heraclitus interchanges a masculine noun such as in his statement about divine law: τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι ὑπὸ ἑνὸς τοῦ θείου·, ‘for all the laws of men are nourished by one law, the divine law’ (B114), or his thunderbolt analogy: τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίζει κεραυνός ‘Thunderbolt steers all things,’ B64. Furthermore, Xenophanes’ god does not move from place to place like the Olympian gods, and is somewhat unshaken, ἀτρεμὲς like Parmenides’. Xenophanes’ god stays still:

αἰεὶ δ’ ἐν ταῦτ’ ἔμειναι κινούμενος οὐδέν
οὐδὲ μετέρχεσθαι μιν ἐπιπρέπει ἄλλοτε ἄλλῃ.
ἀλλ’ ἀπάνευθε πόνοιο νόου φρενὶ πάντα κραδαίνει.
Always he remains in the same place, moving not at all;
nor is it fitting for him to go to different places at different times,
but without toil he shakes all things by the thought of his mind. (B26 + 25)

Xenophanes rejects Homer and Hesiod’s conception of the Olympian pantheon, and that his own ‘one god’, εἷς θεός, stays still yet has the capacity to shake all things, πάντα κραδαίνει. This surely demonstrates a debt to Homer where Zeus assents to Thetis’ request to assist her son Achilles, and when the father of gods and men does, he sets the plan in motion and, shakes all Olympus with the nod of his head.³³⁰ Therefore, Xenophanes cannot fully cut ties with the tradition, and faint traces of the Olympian gods remain in his revised conception of them, which is displayed as henotheism, that is to say the existence of other gods is not denied, but one god is asserted as mightiest amongst these: εἷς θεὸς ἔν τε θεοῖσι... μέγιστος (B23). Xenophanes is also critical of different cultures’ representations of the gods, and thus he is aware of cultural relativism, and ethnocentric bias in relation to the divine:

Αἰθίοπες τε (θεοὺς σφετέρους) σιμοὺς μέλανάς τε
Θρηῆκες τε γλαυκοὺς καὶ πυρροὺς (φασὶ πέλεσθαι).

³³⁰ ἧ καὶ κυανέῃσιν ἐπ’ ὄφρ’ ὤσει νεῦσε Κρονίων·
ἀμβρόσια δ’ ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερώσαντο ἄνακτος
κρατὸς ἀπ’ ἀθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ’ ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπον.
The son of Cronos spoke, and bowed his dark brow in assent,
and the ambrosial locks waved from the king’s immortal head;
and he made great Olympus quake. (*Iliad*, 1.528–30)

The Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black, the Thracians that theirs have light blue eyes and red hair. (B16)

Thus Xenophanes expresses the basic notion that gods arise naturally in each culture's imagination as a mirror for that culture. By use of analogy to species in the animal kingdom, Xenophanes then goes beyond his ethnocentric critique to then in turn critique anthropomorphism of the gods:

ἀλλ' εἰ χεῖρας ἔχον βόες <ἵπποι τ' > ἢ ἐλέοντες
ἢ γράψαι χεῖρεςσι καὶ ἔργα τελεῖν ἅπερ ἄνδρες,
ἵπποι μὲν θ' ἵπποισι, βόες δέ τε βουσὶν ὁμοίας
καὶ <κε> θεῶν ιδέας ἔγραφον καὶ σώματ' ἐποίουν
τοιαῦθ', οἷόν περ καὶ τοὶ δέμας εἶχον <ἕκαστοι>.

But if cattle and horses or lions had hands,
or were able to draw with their hands and do the works that men can do,
horses would draw the forms of the gods like horses, and cattle like cattle,
and they would make their bodies such as they each had themselves. (B15)

Xenophanes takes the formula that human beings merely create gods in their own image. With the premise that other species would be able to create images if they could complete works in the fashion that humans can, ἔργα τελεῖν. This particular acknowledgement of human skill, τέχνη is a common theme for fifth-century thinkers, articulated most clearly perhaps in Plato's Protagoras myth of Prometheus where humans receive particular skills from the gods (Plato, *Protagoras*, 321–22). With τέχνη, human beings could then reciprocate and make works, ἔργα τελεῖν to create images of these gods, ιδέας ἔγραφον. Xenophanes' attitude rationalises individual cultures' religious practices. Herodotus takes a different stance to ethnographic difference. Herodotus acknowledges that the gods have different representations in cultures as a result of his ethnographic research, but he does not apply a dismissive stance to these different cultural practices,³³¹ as Xenophanes has a propensity to do. Herodotus describes the Persian religion thus:

³³¹ Linforth (1926): 'He did not deny the existence of the gods of foreigners [...] it never seems to occur to the Greek traveler to deny their existence [...] His polytheism is of an unlimited capacity, and admits quietly and without criticism whatever gods are worshipped by men anywhere in the world' (2).

Πέρσας δὲ οἶδα νόμοισι τοιοισίδε χρεωμένους, ἀγάλματα μὲν καὶ νηοὺς καὶ βωμοὺς οὐκ ἐν νόμῳ ποιευμένους ἰδρῦεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖσι ποιεῦσι μωρίην ἐπιφέρουσι, ὥς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκέειν, ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρωποφυέας ἐνόμισαν τοὺς θεοὺς κατὰ περ οἱ Ἕλληνες εἶναι. οἱ δὲ νομίζουσι Διὶ μὲν ἐπὶ τὰ ὑψηλότατα τῶν ὀρέων ἀναβαίνοντες θυσίας ἔρδειν, τὸν κύκλον πάντα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ Δία καλέοντες· θύουσι δὲ ἡλίῳ τε καὶ σελήνῃ καὶ γῇ καὶ πυρὶ καὶ ὕδατι καὶ ἀνέμοισι. τούτοις μὲν δὴ θύουσι μούνοισι ἀρχῇθεν, ἐπιμεμαθήκασι δὲ καὶ τῇ Οὐρανίῃ θύειν, παρά τε Ἀσσυρίων μαθόντες καὶ Ἀραβίων. καλέουσι δὲ Ἀσσύριοι τὴν Ἀφροδίτην Μύλιττα, Ἀράβιοι δὲ Ἀλιλάτ, Πέρσαι δὲ Μίτραν.

The following are certain customs which I can describe from personal knowledge. The erection of statues, temples, and altars is not accepted practice amongst them, and anyone who does such thing is considered a fool, because, presumably, the Persian religion is not anthropomorphic like the Greek. Zeus, in their system, is the whole circle of the heavens, and they sacrifice to him from the tops of the mountains. They also worship the sun, moon, and earth, fire, water, and winds, which are their only original deities: it was later that they learned from the Assyrians and Arabians the cult of Uranian Aphrodite. The Assyrian name for Aphrodite is Mylitta, the Arabian Alilat, the Persian Mitra. (1.131.1–3)

Herodotus outlays the basic cultural practices of the religion, νόμοι, which we have seen are important sources of observation evidence, the cultural archaeology.³³² He includes the common phrase: ὥς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκέειν, thus asserting his own judgement capacity as the framework for what is knowable. He then proceeds to determine the key difference to the Greek conception of the gods, in that the Persian gods are not anthropomorphic, ἀνθρωποφυέας.³³³ However, they worship the same Zeus, Διὶ who is connected with the entire sky domain of the world.³³⁴ Their original objects of worship are natural forces and celestial bodies. They later learned other practices surrounding Uranian Aphrodite from other cultures. This passage demonstrates Herodotus' respect for other cultural practices, and is

³³² Mikalson (2003): 'Most of what Herodotus attributes to the Persians are practices, not the beliefs lying behind them' (156).

³³³ Nestle (1908) 9.

³³⁴ This worship of abstract nature resonates with Prodicus' idea of divinity where humans believed 'anything else that sustained life... everything that is useful' to be gods: πάντα τὰ ὠφελοῦντα τὸν βίον [...] εὐχρηστούντων ἕκαστον (B5).

perhaps an instance where he sees religious practices as changing processes that become more sophisticated over time. That is to say the culture originally worships a natural force, which then becomes crystallised as a particular god who is then connected with that domain in nature or culture. We may compare Herodotus' account of the Pelasgians adopting the Egyptian gods' names and offices (2.52.1–3). In contrast, Heraclitus prefers to maintain the thunderbolt as the ultimate form of god (B64). Therefore in the mind of some pre-Socratic individuals the articulations of the gods by the poets which deities are also celebrated in religious customs must be superseded by a more abstract divine power.

An important comparison must be made with the sophists at this point. For instance, Prodicus considered that human beings derived the gods from the aspects of life that benefit humankind. This is an intellectual inversion of Herodotus' narrative where the poets assign offices to the gods. The account of Prodicus' theory reads:

Πρόδικος δὲ ὁ Κεῖος ἥλιον, φησί, καὶ σελήνην καὶ ποταμοὺς καὶ κρήνας καὶ καθόλου πάντα τὰ ὠφελοῦντα τὸν βίον ἡμῶν οἱ παλαιοὶ θεοὺς ἐνόμισαν διὰ τὴν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὠφέλειαν, καθάπερ Αἰγύπτιοι τὸν Νεῖλον, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὸν μὲν ἄρτον Διμήτραν νομισθῆναι, τὸν δὲ οἶνον Διόνυσον, τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ Ποσειδῶνα, τὸ δὲ πῦρ Ἥφαιστον καὶ ἤδη τῶν εὐχρηστούντων ἕκαστον.

Prodicus of Ceos says: 'The ancients considered that the sun, the moon, and rivers and springs and anything else that helped sustain life were gods, because of their usefulness; for instance, the Egyptians considered the Nile a god.' And thus bread has come to be called Demeter, and wine Dionysus, water Poseidon, fire Hephaestus, and so on with everything that is useful to man. (B5)

On account of these observations, Prodicus (and others who presented similar views about the gods) were 'called in derision atheists' οἱ ἐπικληθέντες ἄθεοι, (B5).³³⁵ Cicero lamented this act of Prodicus' reducing the gods to benefits of life, the stoic philosopher imploring: *quam tandem religionem reliquit?* 'What has he left us of the gods?' (B5).³³⁶ Prodicus' view was purportedly taken a step further whereby human beings who could provide social benefit

³³⁵ Sextus Empiricus, *Against the mathematicians*, IX, 51. But compare Guthrie (1971): 'to believe that wine and bread are gods is of course not atheistic, it is precisely the belief which Prodicus said 'the ancients' had and from which religion arose' 242.

³³⁶ Cicero, *On the nature of the gods*, I, 37, 118.

would themselves become gods. Cicero mentions the philosopher Persaeus who advanced the next step to assign godlike status to human beings who could benefit society:

Persaeus... eos esse habitos deos, a quibus aliqua magna utilitas ad vitae cultum esset inventa, ipsasque res utiles et salutare deorum esse vocabulis nuncupatas.

Persaeus... says that they are held to be gods who have discovered some significant alleviation of life's daily wants; moreover, even that these useful things or protecting devices themselves are called by divine names. (B5)³³⁷

This rationalisation of the establishment of the gods in the cultural imagination and the benefits to mankind clearly resonates with Plato's representation of Protagoras. He created the origin myth of mankind, wherein the great benefactor, Prometheus, stole both the mechanical arts from Athena and Hephaestus and fire with them and distributed these to mankind, κλέπτει Ἡφαίστου καὶ Ἀθηνᾶς τὴν ἑντεχνον σοφίαν σὺν πυρί, while Hermes distributed reverence and justice, αἰδῶ τε καὶ δίκην (Plato, *Protagoras*, 321–22).³³⁸

The important difference between Parmenides on the one hand, and Herodotus, Xenophanes and Heraclitus, on the other hand, is that these three latter figures accept the flaws of human perception, that is to say the ability of the eyes to perceive, or of sources to give faulty accounts. Xenophanes clearly acknowledges the role of semblance and personal judgement in the process of determining truth value when he says: 'Let these things be opined as resembling the truth' ταῦτα δεδοξάσθω μὲν εἰκότα τοῖς ἐτύμοισι... (B35), with likelihood, εἰκός being a key aspect of fifth-century argumentation, as I have discussed.

Parmenides on the other hand asserts that truth is beyond what is semblance. Prodicus goes further to define a utilitarian value from religious practice. Critias is another important figure who reflected on the social functions of religion:

τηνικαῦτά μοι δοκεῖ

<-> πυκνός τις καὶ σοφός γνῶμην ἀνὴρ

³³⁷ Cicero, *On the nature of the gods*, I, 15, 38. Compare the euhemeristic views of Socrates in Plato's *Phaedrus* 229b–d where Socrates justifies a girl, Orithyia who was playing on a cliff and blown away by a gale, where the gale is rationalised by Socrates as a deity, Boreas. See Nestle (1908) 22.

³³⁸ Compare the mythical figure Palamedes who was determined to be a cultural benefactor, for instance by creating certain letters of the alphabet (See Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 277).

<θεῶν> δέος θνητοῖσιν εξευρεῖν, ὅπως
εἴη τι δεῖμα τοῖς κακοῖσι, κἄν λάθρα
πράσσωσιν ἢ λέγωσιν ἢ φρονῶσί <τί>.

I think that then <missing word> some sound and clever-minded man invented fear <of the gods> for mortals, so that evil people would have fear, even if they were acting or saying or thinking <something> in secret. (Fr. 19 [Snell] 11–15)³³⁹

Here Critias is represented as a figure who acknowledges the use function of the gods for social cohesion, as a benign deceit, atheistic, but not hostile to religion. Thus, scholars argue that just because an individual provides an explanation for religious practice, it does not mean they reject it.³⁴⁰ Similarly, Herodotus acknowledges the diversity of cultural practice but without rationalising it away and defining purely human origins.³⁴¹

Ultimately, Herodotus' judgment, γνώμη/ὥς μὲν ἔμοι δοκέειν, based on evidence is the thoroughgoing technique that is always represented as the basis for knowledge, and is the process facilitating himself and other pre-Socratic figures to actively advance human knowledge as ἵστορες. This early instinct towards empiricism pre-empts the modern scientific approach where researchers can produce a 'negative' result, which does not make the research process itself a failure. Heraclitus therefore repeatedly metaphorically calls the senses witnesses, μάρτυρες (B107; B101A). More comprehensively though, and in contrast to Heraclitus, Herodotus presents his evidence, τεκμήρια and also reports from specialist individuals, λογιώτατοι. It is important now to examine Herodotus' evidence collecting process.

5.2 Witnesses and evidence – μάρτυρες, τεκμήρια

Where divine matters are unclear, ἀδηλότης to Protagoras, Herodotus makes explicit:

Many things make it clear to me that the hand of God is active in human affairs.

³³⁹ Translation, Patrick O'Sullivan (2012).

³⁴⁰ O'Sullivan (2012) sees this higher level of thinking in Critias: 'Critias fr. 19 gives us much to ponder in its sophisticated, ambivalent, and considered take on religion' 185. Compare de Romilly (1998) 194. See also Nestle (1908) 35.

³⁴¹ Cicero critiqued Persaeus for his defining the gods as created in terms of their pure use value for humankind (*On the nature of the gods*, I, 15, 38). On connections of the Critias fragment with Herodotus see Nestle (1908) 35.

δῆλα δὴ πολλοῖσι τεκμηρίοις ἐστὶ τὰ θεῖα τῶν πρηγμάτων. (9.100.2)

The explicit reliance upon evidence, τεκμήρια distinguishes Herodotus from the other figures who make unevidenced statements about the divine. For Xenophanes, δόκος, semblance prevents one knowing clearly, σαφές, but it does not prevent the apprehension of some knowledge. It is important to compare Herodotus to Xenophanes here: νομίζων πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἴσον περὶ αὐτῶν ἐπίστασθαι, ‘For I do not think that any one nation knows more about such things than another’ (2.3.2).³⁴² Alcmaeon (B1), Xenophanes (B34), Protagoras (B4) and Herodotus (2.3.2) individually, acknowledge the limitation of the human senses.³⁴³ Protagoras sees a difficulty in the shortness of human life. Herodotus accounts for this by consulting knowledgeable individuals, λογιώτατοι, from which source he came to clear conclusions about the divinity Heracles: τὰ μὲν νυν ἱστορημένα δηλοῖ σαφέως παλαιὸν θεὸν Ἡρακλέα ἐόντα. ‘What my researches clearly demonstrate is that Heracles is a very ancient god indeed’ (2.44.5).

This blatantly contradicts Xenophanes’ claim that, no one can or will know clearly about the gods, and all he speaks of: καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφές οὔτις ἀνὴρ ἴδεν οὐδὲ τις ἔσται, εἰδὼς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἄσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων· (B34). This statement excludes human beings from knowledge about the divine, or grants the authorial status to speak about the gods to Xenophanes alone, λέγω, which strongly echoes Heraclitus when he haughtily disregards his own inattentive audience (B1). Whereas for Herodotus all human beings have equal knowledge or ignorance about the gods, the extent of this knowledge is not explicitly mentioned.

What is most prominent in the Heracles inquiry is the primacy of judgement based on reports. The only available examples visual evidence are the elaborate temples dedicated to Heracles. Thus judgment based on hearsay appears to produce the central data results of

³⁴² Nestle (1908) 8.

³⁴³ Compare Plutarch’s *Life of Pericles*, where Plutarch uses an example of an unusual natural phenomenon – a deformed ram’s skull – being presented to both a seer (μάντις) and also Anaxagoras, in order to show Anaxagoras’ capacity as a natural philosopher. Plutarch thus attributes equal understanding to natural philosopher and diviner: ἐκώλυε δ’ οὐδέν, οἶμαι, καὶ τὸν φυσικὸν ἐπιτυχάνειν καὶ τὸν μάντιν, τοῦ μὲν τὴν αἰτίαν, τοῦ δὲ τὸ τέλος καλῶς ἐκλαμβάνοντος· ὑπέκειτο γὰρ τῷ μὲν, ἐκ τίνων γέγονε καὶ πῶς πέφυκε, θεωρῆσαι, τῷ δὲ, πρὸς τί γέγονε καὶ τί σημαίνει, προειπεῖν ‘And yet, in my opinion, it is no absurdity to say that they were both right, both natural philosopher and diviner, one justly detecting the cause of this event, by which it was produced, the other the end for which it was designed. For it was the business of the one to find out and give an account of what it was made, and in what manner and by what means it grew as it did; and of the other to foretell to what end and purpose it was made, and what it might mean or portend’ (6.3).

inquiry. This appears to contradict Heraclitus' model of inquiry, which we have seen bears striking resemblance to Herodotus', when, for Heraclitus the 'eyes are more accurate witnesses than the ears,' ὀφθαλμοὶ [τῶν] ὥτων ακριβέστεροι μάρτυρες (B101A). Heracles did, in Herodotus' view appear in Greece, in which account we have to conjecture there were human witnesses. But according to Herodotus, this building of the temple dedicated to him in Thasos was five generations before his appearance in Greece (2.44.4). At this point, we might conclude that the separation of time strongly limits ὄψις in the process of inquiry into the divine then, despite Ionian figures placing the highest trust in their personal observations.³⁴⁴

The more empirically accessible, visual evidence we see in both Xenophanes' and Herodotus' that displays their mutual interests in the visible world, travel and geographical change is fossils:

κογχύλιά τε φαινόμενα ἐπὶ τοῖσι ὄρεσι,
I have seen shells on the hills (2.12.1).

ὅτι ἐν μέσῃ γῇ καὶ ὄρεσιν εὐρίσκονται κόγχαι,
Shells are found inland and in the mountains (A33; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*, 1.14.5).

Although these geological excursions differ in their more tangible subject matter from the study of the divine, which, of course, is important to both writers, this evidence demonstrates the results of their very comparable inquiry processes, comprised of travel, observation, corroboration of evidence and final judgement.³⁴⁵ The results of inquiry offer both Herodotus and Xenophanes evidence to form their own judgements about geological shifts in coastlines over time. What is more problematic for our investigation into the collection and judgement upon evidence, and especially evidence for the divine, is when Herodotus presents accounts of tangible evidence from his own eyewitness account that amounts to evidence of the seemingly fantastical and unnatural. A problematic and notorious example of this in Egypt is the account of flying serpent creatures that migrate from Arabia to Egypt annually and battle with Ibises. The physical appearance of both these species is described in great detail,

³⁴⁴ Harrison (2000): 'Belief in divine epiphanies depends on their happening in some far-away place, to a friend of a friend or a very long time ago' (91).

³⁴⁵ Nestle (1908) 7.

however one species is historically verified while the flying serpent is entirely fictitious (2.74–76). Thus, while we have established so far that ὄψις is the preferred way to knowledge, the process of ἱστορίη produces a range of results, some ‘negative’ when we analyse these through a modern a critical lens. What then, are the τεκμήρια that make it clear to Herodotus that the divine is active in human affairs?

The quote in book 9 (9.100.2), referenced above suggesting that the divine is active in human affairs, here in the case of two coinciding and significant Greek–Persian battles, points towards the following forms of evidence: The piece of physical evidence Herodotus cites is that a herald’s staff appeared κηρυκίον ἐφάνη, on the edge of the beach (9.110.1). This is ὄψις, personal observation by an individual in the war. Herodotus can only account for it as a story of another’s observations.

The second piece of evidence presented is that rumour φήμη, fled through the Greek ranks at Mycale that their other Greek forces had defeated Mardonius at Boeotia (9.110.1). The final piece of evidence is that both battles at Mycale and Plataea were fought near a temple of Demeter (9.101.1). Herodotus takes both the fact that for him, both battles were won on the same day accompanied by a rumour that emboldened one army, and also that both battles were fought near shrines to be sufficient coincidences to assure him of divine’s role in human matters (9.101–102). These moments of crucial Greek victories, and the support of the Greek side of the battle, are often accompanied by divine coincidence or assistance, and Herodotus refers to merely reported accounts in these narratives. The lack of evidence and the fantastical nature of the divine at these points would seem to fulfil a task of asserting Greek identity at such times of crisis, rather than being a genuine reflection of inquiry into the divine and the results of inquiry, that is to say, the divine supports historical progress.

Immerwahr argues that there is a distancing of the author from the text at such points, when he argues that ‘the dramatic use of religious stories has a function quite separate from the author’s faith (sic.), in that it raises the level of the action in the last battles above the rationally comprehensible.’³⁴⁶ This statement assumes that Herodotus is intentionally deceiving his audience for effect, and as a result it would unfavourably and unfairly colour Herodotus’ inquiry process. This statement is also readily refuted by Herodotus himself at

³⁴⁶ Immerwahr (1986) 312.

another section in book 9. At this point in the battle the line of the Persian troops is broken by the Lacedaemonians, and they attempt to flee into a temple of Demeter, in which instance Herodotus notes an unusual result:

θῶμα δέ μοι ὅκως παρὰ τῆς Δήμητρος τὸ ἄλσος μαχομένων οὐδὲ εἷς ἐφάνη
τῶν Περσέων οὔτε ἐσελθὼν ἐς τὸ τέμενος οὔτε ἐναποθανόν, περὶ τε τὸ ἱρὸν
οἱ πλεῖστοι ἐν τῷ βεβήλῳ ἔπεσον. δοκέω δέ, εἴ τι περὶ τῶν θείων πρηγμάτων
δοκέειν δεῖ, ἡ θεὸς αὐτὴ σφεας οὐκ ἐδέκετο ἐμπρήσαντας {τὸ ἱρὸν} τὸ ἐν
Ἐλευσῖνι ἀνάκτορον.

It is a wonder to me how it should happen that, though the battle was fought close to the holy precinct of Demeter, not a single Persian soldier was found dead upon the sacred soil, or ever appears to have set foot upon it, while round about the temple, on unconsecrated ground, the greatest number were killed. My own view is – if one may have views about divine matters – that the Goddess herself would not let them in, because they had burnt her sanctuary at Eleusis (9.65.2).

Herodotus clearly states his own belief or opinion δοκέω, however with the disclaimer reflecting whether one may have opinions about the divine, εἴ τι περὶ τῶν θείων πρηγμάτων δοκέειν δεῖ, that the goddess herself was the active agent in deterring the Persians from the sanctuary (9.65.2). The use of the verb δοκέω demonstrates Herodotus' personal opinion that the Olympian gods exist and are indeed active in human affairs. But at the same time his opinion is cautioned with the disclaimer: εἴ τι περὶ τῶν θείων πρηγμάτων δοκέειν δεῖ 'if one may have views about divine matters' (9.65). This has led scholars to interpret that such matters are incapable of being furnished with proof, and therefore Herodotus has included the account with the disclaimer. Lateiner in particular sees a reluctance here on Herodotus' part to account for the unaccountable, and that 'under pressure he threw out a *merely* divine explanation.'³⁴⁷

In contrast Herodotus displays more confident assertions about the role of the divine in events when he examines the formation of a geological phenomenon – a gorge in Thessaly through which the river flows. Herodotus describes the formation:

³⁴⁷ Lateiner's emphasis (1989) 67. Compare Lateiner's overarching thesis that 'Herodotus eschews theology as such, since he does not regard it as suitable for his *ιστορίη*' (250).

αὐτοὶ μὲν νυν Θεσσαλοὶ φασὶ Ποσειδέωνα ποιῆσαι τὸν αὐλῶνα δι' οὗ ῥέει
ὁ Πηνειός, οἰκότα λέγοντες. ὅστις γὰρ νομίζει Ποσειδέωνα τὴν γῆν σείειν καὶ
τὰ διεστέατα ὑπὸ σεισμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τούτου ἔργα εἶναι, καὶ ἂν ἐκεῖνο ἰδὼν φαίη
Ποσειδέωνα ποιῆσαι· ἔστι γὰρ σεισμοῦ ἔργον, ὥς ἐμοὶ φαίνεται εἶναι, ἢ
διάστασις τῶν ὀρέων.

The natives of Thessaly have a tradition that the gorge which forms the outlet for the river was made by Poseidon, and the story is a reasonable one; for if one believes that it is Poseidon who shakes the earth and that the chasms caused by earthquake are attributed to him, then the mere sight of this place would be enough to make one say that it is Poseidon's handiwork. It certainly appears to me that the cleft in the mountains had been caused by an earthquake (7.129.4).

Herodotus describes the cleft in the mountain vividly, implying his own observation and judgement on the peculiarities of the land formation in this area. In parallel he accounts for the formation with divine causes when he refers to Poseidon's particular association with earthquakes. The conclusion based upon judgement is that an earthquake had caused the cleft, and therefore for Herodotus, it follows that Poseidon was indeed likely, οἰκότης, responsible. With reference to this particular example, this duality of causes divides scholars, who on the one hand see Herodotus allowing for a duality of causes,³⁴⁸ while others claim that Herodotus 'explains' events that are caused by the divine, but with less seriousness than events caused by human beings.³⁴⁹ If we consider this example in the light of appropriateness of description applied to the divine and geology as fields of knowledge we arguably see Herodotus complete a successful synergy of knowledge. Poseidon is of course directly connected to earthquake activity. The formation of the cleft in the mountain is exemplary of a change due to an earthquake, and a result that Herodotus might compare with other geological features he has observed. These data inform the event in a complementary manner.

The proponents of the Ionian inquiry culture vigorously take into account δόκος, semblance when one researches the truth (namely Xenophanes, B34; Alcmaeon B1). In the

³⁴⁸ Harrison (2000) 95. Compare G. E. R. Lloyd (1979), who acknowledges events that are 'doubly determined' by both divine and natural causes, where the former works through the latter (32). That is to say, the divine must either replace natural causes or be an addition to these causes. Lloyd sees that as a result, Herodotus does not have a universal theory of nature, but treats cases differently. So in Pheretimos's death at 4.205 there are dual causes, but this is not always the case, and at times Herodotus prefers one cause to another; he doesn't have a unified theory. See also 'overdetermination' in Dodds (1951 rpt. 2007).

³⁴⁹ Lateiner (1989): 'Human agency and human actions keep their centrality' (199).

case of the battles at Mycale and Plataea, Herodotus allows opinion to permeate his method and what he allows to be included in his λόγος. Hearsay, ἀκοή, prominently forms this account where rumour, φήμη, spreads through the army. Herodotus never mentions his source though in this account, and the appearance of the herald's staff is remote from Herodotus and thus the account presents a mythical quality. In contrast, the report of the earthquake chasm presents Herodotus with direct evidence from observation: ὅψις with the account the Thessalians gave him, in which he infers divine activity is causal and complementary to geological events. To reiterate, the purpose of comparing these cases is to examine the presence of evidence in ἱστορίη. In both instances Herodotus does cite a particular Olympian god, and not simply a generic form of 'the divine.'

Another significant example of natural phenomena and the divine in synergy features Poseidon at the moment when the Persians, under Artabanus wished to besiege Potidaea. Thereafter the Persians wished to cross to Pallene and an exceptionally low tide that lasted a long time presented them with an opportunity to do this. However, when they attempted the crossing a large tide surged back in killing the Persians who couldn't swim, while Potidaeans in boats dispatched the remainder. Herodotus reports that the Potidaeans attributed this to the fact that these Persians had previously desecrated both the town's shrine and statue of Poseidon. Herodotus accepts their account: αἴτιον δὲ τοῦτο λέγοντες εὖ λέγειν ἔμοιγε δοκέουσι, 'Personally, I think their account is the true one' (8.129.3). It would be rash to make a neat dichotomy between purely divine and geological causes – which is a very modern perspective.³⁵⁰ The argument that Herodotus 'rationalises' natural phenomena is an entirely modern and anachronistic perspective that does not take into account the ancient attitude that could accept dual causes – natural and divine.³⁵¹

In the case of the Potidaeans and Thessalians, Herodotus relies on the knowledge of the individuals who purport to have more understanding of the history of the local geography. For him their λόγος has credibility. Thus the natural events of the areas – extreme tides and earthquakes are for them, logically associated with Poseidon. And we have seen in these two

³⁵⁰ Harrison (2000) 97.

³⁵¹ Lloyd (1979) argues that Herodotus addressing the role of Poseidon 'endorses, but rationalises the Thessalian story' when the god creates the rift (30). Though does this rationalising undermine the role of the divine? Lloyd later states that if one was to retain dual causes for an event, that is to say divine and geological, this would require consideration thus: 'if maintained, [the divine] had now to be seen either as the suspension of nature (that is, in later terminology, a miracle) or as in addition to it' (31–32).

cases that have more tangible, geographical evidence, that Herodotus is more assertive in integrating these λόγοι into his overarching λόγος, than in the case based on pure hearsay, as we saw in the coincidence of battle victories at Plataea and Mycale.

Thus, travel and collating perceptions of the world, passing judgement on reports, revising the tradition, all leads Herodotus to display his understanding – a mode synonymous with the fifth-century project of propagating new ideas. This chapter has aimed to demonstrate how Herodotus relies on sources of evidence, τεκμήρια as a basis for his claims about the role of the divine in the world. Herodotus is fully cognisant that δόκος affects human knowledge, and often he is dealing with the residue of historic events and making judgements on these, fossils, reports of past events, geological formations, the causes of which he passes a judgement upon, based on what seems likely to him, οικότης and clear, δῆλος. Herodotus often refers to those who he deems know best, λογιώτατοι, and οικότα λέγοντες, trusting in local sources. Where they give accounts about the divine, he can happily sit these alongside purely naturalistic accounts, thus creating a multifaceted account. Ultimately, the result is the Herodotus is willing to engage with existing accounts, and come to his own evidenced, rational conclusion, without forsaking the possibility of divine involvement in the phenomena he investigates.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have analysed the tools of Herodotus' inquiry, ἱστορίη, into the divine through his reliance upon travel, consultation of sources and personal observation, in very comparable fashion to the Hippocratic writings, and also Heraclitus. Clearly, ἱστορίη is a process, where perception and judgement (ὄψις, ἀκοή, and γνώμη) form the base of Herodotus' understanding pertaining to how the divine operates in specific instances in the world. Furthermore, in Herodotus' own judgements and revisions of existing narratives we see clear signs of contemporary attitudes, specifically the desire for a contest of ideas, an ἀγών amongst fifth-century individuals, and also the use of allegories. There is a tacit awareness that one's λόγος about the divine is open to scrutiny.

Synonymous with this desire to present new understanding, Herodotus stands out not as only a significant writer, but also as a master in oral presentation, ἀπόδειξις, in the fashion of the sophists and poets of his time, a time when the non-Greek becomes a fascination, and knowledge about other cultures makes Greekness even more vivid. Thus personal observation makes one σοφός, and Herodotus stands out as self-aware of his own identity and the ethnocentric biases of the Greeks. There is cross-pollination of ideas about the divine in the fifth century, and within the mottled nature of Herodotus' writing, through his own observations and conclusions about the divine, based on his travel and in the public display of his knowledge he reveals himself as σοφιστής – closely mirrored in his representation of Solon – when we consider the broader context of Herodotus' life and mode of research outside the *Histories* themselves.

In the fifth century the gods have receded from being the epiphanies as represented by the poets, but they are still present in the cultural imagination of the Greeks, and connected with universal law, νόμος. Herodotus does not reject the divine but rather applies the tools of inquiry to accounts of divine causation that are presented to him on his travels; at times these accounts are retained, at other times rejected for Herodotus' own conclusion. The gods add to the richness of history, especially for underscoring moments of human achievement, and conferring glory to these achievements, κλέος. Thus Herodotus contributes his own notions about the divine to a broad conversation about the nature of the divine, within which many individuals are contributing ideas and challenging one another in an ἀγών.

Modern secular or monotheistic perspectives are constraints that lead the reader to struggle to grasp Herodotus' art, and to make anachronistic, dismissive conclusions about Herodotus. The inclusion of the divine in 'history' does not sit well with such views. Yet I have endeavoured to demonstrate in this thesis that Herodotus' scope is far broader than retelling human political strife in the Persian war. Herodotus had a polymath's desire (πολυμαθίη) to explore origins and cultural universals and differences in all the facets of the human experience. As Gary Saul Morson states:

'To read Herodotus is to appreciate the amazing variety and diversity of the world, which we may search and probe endlessly. As in Montaigne: nothing is of a piece, there are always surprises, we are inconsistent, all patchwork and motley.'³⁵²

The allegorical representation of Herodotus' *Histories* as patchwork is useful for considering the diversity of subject matter. We might consider a depth dimension also however, when Herodotus looks towards causes and the origin, ἀρχή, of phenomena. I have argued that Herodotus is clearly utilising the language and methodology of inquiry, relying on his judgment and perception, which was an early, pre-disciplinary form of empiricism. He certainly presents knowledge in an inconsistent manner, but this does not detract from the overall effect, which is to embed in cultural memory the wonderful phenomena of human beings and the world, θαῦμα. Marincola frames this nicely when he says that: 'in accepting this imperfect truth with all its gaps, suppositions, and best guesses, Herodotus may be said to inaugurate a new method of learning and understanding.'³⁵³

Furthermore, passages such as the constitutional debate illustrate the notion that presenting knowledge orally which was celebrated by the sophists, was also a mode of displaying understanding, which Herodotus also valued, and which I have argued he famously partook in, by presenting texts in Athens, and by his association with Thuri. This relocates Herodotus from his commonly accepted locus as father of prose, to locate him in very close proximity to the sophists, their interests, and practices.

³⁵² Morson (2005) 99.

³⁵³ Dewald and Marincola (2006) 24.

Whether or not he did meet with other thinkers of his time, he was engaged in a ‘conversation,’ with the mode of knowledge synonymous with the life of the travelling intellectual. Provençal goes further to make the bold claim that Herodotus would have settled down in Thurii and enjoyed intellectual life in old age with the other thinkers of his time:

‘We might sum the matter up by entertaining the notion that it would have been as fitting for Herodotus to have taken every opportunity offered by his stay in Athens and his retirement to Thurii to engage in prolonged dialogue with Protagoras as to have enjoyed with Sophocles the intellectual companionship of a like-minded friend.’³⁵⁴

This may be a radical claim, but whether personal contact was made or not, we can assert that Herodotus had a place in the milieu of thinkers, inquirers of the fifth century, and that he was not a storyteller standing alone creating *fabulae* about the gods. He was able to turn his mind to great political matters but also touch upon the metaphysical, if only lightly. Thus his importance in the ‘conversation’ of ancient Greek theology must not be downplayed. It is the complexity and the scope of Herodotus’ research that makes his theological content demand more attention, where we might identify not a binary of believer versus sceptic, but rather uncover nuanced layers within the text.

I have endeavoured to contribute to Herodotean scholarship by going into more depth concerning Herodotus’ relationship to the milieu of his time – particularly the sophists and pre-Socratics, a relationship that is often glossed over. I have aimed to identify how his general methodology and investigation into the divine mirrors others’ methodologies in many ways. This does not detract from the uniqueness of Herodotus’ accomplishment. I have argued that he was a more serious contributor to ancient theological speculations than Plutarch’s albeit critical assessment of his work suggests.

³⁵⁴ Provençal (2015) 257, and earlier when he suggests that ‘of all the sophists, Herodotus is most likely to have had personal acquaintance with Protagoras. Generally, they share with other fifth-century intellectuals a common rationalism inherited from the earlier Ionian tradition of scientific inquiry and a common humanism that belongs to their own time’ (31). Compare Nestle (1908) 16; 37.

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