

## Herodotus and Democracy

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### INTRODUCTION

Charles Fornara, after arguing persuasively from the differences in tone between different parts of Herodotus' history that he did not simply form a plan at the beginning of his work and proceed to implement it, but his ambitions and his treatment of the material developed,<sup>1</sup> suggested the form which he thought that development took. Herodotus began as an ethnographer, he believed; then he used the expansion of the Persian Empire as a theme in connection with which he organized his ethnographies, and to do that he 'moved to the higher plane of imaginative recreation'.<sup>2</sup> The culmination of his history in the war of 480–479, in Books 7–9, was a result of his writing not for posterity (as Thucydides did) but for his own generation, at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War.<sup>3</sup> Of particular relevance to this chapter is the suggestion that it was that culmination, written with a view to his own time, which led him to focus on Athens and Sparta, and to add his digressions on Athens and Sparta to the earlier books.<sup>4</sup> He was not an apologist for Periclean Athens or democratic Athens or imperial Athens;<sup>5</sup> indeed, he had greater sympathy for Sparta and its *eunomia* (healthy lawful state).<sup>6</sup> But overall 'Herodotus was extraordinarily unprejudiced. With his sympathy for Athens and for Sparta he could see neither side as the villain of his day'; 'in his opinion [imperial] Athens had been caught in a sad and inevitable process bringing disaster to all of Greece'.<sup>7</sup> As for Athenian democracy, in the praise of Athens' *isegorie* and the military success which resulted from the ending of the tyranny, 'the antithesis is between freedom and despotism, and democracy is secondary to it. ἐλευθερωθέντων is the key word; the quality of *eleutheria* rather than the intrinsic nature of democracy, as a specific form of government, is the issue.'<sup>8</sup>

From that starting point I examine what Herodotus makes of democracy, in Athens and elsewhere. Even if Fornara has been too readily persuaded by Thucydides that Herodotus had no thought for posterity, we shall need to bear in mind his point that, while Herodotus was writing about an earlier period, he was doing so in the third quarter of the fifth century (but I believe that most of his work was done before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War,<sup>9</sup> though when the division of the Greek world into Athenian and Spartan power blocs had already occurred), and his own context will inevitably have affected his treatment of the material. Some scholars have thought not only that

Herodotus' context affected his treatment of the material but that much of what he wrote about the past was aimed at the Athens of his own time, which he saw as a tyrannical city led by Pericles as a tyrannical leader.<sup>10</sup> What is certain is that Herodotus was writing at a time when the contrast between democracy and oligarchy was familiar, and the Greek world was polarized between states and individuals which considered themselves democratic and states and individuals which considered themselves oligarchic. We have to allow for the possibility, which I argue to be the reality, that he sometimes projected back inappropriately to the period about which he was writing this contrast which belonged to his own time.

## HERODOTUS' KEY TERMS

I begin by noting briefly various key terms used by Herodotus, and then proceed to an analysis of how he used them in treating various phenomena and situations.

*Eleutherie* (freedom) and its cognates, stressed by Fornara, when used by Herodotus of the internal condition of a state are regularly contrasted with some form of monarchy.<sup>11</sup>

Herodotus uses the noun *demokratie* (democracy) and the verb *demokrateesthai* twice in contrast to tyranny (4.137.2, 6.43.3), and twice in cross-references to the Persian debate and to Cleisthenes of Athens (6.43.3, 131.1), though the terms are not used in the main treatment of them. The counterpart, *oligarchie* (oligarchy), he uses only in the Persian debate (3.81.1, 82),<sup>12</sup> and in the speech of Socles of Corinth addressed to the Spartans c.504, with reference to the archaic regime of the Bacchiads (5.92.β1).<sup>13</sup> He never uses *aristokratie* (aristocracy). I am on the side of those who think that *demokratia* was coined not earlier than in the second quarter of the fifth century, and that *oligarchia* and *aristokratia* followed as terms to be contrasted with it.<sup>14</sup> If that is right, all Herodotus' uses of the words are applied to times when this terminology did not yet exist (though of course that does not prove that phenomena to which the terminology could be applied did not yet exist).

*Demos* (people) and *plethos* (mass) have overlapping ranges of meaning, but both can be used, and are used by Herodotus, of a large body of citizens with at any rate some political powers, and sometimes with an implied contrast between the ordinary citizens and the elite. In the Persian debate *plethos* is used by Otanes (3.80.6, 83.2), and both words are used by Megabyxus and Darius (3.81.1, 82.1, 5). What is transferred to the *demos* is contrasted with the king's power in Cyrene (4.161.3). In some passages Herodotus refers to conflict between the rich and the *demos* (but not, strictly, to different kinds of regime).<sup>15</sup> References to the *demos* in Athens are sometimes clearly to the whole community and its assembly,<sup>16</sup> and it is only when Cleisthenes added the *demos* to his *hetaireia*, a word normally used of a group of upper-class companions (5.66.2, 69.2, cf. 74.1) that the reference is clearly to the ordinary citizens. *Plethos* makes other appearances with reference to a body of citizens, and perhaps was particularly chosen when Herodotus wanted to stress the large number of men.<sup>17</sup> *Ochlos* in the sense of 'mob', a more derogatory term for the body of ordinary citizens, is never used by Herodotus.

Then there is a group of words with the prefix *iso-*, 'equal': *isonomie* (equality of law),<sup>18</sup> *isegorie* (equality of speech),<sup>19</sup> *isokratie* (equality of power).<sup>20</sup> These are regularly contrasted with monarchy; the one exception to that is a striking but different form of equality, that among the Issedones beyond Scythia the women are said to be *isokratees* with the men (4.26.2).

*Es meson* (into the middle), is an expression which in its literal sense denotes coming ‘into the presence’ of a ruler or a body of men;<sup>21</sup> and by extension Herodotus uses ‘placing *es meson*’ specifically in connection with the ending of a monarchic regime.<sup>22</sup>

*Koinon* (community), is a word which can be applied both to cities and to entities smaller or larger than a city, and Herodotus applies it to decision-making bodies or their members in entities of various political complexions.<sup>23</sup>

Herodotus uses *dynastai* (powerful men) and *dynasteuein*, when referring to Greeks, of men in a position of informal rather than formal power.<sup>24</sup>

## HERODOTUS’ USE OF THE KEY TERMS

I turn now to an analysis of the phenomena.

Most obviously startling is the Persian debate (3.80–2).<sup>25</sup> It is set in the Persian Empire in 522, and Herodotus insisted on its authenticity, though he expected his readers to find it hard to believe (3.80.1, cf. 6.43.3), and modern readers regularly have found it hard to believe that a group of leading Persians at that date, after killing a claimant to the throne, would have had any intention other than what actually happened, the installation of another King. And the debate is based formally not on the simple contrast between absolute monarchy and some form of constitutional government, but on what during the fifth century became the standard Greek scheme of monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy.<sup>26</sup> [How and] Wells at the beginning of the twentieth century and Asheri more recently have considered the possibility of a debate on the rival merits of the ‘centralized’ monarchy of Cambyses and an earlier style, but:

In the form that has reached us it is a Greek debate on Greek ideas, composed by Herodotus, well integrated into the main narrative, and made emphatic at a time when the Greek public was interested in problems of this type.... We should exclude the possibility that a serious alternative to a monarchic regime could have been proposed.<sup>27</sup>

How could Herodotus have perpetrated, and have insisted on the authenticity of, what seems to us patently incredible? Asheri goes on to suggest, ‘Herodotus knew very well that the empire had undergone a radical change after a severe crisis; he therefore tried to understand the phenomenon within the limits of his own frame of reference: the constitutional changes of the Greek *poleis*.’<sup>28</sup> And the threefold scheme seems to be very much his own frame of reference, not that of the earlier period about which he was writing. It is perhaps a symptom of this that he does not use political labels to explain the three *staseis* which led to the rise of Peisistratus to become tyrant of Athens earlier in the sixth century, though later the *Athenaion Politeia* and Plutarch wrote in Aristotelian terms of oligarchs, moderates, and democrats.<sup>29</sup>

We have noticed a few passages outside the Persian debate in which Herodotus makes a political contrast between the upper class and the *demos*: in Naxos and Aegina in the 490s the *pachees* (fat men) are expelled by the *demos*;<sup>30</sup> in Syracuse in the 480s Gelon seizes power and restores *gamoroi* (land-holders) expelled by the *demos*, and then gives citizenship to the *pachees* but not to the *demos* of Megara and Euboea, finding the *demos* uncongenial.<sup>31</sup> I shall consider these in more detail below. Elsewhere, however, whether Herodotus writes of *demokratie/demokrateesthai*,<sup>32</sup> or of regimes with the *iso-* prefix,<sup>33</sup> or of placing affairs *es meson*,<sup>34</sup> his contrast is always with some form of monarchy.

Wells was surely right to comment, ‘The issue in Herodotus everywhere is not between the “Many” and the “Few”, but between “Freedom” in the general sense...and Tyranny.’<sup>35</sup> We have seen that Fornara commented similarly on the strength of Athens after the tyranny and Cleisthenes.<sup>36</sup> Herodotus is aware that the people of a city could be divided into the elite and the others, and that there could be conflict between the elite and the others; but he does not make much of it, and the distinction which is most important to him is that between a powerful monarchy on one side, whether of a king from an established family or of an upstart tyrant, and on the other side a form of constitutional government, which he can characterize either as *demokratie* or with one of the *iso-* words or with *eleutherie*, without asking as we might how democratic it was by the standards of Athens at the time when he is writing.

What are we to make of the particular situations on which Herodotus is commenting? A general point to be stressed is that the line between a ruling elite and the others was one which could be drawn at different levels in different situations, and words such as *demos* and *plethos* could be used to characterize the others whether the elite were a small group, whose dominance might be due to various considerations, or the richer citizens more generally, and whether or not there was a still lower group with no political rights which ranked below the *demos* or *plethos*. Thus in archaic Corinth, in the one regime which (in Socles’ speech) Herodotus characterizes as *oligarchie*, while Socles contrasts tyranny and *isokratie* in the late sixth century, and himself speaks *eleutheros* (freely) (5.93.2),<sup>37</sup> the Bacchiads in the eighth and seventh centuries (mentioned at the beginning of the explanation of how Cypselus came to be tyrant: 5.92.β1) seem to have been (or to have been perceived as) an extended family, to be contrasted with all the other Corinthians. A fragment from Diodorus (7.9.6) states that after the last king the Bacchiads, numbering more than two hundred, maintained their *arche* and presided over the city jointly (κοινῆ), appointing one of their number as *prytanis* (chief) each year, and Pausanias (2.4.4) likewise writes of annual *prytaneis* from the Bacchiads. Corinth after the tyranny, though oligarchic in the normal Greek sense of the term, was not dominated by as small a group as that, and Herodotus has used the language of his own time to label the Bacchiad regime which was very different from the oligarchies of the classical period: the oracle in 5.92.β2 refers to ἀνδράσι μονάρχοισι (men ruling monarchically), and Thucydides would have called the regime a *dynasteia* (ruling clique).<sup>38</sup>

Nearer to Herodotus’ own time, there are the conflicts between the *pachees* or *gamoroi* and the *demos* in Naxos, Aegina, and Syracuse at the beginning of the fifth century.<sup>39</sup> Are these conflicts between upper-class oligarchs and lower-class (or lower-class-championing) democrats like those of the second half of the fifth century, or has Herodotus here too applied the categories of his own time to situations which were in fact somewhat different?<sup>40</sup> The strongest advocate of the view that texts mentioning democracy in early Greek states mean what they say is E. W. Robinson.<sup>41</sup> But, while the elements of popular participation on which he focuses are genuine and important, the texts in question are generally later than the phenomena which they describe, and we have to consider not only for Herodotus but for all of them whether what they describe was in fact sufficiently close to the democracies of the classical period to deserve that label or is better described otherwise. It is at any rate encouraging that Herodotus’ terms for the rich, *pachees*, and *gamoroi*, are not those used in later discussions of such matters. But Macan, for instance, did not comment on Naxos, wondered if in Aegina Nicodromus had tried to make himself tyrant, and for Sicily suggested a racial explanation, that in Syracuse the *demos* ‘may have included a Greek element’ but probably was not totally distinct ethnically from the Cillyrians—though he thought the remark on the uncongeniality of the *demos* might

be a genuine remark of Gelon.<sup>42</sup> T. J. Figueira in his work on Aegina has judged that ‘The treatment by Herodotus of the Nicodromus coup is phrased in terms that belong to the ideological struggles of the second half of the fifth century, and the terms are anachronistic....The coup may then have been nothing more than a particularly violent factional confrontation, with few real philosophical or ideological grounds’—though he allowed that there might have been a social problem, for instance concerning men whose claim to citizenship was doubtful. Nicodromus had a substantial body of supporters, but the *pachees* had enough support to be able to defeat their opponents.<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Irwin, who stresses the importance of later history to Herodotus’ Aeginetan *logoi*, thinks there is some kind of anachronism in this story, and wonders whether the event is authentic but actually occurred later.<sup>44</sup>

There are also various other references by Herodotus to the *demos* or the *plethos* of a city, some though not all of which imply a contrast with the elite. One is particularly interesting, the statement that after Thermopylae the whole *plethos* of the Boeotians was medizing (8.34). This is one side of an argument in which Thucydides, in the debate in 427 on the fate of Plataea, presents the Thebans as stating the other: after the Plataeans have alluded to the medism of the Thebans in the war of 480–479 (Thuc. 3.54.3–4, 56.5, 57.3–4, 58.5), the Thebans protest that ‘Our city was administered at that time neither by an oligarchy based on equal laws (*oligarchia isonomos*) nor by a democracy, but our affairs were in the hands of what is most directly opposed to laws and the greatest restraint and is closest to tyranny, a ruling clique (*dynasteia*) of a few men’ (Thuc. 3.62.3). Not surprisingly the Boeotian Plutarch makes the medism of Thebes one of the points on which he accuses Herodotus of malice—though in fact he fails to notice the contrast between the ‘whole *plethos*’ of Herodotus and the *dynasteia* of Thucydides (Plut. *De Her. Mal.* 865 A–F, 866 D–867 B), which he could have used to support his accusation. How limited the body of Thebans with a share in political power was at that time we do not know; but Herodotus in using *plethos* is not characterizing the constitution of Thebes/Boeotia, but rather claiming in retrospect that the policy of medizing was one which had general assent, while Thucydides makes the Thebans claim that the policy was due to a ruling clique not representative of wider opinion. *Koinon* is used with the same implication as ‘whole *plethos*’ when after Plataea the victorious Greeks demand two of the leading men among the medizers and one of those men says that they medized ‘with the *koinon*’ (9.87.2).

In connection with Pactyes’ rising against Cyrus in the 540s ‘the Cymaeans’ and their *plethos*, who were inclined to surrender him but were prevented by Aristodicus, and ‘the Chians’, who did surrender him (1.158.1–2, 160.3), may be either the decision-making bodies there or public opinion more generally; and similarly in connection with the killing of Arcesilaus III of Cyrene in the 520s the Barcaeans and their ‘whole *plethos*’ (4.200.1) will again be the decision-making body or less formally the citizens with a measure of political power. Decision-making bodies are denoted again by references to the *koinon* of the Spartiates (1.67.5, 6.50.2), of Samos at the time of the Ionian Revolt (6.14.3), of Thebes (above: loaded in one passage), and of Athens (below), and on a larger scale of the *koinon* of the Ionians (5.109.3, cf. 1.141.4).

*Isonomie* (equality of law), is used in connection with Maeandrius’ attempt to resign the tyranny in Samos, about which he changed his mind (3.142.3); and with Aristagoras’ resignation of the tyranny in Miletus (5.37.2), after which he is represented as retaining a commanding position.<sup>45</sup> The freer regime proposed for Samos did not come into being, so we do not know what that would have been like. It is also hard to estimate the nature of the short-lived regimes installed in Miletus and the other Ionian cities at the beginning of the Ionian Revolt. However, *demokrateesthai* is mentioned as what

the Ionians would like by Histiaeus at the Danube (4.137.2), and *demokratiai* are installed in Ionia in 492 by Mardonius (6.43.3), though the area to benefit was strictly limited and/or tyrants found their way back before long.<sup>46</sup> Here, I believe, whatever Herodotus thought when he cited Mardonius' 'democracies' in support of his Persian debate, the regimes in question were essentially constitutional governments as opposed to rule by Persian-backed tyrants, and I think that the same would have been true of the Ionian regimes of the early 490s.

The condition of Athens after the overthrow of the Peisistratids in 511/0 and the reforms of Cleisthenes in 508/7 is treated in a section on Sparta and Athens as the two cities to which Aristagoras of Miletus appealed for support in the Ionian Revolt. On Athens Herodotus begins with its gaining 'freedom from tyrants' (5.55); and before moving on to Cleisthenes he says that 'Athens was great even before but became greater on being rid of tyrants' (5.66.1); that ring is closed after the war of c.506 with the remark that the value of *isegorie* is shown by the contrast between the Athenians' feebleness under the tyrants and their confidence and success after their liberation (5.78). It is the ending of the tyranny rather than the reform of Cleisthenes which seems to be praised.<sup>47</sup> The picture of Cleisthenes himself is unflattering: in his tribal reform he was motivated by hatred of the Ionians and was copying his grandfather, Cleisthenes of Sicyon (5.66.2–69.1); and although he wooed the *demos* now he had previously spurned it (5.69.2).<sup>48</sup> Herodotus uses *isegorie*, 'equality of speech', when closing his ring (5.78); but he uses *demokratie* when elsewhere, at the end of his account of Agariste of Sicyon, he adds that she became the mother of the Cleisthenes 'who established the tribes and the *demokratie* for the Athenians' (6.131.1).<sup>49</sup>

The two occasions when Sparta invaded Attica for the good of the Athenian *plethos* were the two expeditions to liberate the Athenian people as a whole from the Peisistratid tyranny (5.76). To get the better of Isagoras Cleisthenes had added the *demos* to his *hetaireia* (5.66.2, 69.2, cf. 74.1): that means Athenians outside the elite, but Herodotus is invoking but dismissing some quarrel with the Athenians as a whole when he says some might think that the Alcmaeonids were angry with the *demos* and therefore tried to betray Athens in 490 (6.124.1).<sup>50</sup> The reference is again to the Athenians as a whole when he says the Spartans considered the *demos* ungrateful for its liberation from the Peisistratids and for that reason proposed to reinstate Hippias as tyrant (5.91.2),<sup>51</sup> and the reference is to the citizen body and its official organs when Miltiades was tried by the *demos* after his failure to take Paros (6.136.1, 3), and when Aristides was ostracized by the *demos* (8.79.1). *Koinon* is used in the same way in two other passages (5.85.1, early; 9.117, in 479).

The general impression given by Herodotus' account in Book 5 is that what was crucial in the development of Athens was the ending of the tyranny rather than the reform of Cleisthenes—but I am not sure that the remark that Aristagoras was able to fool 30,000 Athenians more easily than Cleomenes of Sparta (5.97.2) is to be taken as a serious preference for Spartan kingship over an Athenian assembly.<sup>52</sup> Cleisthenes' adding the *demos* to his *hetaireia* is judged to be represented as sinister by Munson but as positive by Gray.<sup>53</sup> And how his intentions and his measures ought to be evaluated by present-day historians continues to be debated. My own view is that at the time the *iso*-words were used but not *demokratia*,<sup>54</sup> and that Cleisthenes' effects were more democratic than his intentions, that his own idea of 'equality' or fairness was to replace a system in which the Alcmaeonids were badly placed by one in which they would be well placed (so that Herodotus' remark on his adding to his *hetaireia* a *demos* which he had previously spurned is not unfair), but that the degree of involvement required to make his elaborate system of tribes, *trittyes* (thirds of tribes)

and demes work gave the citizens experience of and a taste for political activity, and so paved the way for the more consciously democratic reform of Ephialtes in 462/1.<sup>55</sup> Cleisthenes' dispensation was an important step on the road to Athens' full democracy; it was not the final step; but it appears that in 411 Cleisthenes was regarded as the 'founder' of the democracy. However, the decision in that year to have a council of four hundred 'in accordance with tradition' (*kata ta patria*) points to Solon, and as a result of the debates on the 'traditional constitution' (*patrios politeia*) which began then the foundation was pushed further back, to Solon or even to Theseus.<sup>56</sup>

*Es meson* is used in connection with Maeandrius in Samos (above); and also with the reduction in power but not the abolition of the kingship in Cyrene (4.161.3), and with the abdication of Cadmus of Cos (7.164.1). In Cyrene the reduction of the king's power in the time of Battus III, in the middle of the sixth century, is part of a long story, involving trouble with the Libyans before then, and afterwards an attempt by Arcesilaus III and his mother Pheretime to recover the lost powers (4.160–7, 200–5); at some time after 460 Arcesilaus IV was murdered and a 'democracy' was established<sup>57</sup>—but Hornblower comments that 'That "democracy" was probably an oligarchy of a narrow enough type.'<sup>58</sup> Clearly as the monarchy persisted when elsewhere in the Greek world monarchies had been abolished there was trouble between the kings and the various categories of the people, but there is no good reason to suppose that sixth-century Cyrene, in which Battus III remained king but lost political powers, had anything approaching what the Greeks of Herodotus' time would have considered democracy. In Cos Cadmus' abdication is to be dated to the aftermath of the Ionian Revolt, about the time of Mardonius' installation of 'democracies' in Ionia: S. M. Sherwin-White suggests that it is to be linked with the new Persian policy, and notes that by 480 Artemisia of Halicarnassus had established hegemony over Cos and its neighbouring islands.<sup>59</sup> In these cases what is at issue is the abolition (or in the case of Cyrene under Battus III the limitation) of a monarchy, not the particular complexion of the resulting regime.

Overall, then, the Persian debate is exceptional in Herodotus in contrasting the three categories of monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy, and in retrojecting to the last quarter of the sixth century a clear distinction between oligarchy and democracy<sup>60</sup>—which I believe was not explicitly formulated in Greece until the second quarter of the fifth century. Otherwise, while he sometimes mentions divisions between the elite and the *demos* in a matter-of-fact way as if they were the divisions between oligarchs and democrats familiar in his own time, he more often and more emphatically contrasts monarchy with a form of constitutional government, not merely describing constitutional government as 'freedom', and using *iso-* words and *es meson*, but also applying the later language of *demos* and *demokratie* to the constitutional government, while not attending particularly to the precise nature of that constitutional government. He undoubtedly thinks freedom and constitutional government better than subjection and monarchy, and he sometimes uses the language of democracy to praise them, but he does not express an opinion on the democracy whose language he uses.

I noted at the beginning of this chapter that for Fornara Herodotus' 'admiration for the Spartan government was even more intense than any feeling he evinced for Athenian democracy'.<sup>61</sup> In Demaratus' characterization of the Spartans for Xerxes (7.102–4), stressing their obedience to law, and determination to resist even if all the other Greeks submit, Fornara judges that 'Demaratus is plainly speaking for Herodotus'; 'an Athenian democrat would have judged differently of Sparta'.<sup>62</sup> The remark that Aristagoras when seeking support for the Ionian Revolt was able to fool 30,000 Athenians more easily than Cleomenes of Sparta (5.97.2) 'betrays his prejudice'.<sup>63</sup>

That, I think, is over-reacting against the view of Herodotus as a champion of democratic Athens.<sup>64</sup> On the determination to resist Persia Fornara claims that Demaratus is a ‘wise and “objective” adviser’ whereas in the praise of the Athenians in 9.27 ‘the Athenians are praising themselves’;<sup>65</sup> but in 8.143–4 Herodotus makes the Athenians declare as strong a Greek patriotic determination as Demaratus attributes to the Spartans, and the comment that it was the Athenians’ determination which saved Greece (7.139), even if it is ‘for his audience an unpleasant truth’ rather than proof that ‘he was a partisan of Athens’,<sup>66</sup> does not suggest to me that he rated Sparta’s Greek patriotism more highly than Athens’. Internally, Fornara claims that ‘The word *eunomia* in 1.65[.2], as used of Sparta...is not a mere label.’<sup>67</sup> That is true, but the contrast is surely not with Athens or with any other Greek state but with Sparta before the reforms attributed to Lycurgus, described as *kakonomotatoi* (in the most unhealthy legal state): it is in fact strictly comparable to the remark in 5.78 that Athens’ *isegorie* after the ending of the Peisistratid tyranny and the reforms of Cleisthenes was much better than its previous subjection to tyrants. Fornara suggests that ‘an Athenian democrat’ would not have endorsed the praise of Sparta’s obedience to law. But when contrasting freedom with despotism Herodotus does, as we have seen, sometimes use *demokratie* and *demos* and *plethos*, and I doubt whether a man who positively preferred Sparta would have done that. And I do not think we should make too much of the quip about Aristagoras’ finding it easier to fool 30,000 Athenians than the less than admirable Cleomenes of Sparta.

As Fornara notes, Herodotus was indeed, like Thucydides (who admired democracy under the leadership of Pericles but not undisciplined democracy), a man of the upper class and that will have shaped his thinking.<sup>68</sup> However, he was neither an Athenian nor a Spartan, and I do not see convincing evidence in his text that he preferred one city and its way of life to the other. He preferred freedom and constitutional government to subjection and despotism; whatever he may have thought of the kind of democracy which Athens had at the time when he was writing, he sometimes used the language of democracy when writing of the freedom and constitutional government of which he did approve (and by doing so he blurred the difference between democracy as it was when he was writing and forms of constitutional government up to a century earlier). That, I think, is as close as we can approach to Herodotus’ view of democracy.

<sup>1</sup> Fornara 1971b: 1–23.

<sup>2</sup> Fornara 1971b: 24–36, quoting 36.

<sup>3</sup> Fornara 1971b: 75–91, cf. 60. Against that contrast see Grethlein, [Chapter 10](#), this volume, pp. 241–2.

<sup>4</sup> Fornara 1971b: 38–9.

<sup>5</sup> Fornara 1971b: 41–8, 51–8.

<sup>6</sup> Fornara 1971b: 48–50.

<sup>7</sup> Fornara 1971b: 90; 80.

<sup>8</sup> 5.78 with Fornara 1971b: 48–50, quoting 48.

<sup>9</sup> The latest certain allusions are to events of 431–430: 6.91.1, 7.137, 233.2, 9.73.3. Whereas most have thought that Herodotus finished writing before 424 (n.b. his remarking in 6.91.1 on the expulsion of the Aeginetans in 431, but not on the destruction in 424 of their refuge in Thyrea, mentioned by Thuc. 4.57: e.g. How and Wells i 9), Fornara and some others keep him active later: Fornara 1971b: 43 n. 13, 1971a and 1981; most recently, Irwin 2013a, and [Chapter 13](#), this volume.

<sup>10</sup> e.g. Moles 1996, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> ἐλευθερίη 1.62.1, 3.142.4, 6.5.1; ἐλεύθερος 3.125.3, 143.2, 5.64.2, 91.1—and 7.103.3, 104.4 (Persia); ἐλευθεροῦν 5.62.2, 63.1, 65.5, 78, 91.2, [6.122.1—chapter usually considered an interpolation], 6.123.2—and 2.147.2 (Egypt).

- <sup>12</sup> But it is not used by Megabyxus himself: he is made to refer to a body of the best men, ἀνδρῶν τῶν ἀρίστων...ὀμίλην (3.81.3), and the closest parallel to that in Herodotus is 7.8.*init.*: Xerxes when contemplating his invasion of Greece ‘convened a special meeting of the best Persians’ σύλλογον ἐπικλητον Περσέων τῶν ἀρίστων ἐποιέετο. Apart from one use of *kratos* (power) by Megabyxus (3.81.3), the debate is conducted entirely in terms of *arche* (rule) and its cognates.
- <sup>13</sup> For his own time he contrasts *isokratie* with tyranny, 5.92.α1.
- <sup>14</sup> See, e.g., Raaflaub, in Raaflaub et al. 2007: 107–12, 139; note Pi. P. 2.86–8 (of 468?), and the δήμου κρατοῦσα χεὶρ (powerful hand of the people) of Aesch. *Supp.* 604 (of 464/3?). For an earlier date for *demokratia* see e.g. M. H. Hansen 1986.
- <sup>15</sup> 5.30.1, Naxos; 6.88–91.1, Aegina; 7.155–6, Sicily.
- <sup>16</sup> 1.59.4, 5, 5.97.1, 6.104.2, 6.136.1, 3, 7.142.1, 8.79.1, 9.5.1; and I believe (cf. below, ‘Herodotus’ Use of the Key Terms’, p. 274) also 5.91.2, 6.124.1. For *demos* as assembly cf. the enactment formula of decrees of the assembly in Athens and elsewhere, ἔδοξε τῷ δήμῳ (resolved by the people).
- <sup>17</sup> 1.158.1–2, 160.3, Cyme and Pactyes; 3.83.2, to choose the next Persian King; 4.200.1, killing Arcesilaus III in Barca; 5.76, two Dorian invasions for good of Athenian *plethos*; 8.34, whole *plethos* of Boeotians medized after Thermopylae.
- <sup>18</sup> 3.80.6 cf. 83.1, Persian debate; 3.142.3, Maeandrius and Samos; 5.37.2–38, Aristagoras and Miletus. This I think is ‘equality of law’, connected with *nomos*, not ‘equality of distribution’, connected with the basic sense of *nemein* (though probably *nomos* is etymologically linked with *nemein*): see Ostwald 1969: 9–10, 61. Otanes contrasts this with the monarch who disturbs traditional *nomaia* (institutions), does violence to women and kills men without a fair trial (3.80.5); Solon claimed to have written *thesmoi* (statutes) for ‘bad and good’, i.e. men of the lower and the upper class, alike (fr. 36.21–3 West *ap.* [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 12.4. For the use of *isonomie* here see n. 27, below.
- <sup>19</sup> 5.78.1, Athens. Herodotus never uses the more emphatic *parrhesia* (unfettered speech).
- <sup>20</sup> 5.92.α.1, contrasted by Socles of Corinth with Sparta’s proposal to reinstate Hippias.
- <sup>21</sup> 3.62.1, 129.3 and 130.1, 140.3.
- <sup>22</sup> 3.142–3, Samos; 4.161.3, Cyrene; 7.164.1, Cos; cf. 3.80.2, Otanes’ proposal in Persian debate.
- <sup>23</sup> 1.67.5, 6.50.2, Sparta; 5.85.1, 9.117, Athens; 6.14.3, Samos in Ionian Revolt; 8.135.2, 9.87.2, Thebes in 480–79; also 5.109.3, cf. 1.141.4, Ionians; 3.156.2, *ta koina* as the authorities in Babylon.
- <sup>24</sup> 5.66.1, 6.35.1, Athens; 6.66.2, Delphi; 9.2.3, Greek cities in general; cf. 5.97.1, Athens *edynasteue* next after Sparta; but contrast 6.39.2, local rulers of Chersonese; 2.32.3, *dynastai* among Nasamonies in Africa—on which see Munson 2001: 53 with n. 32.
- <sup>25</sup> For a sensitive recent discussion see Pelling 2002. He thinks Herodotus’ insistence on its authenticity is addressed to ‘the incredulity of those who had heard of the debate before Herodotus’ (124), and, while noting the suggestion that it is derived from a Persian debate of Protagoras (see particularly Lasserre 1976), he thinks that Herodotus’ debate was not directly transplanted from Protagoras’ (139).
- <sup>26</sup> But Pelling remarks, ‘This is indeed a debate, not so much on “the constitutions”, more on “tyranny”’ (2002: 139), and he suggests that *isonomie* was a term of suitably wide application to be used for the contrast with tyranny here (135–7).
- <sup>27</sup> How and Wells i. 277–8; Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 471–3, quoting 472.
- <sup>28</sup> Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 472–3.
- <sup>29</sup> 1.59.3, contr. [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 13.4–5, Plut. *Sol.* 13.1–3 [in the wrong context] and 29.1.
- <sup>30</sup> 5.30.1, 6.88–91.1. In 5.77.2 *hippobotai* (horse-rearers) is the local name of the *pachees* of Chalcis whose land is given to Athenian cleruchs c.506. Aristophanes uses *pachys* of rich men in *Eq.* 1139, *V.* 288, *Pax* 639; cf. the recent English expression ‘fat cats’. This is a usage which perhaps was at first pejorative but is not obviously so in Herodotus’ instances of it.
- <sup>31</sup> 7.155–6. Wells 1923: 153 mistakenly considers the episode in Aegina the only one of this kind.
- <sup>32</sup> 4.137.2, 6.43.3, Ionia; 6.131.1, Athens, on which cf. below, this section.
- <sup>33</sup> 3.142.3, Samos; 5.37.2, Miletus; 5.78.1, 92.α.1, Athens after the ending of the tyranny and the reforms of Cleisthenes.
- <sup>34</sup> 3.80.2, Persia; 3.142.3. Samos; 4.161.3, Cyrene; 7.164.1, Cos.
- <sup>35</sup> Wells 1923: 153. Cf. recently Moles 2002: 50, and 2007: 264.
- <sup>36</sup> See above p. 266 with n. 8.
- <sup>37</sup> On Socles’ speech see the discussion of Moles 2007. Moles notes (264, 267 with n. 104) that Socles has a significant name, ‘fame-saver’, which is not otherwise attested and may be invented; but he notes also the significant names of Isagoras and Aristagoras (259), and I do not think anybody would doubt that they existed and bore the names which Herodotus gives them.
- <sup>38</sup> Cf. Thuc. 3.62.3, to be mentioned below in connection with Thebes, 4.78.3, 126.2, 6.38.3. For Herodotus’ use of *dynast-* cf.

above, ‘Herodotus’ Key Terms’ p. 268 with n. 24.

<sup>39</sup> 5.30.1, 6.88–91.1, 7.155–6.

<sup>40</sup> For a similar episode later cf. Epidamnus in or before 435, where ‘the *demos* drove out the *dynatoi* (powerful)’ (Thuc. 1.24.5), and it appears from the reaction of the mother city, Corcyra, that the *dynatoi* were those who had the stronger links with Corcyra.

<sup>41</sup> Robinson 1997; cf. for the period after 480 Robinson 2011.

<sup>42</sup> Macan IV–VI i. 346; ‘democratic movement’ accepted i. 348; Macan VII–IX. i. 1.215–18.

<sup>43</sup> Figueira 1981: 306–11, quoting 308, 309–10; cf. Figueira 1991: 158.

<sup>44</sup> Irwin 2011a–b at 395–6.

<sup>45</sup> Still in a commanding position, e.g. 5.38.2, 98.1, 99 (and indeed in the message to the Paeonians, 98.2, he is still ‘tyrant’), until he appointed a deputy/successor and departed to Myrcinus, 126.1.

<sup>46</sup> See Burn 1962: 222. Berve 1967: i. 89–122 with ii. 571–90 discusses and lists all the tyrants of western Asia Minor and the offshore islands, from the earliest times until after the Ionian Revolt (and believes that Mardonius’ *demokratiai* were democracies: ii. 581).

<sup>47</sup> Cf. 5.91.1, where the Spartans are led to their plan to reinstate Hippias by the thought that the Athenian race when free could become of equal weight (*isorrhopos*) to themselves but when subject to tyranny it was weak and submissive. 78 repeats the earlier remark in order to close a ring, and the fact that it is placed after Cleisthenes does not imply that Herodotus is here thinking of what Cleisthenes did.

<sup>48</sup> But Gray, 2007: 219–25 at 219 n. 46, thinks it was not by Cleisthenes but by the tyrants that the *demos* had previously been spurned. I agree with Gray that Herodotus’ primary purpose in comparing Cleisthenes with his grandfather was to focus on his being motivated by hatred of the Ionians.

<sup>49</sup> This is in the chapter which ends with Herodotus’ one mention of Pericles, as Liz Irwin stresses to me. Munson 2001: 57–9, remarks on the appearance here of Pericles the tyrannical leader of Athens the tyrannical city (cf. n. 11, above).

<sup>50</sup> Plut. *De Her. Mal.* 863 A suggests that Herodotus invented accusations in order to deny them but leave some mud sticking; cf. e.g. R. Thomas 1989: 265–6; Moles 2002: 40–2.

<sup>51</sup> The two notions of adding the *demos* to one’s *hetaireia* and the ingratitude of the *demos* both reappear in [Pl.] *Ax.* 369 A–B, with reference to the trial after the battle of Arginusae in 406.

<sup>52</sup> In Sparta Cleomenes, who rejects Aristagoras’ appeal, is not favourably described by Herodotus (5.42.1, 48), and in the end he is saved from corruption only by his daughter Gorgo (51). Munson 2001: 206–7 remarks that Athens’ *isegorie* leads to a bad result in this case but to a good result in the interpretation of the ‘wooden walls’ oracle (7.140–3).

<sup>53</sup> Munson 2001: 53–6; Gray 2007: 219–25 at 219 n. 46.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. above p. 267 with n. 14.

<sup>55</sup> See e.g. Rhodes 1981: 253–4; 2010: 40–4. For a juxtaposition of different views of Cleisthenes see Raaflaub et al. 2007.

<sup>56</sup> Cleisthenes, [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 29.3 (but note that according to Plut. *Cim.* 15.3 in 462/1 the democrats accused Cimon of stirring up ‘the *aristokratia* of the time of Cleisthenes’); four hundred *kata ta patria*, [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 31.1. For a somewhat schematic account of who was regarded as the founding hero of the democracy when see Ruschenbusch 1958. In Herodotus’ Persian debate Otanes says that a monarch upsets the *nomaia patria* (traditional institutions), while Darius argues that when the *patrioi nomoi* (traditional laws) are in a good state they should not be annulled (3.80.5, 82.5): I do not find it a problem for dating Herodotus’ death in the 420s (above, p. 266 with n. 9) that this points to talk of *patrioi nomoi* before the *patrios politeia* (traditional constitution) became a matter for dispute in Athens.

<sup>57</sup> 4.163.2, schol. inscr. b to Pind. *Pyth.* iv, [Arist.] *Cyr. Pol.* fr. 17 Dilts, the last using ‘democracy’.

<sup>58</sup> Hornblower 2011: 66, noting further upheavals later.

<sup>59</sup> Sherwin-White 1978: 33–4, citing 7.99.2.

<sup>60</sup> The speech of Socles of Corinth uses *oligarchie* of the Bacchiad regime of archaic times and contrasts tyranny and *isokratie* in Socles’ own time: cf. n. 13, with n. 20, above).

<sup>61</sup> Fornara 1971b: 49; cf. ‘Introduction’, pp. 265–6 above.

<sup>62</sup> Fornara 1971b: 49 with n. 22, cf. 50 with nn. 24–5, citing the similar views of Jacoby 1913: 357, Macan VII–IX i. 1.130. In 7.135 the two Spartans sent to Persia for execution make the contrast between slavery and *eleutherie*.

<sup>63</sup> Fornara 1971b: 50.

<sup>64</sup> Stadter 2006 finds both positive and negative in Herodotus’ portrayals of both Sparta and Athens. See here also Blösel, Chapter

11, this volume.

<sup>65</sup> Fornara 1971b: 50–1 n. 25.

<sup>66</sup> Fornara 1971b: 46.

<sup>67</sup> Fornara 1971b: 50 n. 24.

<sup>68</sup> Fornara 1971b: 51 n. 27.

I thank the organizers for inviting me to join in this enterprise and for commenting on successive drafts, and all those with whom I discussed Herodotus in New York; and I am delighted to salute Charles Fornara, whom I first met many years ago when I persuaded him on one of his few ventures outside the USA to visit the English Durham. My particular thanks to Liz Irwin: this is still not the paper which she would have written, but her comments have made me read more and think harder, and have made this a better paper than it would otherwise have been.

I am, of course, aware that a narratorial *persona* may differ from the actual person behind the narration, but since we have no opinions of Herodotus the person to contrast with those of ‘Herodotus’ the narrator, I use such expressions as ‘Herodotus thinks’ as shorthand for ‘Herodotus’ narratorial *persona* appears to think’.