THE THUCYDIDEAN TETRALOGY (1.67–88)

A new look at Thucydides' account of the debate at Sparta motivating the Spartan declaration of war (1.67–88) may provide a footnote to valuable past discussion.[1] Chief concerns about the debate have always been (1) the uniqueness of the four-speech set-up; (2) the oddity of an Athenian embassy in attendance at a Peloponnesian League meeting; and (3) the unlikelihood that any detailed report of speeches made to the Peloponnesian League or Spartan assembly came to Athens. Thucydides' judgement concerning the cause of the Peloponnesian War is far more likely to have been based on his knowledge of past and present relations between Athens and Sparta and members of the Peloponnesian League (*ξυμπᾶσα γνώμη*) than on any information about an actual debate (*τὰ ἀληθῶς λεχθέντα*). But for *τὰ δέοντα* he needed a confrontation which would not only dramatize both opposition and characters of Sparta and Athens but also put them in historical context, that is, in their Persian War roles as recorded by Herodotus. Only in this way is it possible to explain peculiarities of this confrontation which appear to duplicate characteristics of the Herodotean debate involving Athens and Sparta before the battle of Plataea. Thuc. 1.67–88 is like Hdt. 8.140–4 in comprising four speeches of which the first (A) is answered by the third (C1) and the second (B) is answered by the fourth (C2). In each case C1 and C2 are spoken by representatives of a single people: with the Athenians in Herodotus' debate answering two different peoples, and with two different Spartans in Thucydides answering two different peoples.

So let us look for a moment at Herodotus 8.140–4 both as a possible model for a four-speech debate and as providing historical background for Athenian–Spartan relations. The first two speeches exemplify a frequent Herodotean pattern, that of *πειθώ* and wise adviser. The most famous example is that of Mardonius and Artabanus addressing Xerxes (7.9–10) about the invasion of Greece, but more generally significant is that with which Herodotus concludes his history: Artembares tempting the Persians to move to a fairer and richer land, and Cyrus warning that soft lands make soft men (9.122).[2] In this instance the first speaker is Alexander king of Macedon who, quoting from both Mardonius and Xerxes, attempts to persuade the Athenians to come to terms with the Persians and enjoy their patronage. The Spartans make the second speech, of wise advice, warning against submission and urging Greek solidarity. Details must come later but for quick comparison note in the Thucydidean tetralogy the Corinthians' urging of war and the Athenians' warning against it. In both cases there are special arrangements for the inclusion of the second speech in the particular context: in Hdt. 8.141 only because the Athenians delayed negotiations with Alexander till Spartan envoys arrived could the latter take part in the debate; in Thuc. 1.72 only because Athenian envoys were present in Sparta on other business could

[1] E. Schwartz, *Das Geschichtswerk des Thukydides* (Bonn, 1919), pp. 102–24; A. Andrewes, 'Thucydides and the causes of the war', *CQ* 9 (1959), 223–39; R. Sealey, 'The causes of the Peloponnesian war', *CP* 70 (1975), 89–109; K. J. Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* V (Oxford, 1981), app. 2, pp. 415–23; P. J. Rhodes, 'Thucydides on the causes of the Peloponnesian war,' *Hermes* 115 (1987), 154–64; E. Badian, 'Thucydides and the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war: a historian's brief', in *From Plataea to Potidaea* (Baltimore, 1993), pp. 125–62.

[2] Other Herodotean examples include: Candaules and Gyges (1.8.2–4); Delphic oracle and Sandanis (1.53.3; 56.1); Tomyris and Croesus (1.206–7); Oroetes and Polycrates' daughter (3.122.3–4–124.2); Aristagoras and Gorgo (5.49; 51).

they think it best 'not to make a defence against the Corinthian charges but advise due deliberation'.

The second pair of speeches in the Herodotean dialogue are both spoken by the Athenians, one arguing against the first speech of the first pair, that of Alexander, and the other answering the first pair's second speech, that of the Spartans. The parallel in Thucydides is clear: both of the second pair of speeches are spoken by the Spartans (two different Spartans, to be sure), with the first (Archidamus) arguing against the Corinthians and the second (Sthenelaidas) answering the Athenians. One real difference is that while all four Herodotean speeches seem to have the same setting, those in Thucydides are divided between a meeting of the Peloponnesian League and that of the Spartan assembly. But surely this is a difference that helps to mark in still another way the contrast between Athens and Sparta, between an open and a closed society.

The overall pattern of the two dialogues is both unusual and as identical as the different circumstances allow. Those very different circumstances make it very unlikely that the similarities are accidental. Rather it seems that Thucydides in attempting both to show the causes of conflict that led to the war and to give historical depth to the relations between the two principals purposely echoed the Herodotean tetralogy, thereby producing a set of speeches otherwise unparalleled in his work and one in which the internal mechanics are unusually complex.

First we must ask if the parallelism between the two tetralogies extends to details of argument and subject matter in the individual speeches as well as to outward form. Only if there is significant evidence of that will it be worthwhile to inquire about the extent to which Thucydides knew and respected Herodotus' work enough to make such echoing likely. Looking at the contents of the first speeches, that of Alexander in Herodotus (8.140) and that of the Corinthians in Thucydides (1.68–71), we immediately see three things which they have in common. Both are pure *πειθώ*, although to opposite effect: Alexander urges Athens to accept peace and alliance with Persia, promising independence and recompense for injuries suffered; the Corinthians urge Sparta to make war on Athens, citing her duty to defend her allies and rein in Athenian aggression. Alexander supports the offer of peace with two guarantees (from both the Persian king and the commander Mardonius); the Corinthians strengthen their demand for war by citing two losses already suffered (Corcyra and Potidaea). And both Alexander and the Corinthians make a point of contrasting the two peoples between whom they would make peace or war in order to drive home both the need therefor and its inevitablility: Alexander emphasizing the great power and inexhaustible resources of Persia compared with the weakness and isolation of Athens; the Corinthians insisting on Spartan passivity and slowness in comparison with Athenian quick aggressiveness. Moreover, by citing the roles played by both Athens and Sparta in the Persian War to emphasize their differences, the Corinthians seem to hark back to the earlier debate as recorded by Herodotus.

It may be admitted that the similarities are there, but at the same time it may be objected that as fairly common elements to be expected in speeches of persuasion they do not constitute evidence that Thucydides had the Herodotean debate in mind when composing the Corinthian speech.[3] And yet the role assigned by the Corinthians to

[3] I use 'composing' with Thuc. 1.22.1 well in mind, for what reports Thucydides can have had of any speeches made in either the Peloponnesian League meeting or the Spartan assembly will not have been very detailed, only in this case perhaps 'the usual complaints about Sparta's inactivity' with the rest to be supplied by *τὰ δέοντα*.

Athens was at the same time both so apposite and so opposite to that played in the Herodotean debate that intention and design must have played a part: there as saviour of Greece both bearing up under Persian destruction and standing firm against Persian seduction; here as potential destroyer of Greek freedom by both its active genius and its overbearing exuberance.

Let us assume then for the moment that Thucydides, in formulating τὰ δέοντα in speeches presenting Spartan motivation for a declaration of war on Athens, wished to ground it firmly in past actions and relations of the two powers. The obvious source was Herodotus' Ἱστορίη, and the most striking passage illustrating characters as well as comparative roles of Sparta and Athens in a time of Greece's greatest danger was the fourfold debate in 8.140–4. It would have appealed to him as a splendid backdrop suggestive of the two powers' later roles and development, and he may have thought that with a close imitation of it he could best ground the causes of the later war between them on their basic roles in the liberation of all Greece from foreign domination and show their growth as separate powers in disengaging development. Furthermore, the special format of the Herodotean debate (with Alexander's πειθώ, with the Spartans' wise advice, and with the two Athenian speeches answering these) would allow not only for some form of debate contrasting motivation for war with some arguments advising against it but also for two Spartan voices showing the split in readiness and resolve.

Continuing then with the comparison between the two tetralogies and traces of possible adaptation, we look to the second speeches, that of the Spartans in Hdt. 8.142 and that of the Athenians in Thuc. 1.73–8. Just as the Spartans advise the Athenians to resist Persian peace overtures, so the Athenians warn the Spartans against Corinthian war-mongering. The reciprocal exchange of advisors and advisees (Spartans advising Athenians; Athenians advising Spartans) and its echo in the opposition between what each warns against (peace vs. war) suggest design more than happenstance. And in both cases the advisor points out the advisee's responsibility for the present situation: the Spartans say that the Athenians brought the Persian invasion on themselves; the Athenians point out that it was the Spartans' own failure to act that resulted in Athenian aggrandizement and empire. Moreover, both warners are concerned with justification of their own stance: the Spartans say that past Athenian action in freeing Greeks justifies their expectation that Athens will save them now from slavery; the Athenians' justification of their empire is far more detailed. And it is here that Thucydides' ingenuity in adapting the Herodotean debate to explain the causes of the Peloponnesian War is most apparent: by putting in Athenian mouths a boastful account of their empire-building he makes dramatic what elsewhere he states baldly (1.23.6: 'The truest cause, but least publicized, I consider to be the great growth of the Athenians exciting Spartan fears which made war inevitable.'). The Athenian recital of their achievements and aggression, however they justified it, is openly evocative of Spartan fears and constitutes a clear provocation to war.

One final point should be made about the first two speeches in both tetralogies: as Athens is not only characterized in some detail but also contrasted with the tyranny of Alexander and Mardonius by both Alexander and the Spartans in the Herodotean debate, so also is Sparta both characterized in withering detail by the Athenians as well as the Corinthians and contrasted with Athens as to character and effectiveness by both.

The ways in which the second pair of speeches in the Thucydidean tetralogy can be compared with the Herodotean third and fourth speeches are necessarily as different

as the disparity between the two situations requires. But in both there are two responses, one to the persuader and the other to the warner. In Herodotus the Athenians proudly refuse to give in to Alexander's plea and surrender to the Persians while they are disdainful of the Spartans' mistrust of their valour as defenders of Greece and its gods. They also somewhat contemptuously reject Sparta's offer of a refuge for noncombatants and urge cooperation against the common enemy of a more active kind. In Thucydides the Spartans too have two reactions, but here the reactions are personified by individuals, with King Archidamus in answer to the Corinthians admitting Spartan responsibility for members of the Peloponnesian League but personifying Spartan deliberation and the need for preparation. The ephor Sthenelaidas, on the other hand, is outraged by the arrogance of the Athenians' warning and urges an immediate declaration of war.

All in all, the neatness of the match between the two debates excludes coincidence and seems to make it certain that Thucydides deliberately designed the tetralogy at Sparta to echo the earlier conflict, reflecting the principles and parts played there by both Sparta and Athens. Then, too, what follows in Thucydides provides further confirmation of his intention, as it were, both to ground the coming conflict in rivalries of the past and actually to link the two together with a narrative of intervening events. That is, in the context of a Thucydidean debate which echoes a Herodotean account of Athenian–Spartan relations in the context of the Persian War, the Pentecontaetia (1.89–118) serves a double function: it both provides exemplification of the Athenian growth that motivated the Spartan decision for war and it completes the transition from Persian War politics to the politics of the oncoming Peloponnesian War. Although it is generally assumed that this survey takes up where Herodotus leaves off, there is more point to that starting-place if Thucydides has already grounded later Athenian–Spartan relations on the Spartan–Athenian confrontation in Herodotus 8.140–4.

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VERGIL, *AENEID* 5.458–60

It appears to have gone unnoticed that the simile used by Vergil at *Aeneid* 5.458–60 was appropriated by him from Apollonius Rhodius.

In the boxing match between Entellus and Dares, Entellus recovers from a fall and begins to pummel his opponent, driving him about the 'ring', delivering blow after blow on the hapless Dares. Vergil introduces here a simile, *quam multa grandine nimbi / culminibus crepitant, sic densis ictibus heros / creber utraque manu pulsat versatque Dareta*. The repeated blows crashing down upon Dares are like hailstones beating on the roof of a house. Vergil has essentially lifted this simile from Apollonius 2.1080–8. The Argonauts prepare to defend themselves against the attack of the birds of Ares. They lock their shields together and raise them over their heads. The birds approach and shoot their 'arrows' at the Argonauts, but the arrows clang harmlessly on the shields. Apollonius compares the shooting of the arrows to the falling of hail on the roof of a house. There are verbal echoes: πυκινὴν . . . χάλαζαν (1083)/*multa grandine* (458), τεγέων ὕπερ (1085)/*culminibus* (459), κόναβον . . . εἰσαίοντες (1085)/*crepitant* (459), πυκιναὶ πτεραί (1088)/*densis ictibus* . . . *creber* (459–60). There are, of course, descriptions of hailstorms in ancient literature,[1] but the use of such a description in a

[1] See e.g. Vergil's at *Georgics* 1.449.