

Enargeia* and the Spectator in Greek Historiography

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If the reader then imagines that he can *see* the events happen (*horan ta legomena*), and praises this, the work of our historical Phidias has reached its consummation, and won its due meed of praise.

Lucian, *How to Write History* 51¹

Lucian's ideal historian is like the sculptor Phidias both in the sense that he gives shape to the "raw material" (*hylê*) of history, and in the sense that his work has a powerful visual appeal for the reader. "[The historian] has to organize his facts (*ta pepragmena*) skillfully," Lucian stresses, "and express them as vividly (*enargestata*) as he can" (*Hist. conscr.* 51). In his emphasis on the *vividness* of the historian's representation and on the reader's "visual perception" of the events he recounts, Lucian raises the issue of *enargeia*, the technical term that ancient critics employ to describe how language creates a vivid, visual presence, bringing the event described, and all the emotions that attend its perception, "before the reader's eyes."² The term *enargeia* and the

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¹I employ throughout the translation of Russell in Russell and Winterbottom 544-45, with some slight alterations, e.g., here I translate *tis akroômenos* as "the reader" rather than as "the hearer."

²For *enargeia* and its various synonyms in classical rhetoric, see Lausberg §810-19 (*evidentia*), and Zanker 297-311. As Meijering points out, strictly speaking, *enargeia* "is not really a property of the text, but of the visual image suggested by it. . . . [I]t was quite legitimate to say that a writer aims at ἐνάργεια by means of his text, trying to provide his words with the capacity to 'show' the subject-matter ἐναργῶς, i.e., to produce an ἐναργῆς φαντασία. [*However, in due course this quality of the text also came to be called ἐνάργεια* . . ." (29-30; my italics).

phenomenon to which it refers are central to the study of *ekphrasis*, where literary and visual representations approximate each other in the literary description of a work of visual art.³ Yet Lucian's advice to the historian—and the rich rhetorical tradition on which it depends—show that *enargeia* is also applicable to descriptions of every sort and to the narratives of history, oratory, and ancient fiction.⁴ As the Greek critic Demetrius observes in perhaps the most systematic treatment of *enargeia* to survive from antiquity, “every representation (*pasa mimêsis*) contains some measure of *enarges*” (*Eloc.* 219).

What follows is intended in part as a contribution to the understanding of the *enargeia* of ancient narrative prose. My particular concern is with how the representation of spectators in a historical narrative both enhances the “visibility” of the larger narrative scene and comments implicitly on the processes of reading and representation. At the risk of sounding *cliché*, I offer a post-structuralist reading of Greek historiography, one attentive to the ways in which these texts invariably call attention to their own formation. For classicists familiar with the conventions of Greek historiography, this type of reading is not as radical or reductive as it might seem at first blush, since a critical self-consciousness is germane to ancient history-writing, as perhaps best evidenced by the kind of running commentary that Polybius keeps on the goals of his history and on the pitfalls of the historiography practiced by his predecessors. The ancient historian's self-consciousness is no doubt due to his genre's demand for accuracy over and against a romantic or fictional account of the past—its concern for *akribeia* even at the expense of *to mythôdes*, as articulated by Thucydides in his influential prolegomenon (1.22). Versions of this opposition between “fact” and “fiction” will also enter into my argument, but primarily as such distinctions have been called into question by scholars who challenge even Thucydides' claim of presenting simply “the facts themselves” (*auta ta erga*: 1.21.2).⁵ It is appropriate, then, in light of his traditional appeal as a “scientific” historian, that Thucydides should provide the key texts for the discussion that follows.

³For *ekphrasis* of visual art and the theoretical problems it raises, see Fowler 25-35, and the abundant bibliography cited ad loc. The fundamental study remains Friedländer 1-103. In the *progymnasmata* of the Second Sophistic, *ekphrasis* is virtually synonymous with description; see Friedländer 84-85, and Bartsch 7-10.

⁴For *enargeia* as a “virtue” of narrative (*aretê diêgeseôs*), see Lausberg §319. For *enargeia* and ancient oratory, see Eden 71-74 and 87-94. For *enargeia* and Hellenistic historiography, see Scheller 57-61, and, with particular reference to Lucian's discussion, Avenarius 130-40.

⁵See Connor's review of recent developments in Thucydidean scholarship (1977: 289-98).

I. Thucydidean *Enargeia*

For later historians, Thucydides' greatest legacy is contained in his use of speeches, not only to highlight differences that separate opponents but also to expose underlying purposes and causes, giving the *History* as a whole a philosophical and *universalizing* tone. But Thucydides also showed special skill in his narratives of *particular* events, narratives that often contain an element of reversal or surprise, and the "unexpected" (*paralogos*) looms large in the historian's understanding of the forces that shape historical destiny (see Pouncey 16). The most polished narrative of the *History*—and the narrative that encompasses the greatest "reversal"—is no doubt the account of the Sicilian expedition (Bks. 6 and 7) which, undertaken when the Athenians were still at the height of their power, ended in a defeat so decisive that the battle in retrospect would seem to have "prefigured" the outcome of the longer war. "These men had now suffered very nearly what they themselves had inflicted upon their enemies at Pylos" (7.71.7). Thucydides is writing of the naval defeat that the Athenians suffered in the Syracusan harbor, and he is thinking of the ironic reversal of circumstances that attended the destruction of the Athenian fleet. His comment is preceded by a lavishly visual scene, famous, as we shall see, even in antiquity, in which he describes how the vicissitudes of the sea battle are registered by those Athenian forces who watch from ashore. Since the narrative of the expedition begins with the spectacle of the Athenian fleet as seen by the townspeople who look on from the Piraeus (6.30-31), it is only fitting that the climactic moment of the expedition should also be told from the perspective of spectators and their emotional responses to the sight of that same fleet destroyed. Their reactions are not uniform (7.71.3), owing to their closeness to the spectacle and to the fact that they are not all seeing the same scene of fighting: those who see victory rejoice, those who see defeat lament, and those who watch where the battle is evenly balanced are kept in a prolonged state of agonizing suspense, "continually on the verge of escape or destruction."

What this passage has in common with the earlier Piraeus scene is an emphasis on human psychology, perhaps even psychology of the crowd. Thucydides seems particularly interested in the crowd's conflicting and volatile emotions, its almost desperate susceptibility to what it sees and to whatever imaginings those sights inspire (V. Hunter 1988: 17-30). The association of conflicting emotions with the visual experience is a topic to which Thucydides

returns repeatedly, as if to forge some connection between visual perception and emotional subjectivity. "Vision in Thucydides is the privileged sense," writes W. R. Connor, "most commonly invoked and most directly linked to the emotions."⁶ In the Piraeus scene, the outstanding spectacle of the Athenian fleet all but overwhelms the Athenians' misgivings about the wisdom of the expedition as a whole, and the visual perception works to restore confidence in the decision they had made the day before: conflicting feelings of hope and lamentation are alleviated by the impressive sight (*opsis*) of the powerful Athenian fleet, a spectacle (*thea*) that surpasses all belief (6.31.1). And so powerful are the emotions stirred by the spectacle of the naval battle at Syracuse that some of the spectators experience afflictions more oppressive than the wounds suffered by those actually engaged in the fighting: "while others. . . were more broken by the sight (*opsis*) of what was being done than were the men actually engaged (*tôî ergôî*) in the fighting" (Warner trans.: καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν δρωμένων τῆς ὄψεως καὶ τὴν γνώμην μᾶλλον τῶν ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ ἐδουλοῦντο, 7.71.3). Here again, as in the Piraeus "harbor scene," Thucydides turns our attention from the spectacle itself to the psychology of the spectators who look on, and he draws into relief the disparity between the incidents (*ergon*) and their visual perception (*opsis*).

The emphasis on audience, spectacle, and reversal in these and in related passages has inspired Thucydidean scholars like de Romilly to speak of various "theaters" of action in Thucydides, or to argue, as Cornford has done, that his narrative technique owes more to the dramatists of the fifth century than to his generic predecessor Herodotus.⁷ Inevitably, readings of this sort raise the much-vexed question of "tragic history," the notion, derived largely from the derisory comments of Polybius (see 2.56-2.63), that a theory of history-writing, based on principles drawn from Aristotle's *Poetics*, was articulated and applied by students of Aristotle, or his students' students, most notably

⁶Connor 1985: 10. On the "vision theme" in Thucydides, see further Connor's remarks (1984: 55 n. 10) and Macleod 140-58, esp. 144.

⁷See de Romilly 123, and (treating the battle of the Syracusan harbor) 161-65. Cornford 129-52 detects the influence of Aeschylus on Thucydides, while Finley argues for a connection between Thucydides and Euripides, see esp. 322, where Finley suggests (citing *Supp.* 719-20 and *Ph.* 1388-89) that Euripides "observes, as Thucydides does at the height of the struggle at Syracuse, the varied emotions of the onlookers." Macleod discusses several passages from the Sicilian expedition narrative (including 6.31 and 7.71) as evidence of tragic and dramatic elements in Thucydides' *History*, but he identifies Herodotus, and ultimately, Homer, as the literary influences on Thucydides, rather than the fifth-century tragedians.

Duris of Samos in the early third century.⁸ The visual and “tragic” character of Thucydides’ narrative was noted by critics even in antiquity. Indeed, Plutarch quotes the description of the battle in the Syracusan harbor (Thuc. 7.71) as evidence of Thucydides’ ability to make the reader (*akroatês*) a spectator (*theatês*) of the events he describes: “Assuredly Thucydides is always striving for this vividness (*enargeia*) in his writing, since it is his desire to make the reader a spectator, as it were, and to produce vividly (*energiasasthai*) in the minds of those who peruse his narrative the emotions of amazement and consternation which were experienced by those who beheld them.”⁹ This passage is widely quoted, but its precise interpretation is subject to some dispute. Fornara focuses on Plutarch’s subsequent examples of Thucydidean *enargeia* (which include the description of Demosthenes and Brasidas at Pylos, in addition to the battle in the Syracusan harbor) to argue that the passage identifies the subject matter appropriate for “tragic history”: for Plutarch, as for Duris, “vivid writing” (*enargeia*) was grounded in “the description of surprising turns and calamitous events” (130). Yet the larger context of the passage—a discussion of the high degree of realism characteristic of Athenian art—suggests that it is the *realistic character* of Thucydides’ narrative that Plutarch singles out for praise. He appeals to Simonides’ analogy of the verbal and visual arts in order to stress that literature, like painting, has its end in realistic representation: “Even though artists with colour and design, and writers with words and phrases, represent the same subjects, they differ in the material and the manner of their imitation; and yet the underlying aim of both is one and the same” (Babbitt trans., *De glor. Ath.* 347a: εἰ δ’ οἱ μὲν χρώμασι καὶ σχήμασιν οἱ δ’ ὀνόμασι καὶ λέξεσι τὰυτὰ δηλοῦσιν, ὕλη καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως διαφέρουσι, τέλος δ’ ἀμφοτέροις ἐν ὑπόκειται). Simonides’ famous dictum (that “poetry is articulate painting, and painting is inarticulate poetry”) is also cited in *How to Study Poetry*, where again Plutarch’s emphasis is on how both painting and its “counterpart” (*antistrophos*) poetry have a common goal in

⁸The case for Duris as a theorist of tragic history has been advanced most recently by Fornara, who also suggests that Duris’ interest in emotions and spectacles is “reminiscent of Thucydides” (130). For a different assessment of Duris (and a good summary of the extensive scholarship relevant to the problem of tragic history), see Kébric 11-18.

⁹*De glor. Ath.* 347a: ὁ γοῦν Θουκυδίδης αἰὲν τῷ λόγῳ πρὸς ταύτην ἀμιλλᾶται τὴν ἐνάργειαν, οἷον θεατὴν ποιῆσαι τὸν ἀκροατὴν καὶ τὰ γινόμενα περὶ τοὺς ὁρῶντας ἐκπληκτικὰ καὶ ταρακτικὰ πάθη τοῖς ἀναγινώσκουσιν ἐνεργάσασθαι λιχνευόμενος. I employ throughout the Teubner text of Nachstädt and the Loeb translation of Babbitt 501-3. For the relation of *energeia* (cf. ἐνεργάσασθαι) to *enargeia* and the inevitable confusion of the two terms, see Meijering 36-37 and 237 n. 70.

creating a convincing “likeness” (*homoiotês*) or realistic representation (*Quomodo adul.* 17f-18a).¹⁰

On this reading, *enargeia* is in the verbal realm the counterpart of verisimilitude in the visual arts, “the achievement of [a] persuasively lifelike description” (Leach 7). Ultimately, the poetics of realism that Plutarch seems to be espousing here sets as its implicit goal an aesthetics of illusion: the production of representations so like the originals that they become indistinguishable from reality. In classical criticism, the technical term for such illusionistic effect is *apatê*, and it is perhaps no accident that, in a discussion that follows closely on this description of Thucydidean *enargeia*, Plutarch appeals to Gorgias’ doctrine of *apatê* when he seeks to explain how tragedy affects its viewers.¹¹ While the concept of *apatê* is absent from Aristotle’s *Poetics* (perhaps because the cognitive value of Aristotelian *mimêsis* depends on the recognition of representations *qua* representations), the term remains associated with tragedy and is operative in Polybius’ effort to distinguish between tragedy and history (2.56.11-12). The measure of deception to which *apatê* refers is perhaps easiest to create in arts that have, like tragedy and painting, a visual medium (as any modern-day movie-goer will attest), and when Plato appeals to the dangers of artistic *apatê* as a part of his negative critique of *mimêsis*, the example he chooses is from the visual arts, namely the deceptive power of a realistic painting (of a carpenter) shown at a distance to children or to “simpletons” (*R.* 10.598c1). Illusionistic effects and deception can, in principle, also be created by narrative alone, as the reader visualizes the world that the text seeks to represent, but critics stress that this process is a far more complex one than the spectator’s apprehension of a work of visual art. “*Enargeia* differs from pictorial verisimilitude in the complexity of the receptive act it demands from the spectator,” writes Eleanor Leach, “in responding to pictorial verisimilitude, he needs only to perform the two simple and interrelated mental functions of identifying the subject and acknowledging its likeness to life, but in responding to *enargeia* his cognitive faculties approximate the painter’s act of giving form to the unseen” (7). It is difficult to determine the degree to which ancient critics were sensitive to the issues of reception that Leach is raising here, although later antiquity saw the

¹⁰See esp. 18a: ἡ δὲ μίμησις, ἂν τε περὶ φαῦλον ἂν τε περὶ χρηστὸν ἐφίκεται τῆς ὁμοιότητος, ἐπαινεῖται with the comment of Zanker 311: “the arts are analogous because they both in their different materials and means aim at the vivid and accurate depiction of the subject as it is in reality.”

¹¹*De glor. Ath.* 348c. On Gorgias and *apatê*, see Verdenius 116-28.

development of a notion of the imagination that theorized aesthetic response as a creative, mimetic process comparable to “the painter’s act of giving form to the unseen.”¹² What Pollitt has called “popular criticism” (63-66) was comfortable with facile comparisons of the verbal and visual arts—of the sort that informs Lucian’s conceit of the “historical Phidias”—unaware of the very different “cognitive faculties” that they engage in their audience: the differences between these two forms of *mimêsis*—as Plutarch’s own gloss on Simonides suggests—are principally perceived as a difference in “material and manner of imitation. . . the underlying aim of both is one and the same.”

As we shall see, ancient critics also tend to characterize literary response in terms that, to the modern critic, sound hopelessly hyperbolic, a phenomenon that perhaps reflects the ancient critic’s training in the rhetorical schools: criticism becomes yet another opportunity to practice the devices of persuasion. Plutarch’s discussion of Thucydides is a case in point, although it is cited by Walbank as evidence that “the ancient Greeks. . . reacted more directly and emotionally to both the written and spoken word than we normally do” (231). With even greater hyperbole than Plutarch employs, the poet Lucan appeals to the principle of *apatê* to lend a visual character to his narrative and to cultivate the *tragic* dimension of Pompey’s (*historical*) defeat: he hopes that his epic poem *Bellum Civile* will excite the hopes and fears of his future readers and that his narrative will be so compelling that “they will read spell-bound, as if it were not past but still to come; and all will side with you, Pompey” (“cum bella legentur, / spesque metusque simul perituraque vota movebunt, / attonitique omnes veluti venientia fata, / non transmissa, legent et adhuc tibi, Magne, favebunt,” 7.210-13). Historians frequently narrate events in the present tense in order to give a measure of immediacy to the action described, a phenomenon known as *metastasis* to the Greek rhetoricians (cf. Quint., *Inst.* 9.2.41) and discussed in some detail by “Longinus” (*Subl.* 25; see Russell 1964 ad loc.). Nevertheless, the act of narration—and by implication, the *narrative itself*, even more so a narrative recounting an *historical* event—always lags behind the events described, a feature noted by Plutarch in his gloss on Simonides: “for the actions which painters portray as taking place *at the moment* literature narrates and records *after they have taken place*” (Babbitt trans., *De glor. Ath.* 346f: ἄς γὰρ οἱ ζωγράφοι πράξεις ὡς γινομένας δεικνύουσι, τούτας οἱ λόγοι γεγενημένας διηγοῦνται καὶ συγγράφουσιν). Lucan points to the paradoxes created by a historical narrative that encroaches

¹²See Philostr., *VA* 2.22 with the discussion of Watson 59-95, esp. 63-64.

on the visual: the distinction between past and present events is collapsed into the moment of reading as a kind of visual perception. The reader's response of "hopes and fears" testifies to the magnitude of his deception (*apatê*): the conviction that past events—the *res gestae* that *are* history—still lie in the future, and have not yet transpired (*non transmissa*).¹³

In his treatment of Thucydidean *enargeia*, Plutarch does not limit the scope of his discussion to realism or to the types of illusion (*apatê*) that *enargeia* implies. He also seems to be sensitive to the interest in the link between vision and the emotions that, as we have seen, is evidenced by Thucydides' concentration on spectators and their response to what they see, details which—to the chagrin of some modern historians of antiquity—frequently command more of Thucydides' attention than the particulars of the spectacle seen.¹⁴ "The most effective historian," writes Plutarch, "is he who, *by a vivid representation of emotions* (*pathê*) and characters, makes his narrative like a painting. Assuredly Thucydides is always striving for this vividness" (Babbitt trans., *De glor. Ath.* 347A: τῶν ἱστορικῶν κράτιστος ὁ τὴν διήγησιν ὥσπερ γραφὴν πάθει καὶ προσώποις εἰδωλοποιήσας. ὁ γοῦν Θουκυδίδης αἰεὶ τῷ λόγῳ πρὸς ταύτην ἀμιλλᾶται τὴν ἐνάργειαν. . .). What gives a narrative *enargeia* is its representation of *pathê*, especially—as Plutarch's choice of the example of the Syracusan harbor scene might suggest—*pathê* that are attendant on visual perception. And it is precisely at this juncture that Plutarch introduces the notion of the reader's "spectatorship." The *enargeia* of a text is contingent upon the reader's experience of *pathê* like those suffered by the spectators of the original event: "[Thucydides] produce[s] vividly in the reader. . . the *emotions* (*pathê*) . . . which were experienced by those who beheld (τοὺς ὁρῶντας) them [sc. the events Thucydides is describing, e.g., the battle in the Syracusan harbor]."¹⁵ Plutarch seems to be pointing to a cor-

¹³On *enargeia* and the illusion of historical events "taking place" (*ginomena*) in the moment of reading, see also Plutarch's comment on the *enargeia* that informs Xenophon's description of the battle of Cunaxa (Plut., *Art.* 8.1 [= 1014f]) with the discussion of Meijering 30-31: τὴν δὲ μάχην ἐκείνην πολλῶν μὲν ἀπηγγελκότων, Ξενοφῶντος δὲ μονονουχὶ δεικνύοντος ὅψει καὶ τοῖς πράγμασιν ὥς οὐ γεγενημένοις, ἀλλὰ γινομένοις, ἐφιστάντος αἰεὶ τὸν ἀκροατὴν ἐμπαθῇ καὶ συγκινδυνεύοντα διὰ τὴν ἐνάργειαν...

¹⁴See W. S. Ferguson, *CAH* vol. 5 (Cambridge 1927) 308, of Thucydides 7.71, as quoted by Connor 1984: 196 n. 32: "Thucydides fails even to suggest the factors that determined the outcome...[he] turns our attention to the spectators on the shore, and leaves us to infer the manifold vicissitudes of the protracted struggle from the agony of fear, joy, anxiety."

¹⁵*De glor. Ath.* 347a (for the Greek text see above, n. 9); my translation follows the Loeb of Babbitt, which is accepted by Zanker 311 and by Meijering 31: the reader shares in the *spectator's* experience of *pathê*. By contrast, Fornara's translation seems to take *περὶ τοὺς*

respondence between the *pathê* of the reader and the emotions experienced by the spectators in the text. “The reactions of the audience,” as Hägg has written of similar scenes of spectatorship in Chariton’s romance, “are meant to call forth parallel feelings in the reader” (260).

II. *Enargeia* and the *Mise en Abyme*

This narrative technique of supplementing *ekphraseis* and extended narrative descriptions with an account of viewers who see the scene and with details of their often highly emotional response to what they see appears with some frequency in the Greek romance, as Hägg’s comment on Chariton might suggest. Perhaps the most detailed development of the spectator’s response is found in the celebrated opening scene of Heliodorus’ *Aithiopika*, where an extended description of carnage left after a battle is supplemented by a description of Egyptian bandits, who see the scene from a distance, and of their bewildered response to what they see (1.1.6-8). Earlier in this century, S. L. Wolff coined the term “pathetic optics” to refer to Heliodorus’ tendency to tell not only “how a thing looks. . .[but also] how the people who look at it look, how they open and close their eyes, shift their gaze from one point to another, and are affected in appearance by what they see. He [Heliodorus] is fond of describing persons, objects, and actions by means of the impression they make upon some observer, whose changes of countenance he describes in turn.”¹⁶ Wolff’s term has been recently revived by Bartsch (109-19) as part of a larger effort to align the descriptive techniques of the Greek novelists with the ekphrastic *progymnasmata* of the rhetors of the Second Sophistic, although the rhetors themselves frequently define *ekphrasis* with reference to the battle descriptions of Thucydides,¹⁷ and the novels contain passages that are clearly indebted to Thucydides’ *History*. This is especially true of Chariton’s romance *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, which is set in Sicily a generation after the Sicilian expedition and contains several scenes of spectatorship that are meant to recall

ὁρῶντας to refer to the *participants* in the battle: “eagerly desiring to infuse the dizzying and upsetting emotions of the *actual participants* [περὶ τοὺς ὁρῶντας] into the reader” (128). However, Fornara notes earlier in the course of his “reconstruction” of Duris’ theory of imitation that the pleasure of history lies in “realistic description, of the objective actions and *subjective reactions* of the historical characters” (124 n. 47; my italics).

¹⁶Wolff 177; for pathos generally in the Greek romance, and the representation of “mixed contrary emotions,” see Heiserman 120 and 125, and, in greater detail, Fusillo 201-21.

¹⁷See Spengel, vol. 2, 16-17 (Hermogenes), 46-49 (Aphthonius), and 118-19 (Theon).

Thucydides 6.31 and 7.71 (see R. Hunter). “Pathetic optics” may be part of what Greek historiography (and perhaps Thucydides in particular) contributed to the later genre of the Greek romance.

In the language of contemporary narratology, the structure of such narratives is that of *mise en abyme*, since the spectators who watch the scene (of ships embarking or at battle) are themselves part of a larger scene that includes the first. The term has its origins in criticism of the French novel, most particularly the *nouveau roman*, and it refers in a general way to “a miniature replica of a text embedded within that text; a textual part replicating, reflecting, or mirroring (one or more than one aspect of) the textual whole.”¹⁸ A simple—and obvious—example of the sort of textual replication to which *mise en abyme* refers is provided by the character in the text whose activity somehow resembles (“replicates” or “reflects”) the activity of the reader, namely, the character who listens to a story even as the reader “listens” to the larger story of the textual whole. A passage from Ctesias (*FGrH* 688 F 24) that the Greek critic Demetrius isolates as a narrative rich with *enargeia* is strongly suggestive of this sort of textual replication: a messenger delivers to Parysatis the news of Cyrus’ death so slowly that the reader, Demetrius asserts, “is forced to enter into the mother’s anguish.”¹⁹ Here again, *enargeia* is associated with *pathê* and with the representation of emotions, suffering that is experienced by an audience in the text and “replicated” by the reader.

The persistent theme of narratological readings has been how the double structure of the *mise en abyme* carries with it some measure of self-reflexivity or self-consciousness about the processes of reading and interpretation. Hence, Winkler argues of the enigmatic opening sequence of Heliodorus’ *Aithiopika* that the bandits’ perplexity at what they see on the Egyptian shore parallels and supports the reader’s own difficulty in deciphering the details of the novel, since the “aporetic” narrative strategy of the *Aithiopika* involves a delayed explanation of this opening scene until midway through book five.²⁰ It is

¹⁸Prince 53. The standard study of the topic (with a typology applied to *le nouveau roman*) is that of Dällenbach.

¹⁹See Demtr., *Eloc.* 216: μάλα ἥθικῶς καὶ ἐναργῶς τὸν τε ἄγγελον ἐμφήνας ἀκουσίως ἀγγελοῦντα τὴν συμφορὰν, καὶ τὴν μητέρα εἰς ἀγωνίαν ἐμβαλὼν καὶ τὸν ἀκούοντα. Trans. Innes in Russell and Winterbottom 210: “[By this delay Ctesias] has very realistically and vividly brought out the messenger’s unwillingness to announce the news and forced the reader to enter into the mother’s anguish.”

²⁰Winkler 93–158. Drawing on the participle that Heliodorus uses to describe the spectators at 1.1.6 (ἀποροῦντες), Winkler coins the term “aporetic style” to characterize Heliodorus’ narrative technique; see esp. 97 and 101.

conceivable, then, even within the parameters of *ancient* literary theory, that the spectators in Thucydides' text serve as an emblem for the reader, promoting our visualization of the events, as Plutarch's analogy between the reader and spectator would seem to suggest. But, as we shall see, it is equally true that the *mise en abyme*, in its self-reflexivity, can call attention to the artificialities (and shortcomings) of representation, creating as a consequence a text concerned with discourse over and *against* representation.

III. Reader and Spectator in Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Clearly the most interesting and most detailed commentary on the visual element in Thucydides is provided not by the Greek novelists, nor yet by the rhetors of the Second Sophistic, but by historians who employ the language and visual imagery of Thucydides to describe an entirely different set of historical circumstances and events. When the narrative of Cassius Dio, for example, reaches Sextus Pompeius' naval defeat by M. Agrippa in 33 B.C. (49.9-10), the author provides a description that is modeled closely on Thucydides' account of the Athenian defeat at Syracuse (7.71). The ancient habit of "embellish[ing] a history with borrowed descriptions. . . dressing up an historical picture as some artists dress up their sketches from nature" no doubt owes something to the *progymnasmata* of the rhetorical schools, and the practice has, quite predictably, been perceived as a sign of *weakness* in the historian, as one "who corrupts first history itself, and then the taste of the readers of history" (Arnold 96 n. 9). This criticism, which dates from the middle of the nineteenth century, assumes a hard and fast distinction between rhetoric and historiography that has been challenged by more recent scholarship on history-writing in antiquity. Such criticism does not allow that an author's borrowings from an earlier source can be part of a *creative* imitation: Arnold speaks of Dio's description as "copied. . . nearly word for word" from Thucydides, but on closer inspection this is hardly the case, and the ancient critics who theorize about imitation caution against mere verbal repetition (cf. Quint., *Inst.* 10.2.27-8). The importance of *imitatio* to the Greek and Latin literary traditions is widely recognized by classical scholars: its dynamics are particularly well-known to Latinists, who treat texts that were written in the shadow of Greek models and "Greek originals" (see Russell 1979: 1-16). Less often considered are the insights that imitations can provide into their models and, further still, the importance of imitations for the history of literary reception, including our own readings of particular works. A radical view—recently

advanced by Charles Martindale (7)—is that imitations figure significantly in the chain of receptions that make any “originary meaning” of a text irretrievable.

As we shall see, both vision and reception are thematized by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his use of Thucydides 7.71, as he recounts his version of the duel of the Horatii and Curiatii in book 3 of *Antiquitates Romanae*. This is, as in Livy (1.24-26), the story of a protracted duel between two sets of evenly matched triplets from the Roman and Alban camps, a suspenseful tale of Horatius’ single-handed victory over three Curiatii after two of his own brothers have been killed (*Ant. Rom.* 3.18.1-3.20.4).²¹ To this *peripeteia* is added another: entering the city triumphantly, Horatius kills his sister for mourning the death of one of the Curiatii he has slain, and though convicted of murder he is subsequently acquitted and purified of the blood guilt that his crime incurs (3.21.1-3.22.10). That the story as presented in Dionysius should owe much to Thucydides 7.71 is no surprise, since, in his own critical study of Thucydides, Dionysius singles out precisely the Syracusan harbor scene as a passage worthy of imitation (*Thuc.* 26).²² Hence the episode offers a unique opportunity, outside of Dionysius’ own critical writing on Thucydides, to compare the two authors’ “thought processes and methods of writing history”:²³ since he is in the first instance not a historian but a literary critic, Dionysius’ borrowings from Thucydides are accompanied by a conscious effort to recast his material in explicitly “tragic” and “visual” terms.

For as a literary critic Dionysius is, like Aristotle, sensitive to the cognitive pleasures of vision. “The understanding of every human takes pleasure at being led through words to the deeds,” writes Dionysius in his preface to book 11, “and that pleasure is derived not only from *hearing* things said, but also from *seeing* things being done” (ἡδεται γὰρ ἡ διάνοια παντὸς ἀνθρώπου χειραγωγουμένη διὰ τῶν λόγων ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα, καὶ μὴ μόνον ἀκούουσα τῶν

²¹For the story in pre-Augustan historiography and a brief comparison of the presentations in Livy and Dionysius (highly critical of the “empty rhetoric in which D. H. indulges”) see Ogilvie 106; for a more detailed assessment of both Livy’s and Dionysius’ versions, see Solodow 251-68. For a recent analysis of spectator and spectacle in Livy’s account, see Feldherr 24-36.

²²Although Dionysius’ imitation of Attic authors in the speeches of *Ant. Rom.* has been documented, a similar study of the narrative sections of his history is lacking; see Pritchett 128 n. 13. For Dionysius’ use of Thucydides and his place in the traditions of Greek historiography generally, see Schultze 123-43.

²³*Pace* Gabba 9: “Any contrast of Dionysius with Thucydides makes sense only because Dionysius wrote an important, partly critical, treatise on that author. It is quite impossible to make a comparison between the two historians in terms of ideals or political content, and the same may be said of their thought processes and the methods they used in writing history.”

λεγομένων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ πραττόμενα ὁρῶσα, *Ant. Rom.* 11.1.3).²⁴ The passage engages a familiar debate concerning the pleasure proper to history (*hêdonê*, or more frequently, *terpnon*), and hence should be read in the context of a larger tradition that includes Thucydides' rejection of the *mythôdes* from his history (1.22.4), Polybius' arguments for the combination of practical benefit and pleasure afforded by reading history (1.4.11), and Lucian's effort to subordinate pleasure to utility as the function and goal of history (*Hist. conscr.* 9).²⁵ Dionysius' contribution to this tradition is to call attention to the pleasure the reader experiences in visualizing the text, "being led by the hand through the words to the deeds" themselves (χειραγωγουμένη διὰ τῶν λόγων ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα). Here Dionysius employs the familiar *logos/ergon* antithesis, recalling perhaps Thucydides' programmatic division of speech and event in his *History* (1.22.1-2), although in Dionysius *logos* refers to the medium of the literary artist and *ergon* refers to the represented world of the text, identified in the second part of the sentence as the "things being done" that the reader "sees" (τὰ πραττόμενα ὁρῶσα). The *present* tense of the participle here may be important: it speaks to the illusion that the historical events described are not past, but transpiring before the reader's eyes.

Hence, Dionysius' reader is clearly a "spectator" of sorts, although this metaphor is not, as we have seen, in itself unique to ancient criticism nor unprecedented in Greek historiography. Polybius thinks of his own narrative as a spectacle that he "puts before the eyes" of the reader—this in spite of his attacks on the *psychagôgia* of contemporary historians. The difference between Polybius and Dionysius lies in the *character* of their historical material and in the type of spectator suggested by each. Polybius frequently employs metaphors of athletic contests to characterize his subject matter and its reception by the reader who "sees," a feature that one critic has called the "didactic arena" of Polybian historiography (Davidson 14-15). Dionysius, by contrast, employs metaphors from drama and hence introduces a "second level" of representation into his narrative, constructing the reader as a spectator of events that transpire on the tragic stage.

²⁴For Aristotle on the cognitive pleasures of vision, see his effort to link *mimêsis* to *mathêsis* at *Po.* 2.1448b17 and his appeal to the pleasures of seeing as "proof" (*sêmeion*) of human-kind's innate desire to know at *Metaph.* α 980a23-26.

²⁵For the ancient debate on the "pleasure" proper to history see further Duris' criticisms of Ephorus and Theopompus, as quoted by Photius, *Biblio.* 176.121a (=FGrH 76 F1), with the discussion of Fornara 120-30, esp. 124; and Avenarius 134.

This is particularly true of Dionysius' version of the Horatii story, a story which, Dionysius says at the conclusion of the narrative (borrowing a term from Aristotelian literary criticism), is notable for its "remarkable and unexpected reversals of fortune" (see *Ant. Rom.* 3.22.10: τὰ μὲν δὴ περὶ τὴν Ὀρατίων οἰκίαν γινόμενα θαυμαστάς καὶ παραδόξους περιπετείας λαβόντα τοιούτου τέλους ἔτυχεν). But such self-consciousness about the dramatic character of his material is present from the very beginning of the episode, as Dionysius makes clear in his methodological introduction (3.18.1):

Ἀπαιτούσης δὲ τῆς ὑποθέσεως καὶ τὸν τρόπον διεξελθεῖν τῆς μάχης ἀκριβῶς καὶ τὰ μετὰ ταύτην γινόμενα πάθη θεατρικαῖς ἐοικότα περιπετεῖαις μὴ ῥαθύμως διελθεῖν πειράσομαι καὶ περὶ τούτων ἐπ' ἀκριβείας ἕκαστον, ὥς ἐμὴ δύναμις, εἰπεῖν.

As my subject requires not only that a full account of the way the battle was fought should be given, but also that the subsequent tragic events, which resemble the sudden reversals of fortune seen upon the tragic stage, should be related in no perfunctory manner, I shall endeavor, as far as I am able, to give an accurate account of every incident.²⁶

Here again Dionysius employs a number of "commonplaces" of Greek historiography that are traceable, ultimately, to Thucydides and his influential prolegomenon. Like Thucydides, who identifies *pathēmata* as an important component of his narrative of the Peloponnesian War (1.23.1), Dionysius will present sufferings and calamities, although these *pathē* "resemble the sudden reversals of fortune seen upon the tragic stage." And like Thucydides, who places a high premium on accuracy (*akribeia*) in his presentation of speech and event in narrative, Dionysius also professes to be deeply concerned with *akribeia* (cf. ἀκριβῶς...ἐπ' ἀκριβείας), although on closer inspection what Dionysius means by this term will prove to be something quite different from Thucydidean accuracy, as noted by Clemence Schultze: ". . . ἀκρίβεια [in Dionysius] often seems to relate to fullness rather than to precision or discrimination. ἀκρίβεια and completeness go together, while in contrast are lack of care and summary treatment. Dionysius promises to be ἀκρίβες rather

²⁶Throughout my discussion of the Horatii episode in Dionysius, I employ the Loeb text and translation of Cary, vol. 2, 69-93, with some slight alterations; the introduction quoted here is on 69-71.

than brief and to ‘go through’ (διεξελεθεῖν) all the factors.”²⁷ This alternate sense of *akribeia*, relating to “fullness rather than to precision,” has important consequences for the structure of Dionysius’ history in general, and for his account of the Horatii in particular. Livy, himself an expansive and dramatic author, treats the Horatii story in five pages; Dionysius’ account, by contrast, extends to more than three times this length. This type of expansion is characteristic of Dionysius—his “fullness”—and it conveys an implicit conviction that a dramatic elaboration of material provides history with *akribeia*, compensates, as it were, for the paucity of “reliable” material that the historian is faced with in writing archaic history. In narratological terms, Dionysius’ version, much more than Livy’s, approaches the category of *scene*, where the time it takes to tell the story becomes equal to the period of time in which the narrated occurs (see Prince s.v. “scene”; Genette 94).

Like Thucydides, Dionysius employs spectators to heighten the visual character of his “scene”: as the Horatii and Curiatii prepare for their duel both Albans and Romans put down their weapons in order to become spectators of the fighting that will follow (...θέμενοι τὰ ὅπλα προήγον ἐκ τοῦ χάρακος ἀμφοτέροι θεαταὶ τῆς μάχης ἐσόμενοι, 3.18.2). When the duelists finally do engage in combat, Dionysius turns to describing the varied emotions that the spectators experience as they look on, a passage inspired by Thucydides’ Syracusan harbor scene, although Dionysius characteristically expands his description, attempting to outdo the “pathetic optics” of his model. As we have already noted, Thucydides’ viewers are of various types, distinguished from one another by the precise scene of battle they see and by the particular emotional response that attends their viewing (7.71.3). Some rejoice at the apparent victory of the Athenians, others lament at what seems to be their imminent defeat, while still others watch where the battle is evenly balanced, feeling simultaneously the emotions of both salvation and destruction. It is this third type of spectator that receives the most detailed development in Dionysius—those who watch with uncertainty and in a prolonged state of suspense. Their uncertainty, as in Thucydides, is due in part to the rapid reversals of the battle, “the frequent advances and retreats of the combatants and their many sudden countercharges” (αἵ τε συνεχεῖς τῶν μαχομένων ἐπεμβάσεις καὶ ὑπαναχωρήσεις καὶ εἰς τὸ ἀντίπαλον αὐτοῖς ἀντιμεταστάσεις πολλαὶ καὶ ἀγχίστροφοι γινόμεναι, 3.19.2), although it is

²⁷Schultze 126; see also Gabba 80-81 on Dionysius’ “fullness of historical description”; and Fornara 134-37, on “historical amplification.” Of course, “Thucydidean *akribeia*” is itself notoriously problematic; see Swain 39-41 and the studies he cites 39 n. 17.

equally true that an indistinct visual perception also contributes to their dilemma: “their view (*opsis*) of the duel was unclear (*asaphes*),” writes Dionysius, “owing to the great distance” that intervened, separating spectators from the object seen (ἡ τε γὰρ ὄψις ἐκ πολλοῦ διαστήματος γινομένη πολὺ τὸ ἀσαφὲς εἶχε, 3.19.2).

Hence, the multiple viewpoints that we find in Thucydides are reduced to a single, indistinct view; for the *variety* of responses that are present in his model Dionysius substitutes a kind of *complexity* of visual perception, shared by Albans and Romans alike. Initial perceptions of the progress of the combat are colored by *sympathes*, a personal interest in the outcome that inevitably influences how the action is viewed: “the partiality of each side for their own champions interpreted everything that passed to match their desire” (καὶ τὸ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους ἀγωνιστὰς ἐκάστοις συμπαθὲς ἐπὶ τὸ βεβουλημένον ἐλάμβανε τὰ πρασσόμενα, 3.19.2), writes Dionysius, although he hastens to add that these initial “sympathetic” interpretations are checked by “sudden counterchanges” that render an “accurate assessment” (*to akribes tēs gnōmēs*) of the events impossible (ἀντιμεταστάσεις πολλαὶ καὶ ἀγχίστροφοι γινόμεναι τὸ ἀκριβὲς τῆς γνώμης ἀφηροῦντο, 3.19.2). Partly as a consequence of their inability to see clearly, Dionysius’ spectators experience emotions that are only marginally grounded in what actually transpires (*ta drōmena*). In a single sentence the author identifies various gradations of disparity between events and their visual perception: “some [expressions of emotion] were caused by what was either being enacted or witnessed by each side, and others by apprehensions of the outcome; and the things that they imagined outnumbered those which were actually happening” (φωναὶ...αἱ μὲν πρὸς τὰ δρώμενά τε καὶ ὀρώμενα ὑφ’ ἐκατέρων, αἱ δὲ πρὸς τὰ μέλλοντά τε καὶ ὑποπτευόμενα· καὶ ἦν πλείω τὰ εἰκαζόμενα τῶν γινομένων, 3.19.1). There is, in these details, a survival of Thucydides’ remark that some spectators suffered more than the actual combatants; Dionysius shows how such suffering might be possible by calling attention to “imagined” events and by emphasizing the spectators’ apprehension of things to come.

It is difficult to read Dionysius’ reference to imagined events without thinking of the spectator of the larger scene of the text. Read as a *mise en abyme*, the spectators in Dionysius’ narrative resemble (“reflect,” “replicate”) the reader imaginatively engaged with the world that Dionysius presents. This kind of reading especially suggests itself when we compare the combination of emotions experienced by the spectators here with the responses that Cicero (writing a generation earlier) anticipated would greet the narrative of his own

consulship from readers dulled by the monotony of annalistic history: "The monotonous regularity of the *Annales* has an effect on us as if we were reading through official calendars," Cicero writes to Lucceius, "but the unpredictable and fluctuating circumstances surrounding a great figure induce admiration, anticipation, delight, misery, hope and fear" (*Fam.* 5.12.5; trans. Woodman 72-73). Indeed, the act of reading is itself a dynamic process, unpredictable and fluctuating. Much of this dynamism is derived from the anticipation of things to come (*ta mellonta*) and from a constant reframing of the past in the light of new information; reader-response critics speak of a convergence of past and future *horizons*. "Every moment of reading," writes Wolfgang Iser, "is a dialectic of protension and retension, conveying a future horizon yet to be occupied, along with a past (and continually fading) horizon already filled" (112). Although Iser insists that "there is no escaping this process, [since] . . . the text cannot be grasped as a whole," *ancient* criticism, as we have seen, seems to have imagined a moment of complete closure: when the *enargeia* of a text proves so strong that the reader is lulled into *apatê*, made incapable of distinguishing reality from representation, like Lucan's ideal reader, convinced that past events have not yet transpired.

As a literary critic, Dionysius is well aware of the deception that realistic representation and *enargeia* imply. In his critical essay on Lysias, he cites the Attic orator's command of circumstantial detail and his appeal to the senses as evidence of Lysianic *enargeia*: "Nobody who applies his mind to the speeches of Lysias will be so obtuse, insensitive or slow-witted that he will not feel that he can see the actions which are being described going on and that he is meeting face-to-face the characters in the orator's story" (*Lys.* 7).²⁸ Read as a *mise en abyme*, Dionysius' Horatii episode dramatizes this level of the reader's engagement with the text when, overcome by rivalry and sympathetic identification with their own champions, spectators from both Alban and Roman camps "unconsciously put themselves in the position of the combatants and desire rather to be actors in the drama that was being acted than spectators" (*Ant. Rom.* 3.19.3).²⁹ Thucydides' description climaxes with a striking image of the spectators' "bodies swaying, in the extremity of their fear, in accord with their opinion of the battle" (Smith trans., 7.71.3: τοῖς σώμασιν αὐτοῖς

²⁸Trans. Usher 33. This passage is part of what has been called the "oldest definition" of *enargeia* to survive from antiquity; see Meijering 30 and Zanker 297.

²⁹. . . ὥστε πολλοὶ Ῥωμαίων τε καὶ Ἀλβανῶν ἐκ τοῦ φιλονεικεῖν τε καὶ συμπαθεῖν τοῖς σφετέροις ἔλαθον αὐτοὺς τὸ τῶν κινδυνευόντων μεταλαβόντες πάθος ἀγωνισταί τε μᾶλλον ἐβούλοντο ἢ θεαταὶ τῶν δρωμένων γεγονέναι.

ἴσα τῇ δόξῃ περιδεῶς ξυναπνεύοντες). The image makes the vicissitudes of battle manifest in the very posture of the viewers, although the correspondence between event and emotion is always a precarious one, subject to the mutabilities of perception (*doxa*). Thucydides' spectators will, of course, eventually become embroiled in the fighting that they see, when the ships run ashore and the battle fought in the harbor is renewed on the coastline (7.71.6). Dionysius' spectators, by contrast, engage in combat only indirectly, when their emotional investment in what transpires so alters their perception that the boundary between spectators and spectacle grows indistinct: "desiring rather to be actors in the drama that was being acted than spectators." Cary's translation captures the theatrical metaphor here, consistent with the language Dionysius uses earlier of the reader's experience of the text; it suggests that the duel itself exists as a kind of representation, and that the spectators' responses reflect the reader's reception of the larger textual whole.

IV. The Historian as Spectator

"Polybius provides us with an audience for the readers to model themselves on," writes James Davidson in his recent study of the gaze in Polybius, "together with a paradigmatic gaze and exemplary responses" (14). Davidson is thinking of Polybius' simile at 1.57, where Hamilcar and the Romans are compared to two champions in a boxing-match, "continually exchanging blow for blow" (1.57.1), and he is employing a critical strategy similar to our own in reading the spectators in Dionysius as emblematic of the reader. "The simile is explicit," Davidson continues, "the boxers represent Hamilcar versus the Romans on Eryx; the spectators are the readers" (14). Yet Davidson's effort to align the spectator *solely* with reader develops only a portion of the comparison that Polybius' simile is meant to suggest: "The causes or the modes of their daily ambushes, counter-ambushes, attempts, and assaults were so numerous," Polybius explains, "that no writer could properly describe them, while at the same time the narrative would be most tedious as well as unprofitable to the reader" (Paton trans., 1.57.3).³⁰ Here Polybius dismisses as "unprofitable to the reader" precisely the sort of material that Dionysius might choose to work up into a dramatic narrative, "full of amazing and remarkable reversals." The

³⁰ τὰς μὲν αἰτίας ἢ τοὺς τρόπους, δι' ὧν ἅν' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν ἐποιοῦντο κατ' ἀλλήλων ἐνέδρας, ἀντενέδρας, ἐπιθέσεις, προσβολάς, οὗτ' ἂν ὁ γράφων ἐξαριθμούμενος ἐφίκοιτο, τοῖς τ' ἀκούουσιν ἀπέραντος ἅμα δ' ἀνωφελὲς ἂν ἐκ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως γίνοιτο χρεία.

passage provides an index to the difference between Polybian historiography and the principles that inform Dionysius' history of archaic Rome, although both historians conceive of the reader as a kind of spectator of the text. The Polybius passage is important because it extends the metaphor of seeing to include both reader and historian alike. In fact, it is the historian's *difficulty* in registering what he sees that inspires the boxing-match simile: "These combats *I am unable to describe* in detail here. For as in a boxing-match. . .the contestants meet in decisive contest for the prize. . .neither the combatants themselves nor the spectators can note or anticipate every blow. . .so it was with these two generals" (Paton trans., 1.56.11–57.1-2).³¹ Ultimately Polybius resolves the dilemma he describes by providing a "general assessment" (*katholikê apophasis*) of the two men (1.57.4), even as it is possible to arrive at a "fair idea" (*hikanê ennoia*) of the strength and courage of two contestants in a boxing-match, independent of the precise details of their exchange (1.57.2). To the many "gazes" that Davidson identifies in Polybius' *History* should be added this fundamental gaze of the historian.

No treatment of the spectators in Thucydides 7.71 and its imitation by Dionysius would be complete without some consideration of the ways in which these spectators reflect and replicate the activity of the historian, as one who also struggles for an "accurate assessment" (*to akribes tês gnômês*) of what transpired (cf. *Ant. Rom.* 3.19.2). Polybius himself suggests this kind of reading of spectacle with his boxing-match simile, which highlights both the historian's need for selectivity and the impossibility of recording every detail seen. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, by contrast, was faced with a different set of problems as a historian of archaic Rome. He undertook a dramatic elaboration of material that his readers knew only from *annales* and as legends from the distant past (cf. *palaiotatoi mythoi*: *Ant. Rom.* 1.8.1); his is an imaginative reconstruction of the "events." This portrait of the historian has its analogue in the spectators in Dionysius' text whose view is, as we have seen, obscured (*asaphes*) by the distance that separates them from the events as they unfold and who respond in the end to their own imaginings (*ta eikazomena*, 3.19.1). For such a project, the historian's emotional investment in his material plays no small role in his discovery and representation of the past, and history becomes

³¹ . . . περὶ ὧν οὐχ οἶόν τε διὰ τῆς γραφῆς τὸν κατὰ μέρος ἀποδοῦναι λόγον· καθάπερ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῶν διαφερόντων πυκτῶν...ὅταν...διαμάχωνται...λόγον μὲν ἢ πρόνοιαν ἔχειν ὑπὲρ ἐκάστης ἐπιβολῆς καὶ πληγῆς οὔτε τοῖς ἀγωνιζομένοις οὔτε τοῖς θεωμένοις ἐστὶ δυνατόν...οὕτως δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν νῦν λεγομένων στρατηγῶν.

a form of epideictic or encomium (cf. *Ant. Rom.* 1.1.2-3).³² On this reading of the historian as “spectator,” Dionysius’ spectators see what they want to see in the absence of precise details of the Horatii duel: *sympathes* (3.19.2, repeated at 19.3) for their champions inspires them to interpret everything that transpires “to match their desire” (*epi to beboulêmenon*).

Thucydides’ spectacle suggests yet another type of historian, one who is enmeshed in the events that he is trying to record—the historian, in short, of contemporary events. In commenting on Thucydides’ historiographic technique, Woodman adduces the evidence of war-reporting by journalists stationed at the scene of fighting in order to illustrate how autopsy in itself provides little guarantee of a historian’s accuracy (17-22). Thucydides himself shows some sensitivity to the limitations of autopsy in his prolegomenon when he describes himself as “examining as exactly as possible in detail *both* the events at which I myself was present *and* those learned from others.”³³ The historian’s problems are compounded, Thucydides continues, when confronted with the testimonies of eyewitnesses, because different witnesses of the same event told different things (see 1.22.3: οἱ παρόντες τοῖς ἔργοις ἐκάστοις οὐ ταῦτὰ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἔλεγον). Beyond his famous and problematic remarks in this prolegomenon, Thucydides is, of course, conspicuously silent on the difficulties he encountered in substantiating his account of the war (and absent from the reader’s view): my reading suggests, however, that some of difficulties of writing contemporary history are implicitly dramatized in the Syracusan harbor scene, where the spectators, too close to the action to properly “see,” provide conflicting accounts of what transpired. On a broader scale, the shifting narratives of the text of Thucydides—that is, what is meant when one speaks of the problem of composition in Thucydides—testify to the author’s struggle to attain a “complete vision” of contemporary history, in the end characterizing many diverse events as belonging to a single, twenty-seven year war.³⁴

³²On history as a form of encomium, see the sources cited by Homeyer 182-83, commenting on Lucian, *Hist. conscr.* 7.

³³Trans. Rusten 12 (see 1.22.2: τὰ δ’ ἔργα. . . ἡξίωσα γράφειν, οὐδ’ ὥς ἐμοὶ ἐδόκει, ἀλλ’ οἷς τε αὐτὸς παρῆν καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσον δυνατόν ἀκριβεῖα περὶ ἐκάστου ἐπεξελθόν). Rusten’s translation (with the italics that I have added) stresses that Thucydides was critical about his own impressions (cf. οὐδ’ ὥς ἐμοὶ ἐδόκει), while other translations suggest that Thucydides scrutinized with the greatest detail possible only the reports he received from others; cf. Woodman’s translation: “[I wrote]...from personal experience and after investigating with as much accuracy as possible each event reported by others” (15).

³⁴In his fundamental study of the problem of composition in Thucydides, Ullrich argued that Thucydides began writing after the peace of Nicias (421 B.C.) under the impression that the

Evidence that the ancients conceived of the historian as a kind of privileged spectator is relatively easy to adduce to support this final reading of the *mise en abyme* created by Dionysius' and Thucydides' scenes of spectatorship. Indeed, from the very beginning of history-writing in Ionia and Greece, *opsis*—or, more particularly, autopsy—was regarded as an essential component of historiographical inquiry, as attested by the methodology that Herodotus espouses in his *History* and by his frequent appeals, as proof of the veracity of his narrative, to his experience as an eyewitness of particular places, cultures, and events.³⁵ Perhaps as a consequence of this founding character of *opsis*, historians themselves in their prolegomena have frequent recourse to visual scenarios or scenes that reflect in different ways on the problems, difficulties, and even dangers that confront the historian in his inquiry: hence Polybius' allusion, in his own prolegomenon, to examining a lifeless, dissected body, as a metaphor for the historian who sees, not synoptically, but *kata meros* (1.4.7). Most famous of all these programmatic scenarios is, of course, that of Gyges and his reluctant acceptance of Candaules' invitation to see his wife unclothed, a story that reflects Herodotus' own project as an intruding ethnographer, "continually...looking at alien things."³⁶ When centuries later Lucian turns to describe the ideal dispassionate historian, he endows him with a superhuman gaze, and likens him to the Homeric Zeus, "who looks one moment at the land of the horse-tending Thracians, and the next moment at Mysi," and who "reports [events] as [they] appear to him from his lofty look-out" (Russell trans., *Hist. conscr.* 49).³⁷ Lucian's fantasy is that of the historian whose autopsy extends to every event, while maintaining at the same time a safe distance and proper "perspective" on what he sees. From this kind of seeing it naturally follows that the historian's text should present an impartial view of the whole, in the moment his vision is brought to completion in the representation that the reader "sees" (cf. *Hist. conscr.* 51).

war was over, but the Sicilian expedition forced him to reconsider the connection between events, and he eventually came to view both conflicts as part of a larger, continuous twenty-seven year war, as evidenced by the second preface of 5.26 and the existence of both "finished" and "unfinished" sections of the *History*.

³⁵See esp. V. Hunter 1982: 50-92. On autopsy generally in Greek historiography, see Schepens.

³⁶See Benardete 12-13. On the paradigmatic character of the Gyges episode, see also Hartog 262-63.

³⁷For the notion of the "supernatural eye that sees all," see Deonna 96-108.

V. Conclusions

Thucydides has long been read as a historian with precisely the sort of super-human gaze that Lucian describes, as W. R. Connor remarks in an effort to highlight recent developments in Thucydidean scholarship: "We saw an Olympian Thucydides, looking down on the struggles of mortals, beholding with equal clarity and distance the toils of that long and paradigmatic war... Ours was a thoroughly modernist Thucydides. He was the disengaged, dispassionate, detached observer" (1977: 290-91). Increasingly, scholarship has probed the inadequacies of such a reading of the *History*, since Thucydides rarely offers evidence for his findings and rarely adjudicates between conflicting accounts in an effort to arrive at "the truth." The notion of an "Olympian Thucydides" registers, it seems, more an *effect of the text* and the clarity and confidence with which Thucydides presents the events than it does any identifiable correspondence between the representation and the events themselves. Scholars have accordingly shifted their focus from Thucydides' explicit statements to the "rhetoric" of his text and to his "artful" manner of reporting.³⁸ Certainly this "post-modern" reading of Thucydides owes something to our growing awareness that the facts can never simply "speak for themselves"—that they are (as Charles Martindale would say) "always already interpreted" (21)—but it is also testimony to a more sophisticated appreciation of the conventions of ancient historiography, where fact and fiction seem to coexist without contradiction. For the ancient historian, Gabba stresses, "the search for an effective style and a lively presentation was never regarded as an alternative to the truth."³⁹ As *fiction*, ancient historiography frequently sets as its goal verisimilitude—understood as a likeness to reality, and not as a fidelity to "the facts"—and its success was often measured, by ancient critics and historians alike, by the degree to which the representation is "visually perceived" by the reader: hence Lucian speaks of the ideal historian as a kind of "historical Phidias." Thucydides, no less than Dionysius, addresses his history to readers "who desire to see *to saphes* of what transpired" (ὅσοι δὲ βουλήσονται τῶν τε γενομένων τὸ σαφὲς σκοπεῖν, 1.22.4). It is significant for the argument ad-

³⁸See Connor 1977: 298 and, with reference to V. Hunter, *Thucydides the Artful Reporter* (Toronto 1973), 292.

³⁹Gabba 74; perhaps the most sophisticated treatment of this problem is T. P. Wiseman's essay, "Lying Historians: Seven Types of Mendacity," in Gill and Wiseman. Unfortunately, this collection of essays is not available to me, although I benefited from hearing a version of Prof. Wiseman's paper delivered at the University of Virginia in the spring of 1992.

vanced in this paper that Woodman should link this important phrase (*to saphes skopein*) to the tradition of Thucydidean *enargeia*, suggesting that *to saphes* refers, not to “complete accuracy” (Lesky) nor yet to “the truth” (Dover), but to the *realistic representation* of the war that Thucydides’ text provides.⁴⁰

In both Dionysius and Thucydides, visual effects of the narrative are achieved by creating scenes that themselves contain scenes, a phenomenon that narratologists describe as *mise en abyme*. Hellenistic definitions of *enargeia* suggest that Plutarch and, perhaps to a greater degree, Dionysius were aware of this phenomenon, and it is perhaps worth noting in this connection that, in his own narrative histories (the *Lives*), Plutarch employs a device that is similar to the pathetic optics we have described here, dubbed by Pelling as “characterisation by effect” (40). But the *mise en abyme*, in its self-reflexivity, can also call attention to the problems that attend the processes of representation, and a new possibility emerges when we read the spectator and his seeing as an emblem of the historian at work: the scenes of spectatorship that we have examined “are about” the problems of writing history, history of contemporary events in the case of Thucydides, and history of the archaic past in the case of Dionysius. These narratives in effect implicitly dramatize some of the methodological speculations that the historians articulate explicitly in their prolegomena. Such a reading is consistent with the work of scholars—both ancient and “post-modern”—who find in Thucydides’ *History* evidence, not of a detached and scientific historian, but of one passionately engaged in the events that he sought to place “before the reader’s eyes.”

⁴⁰Cf. Woodman 23–28, citing A. Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature* (1957; English trans., London 1966) 459; and K. J. Dover, *Thucydides. Greece and Rome, New Surveys in the Classics* 7 (Oxford 1973) 43. For his translation of τὸ σαφὲς σκοπεῖν as “a realistic view,” see also Woodman 62 n. 162. For the association of *enargeia* with *saphêneia* in the *progymnasmata*, see Spengel, vol. 2, 119 (Theon) with the comments of Woodman 26 and 59 n. 144.

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