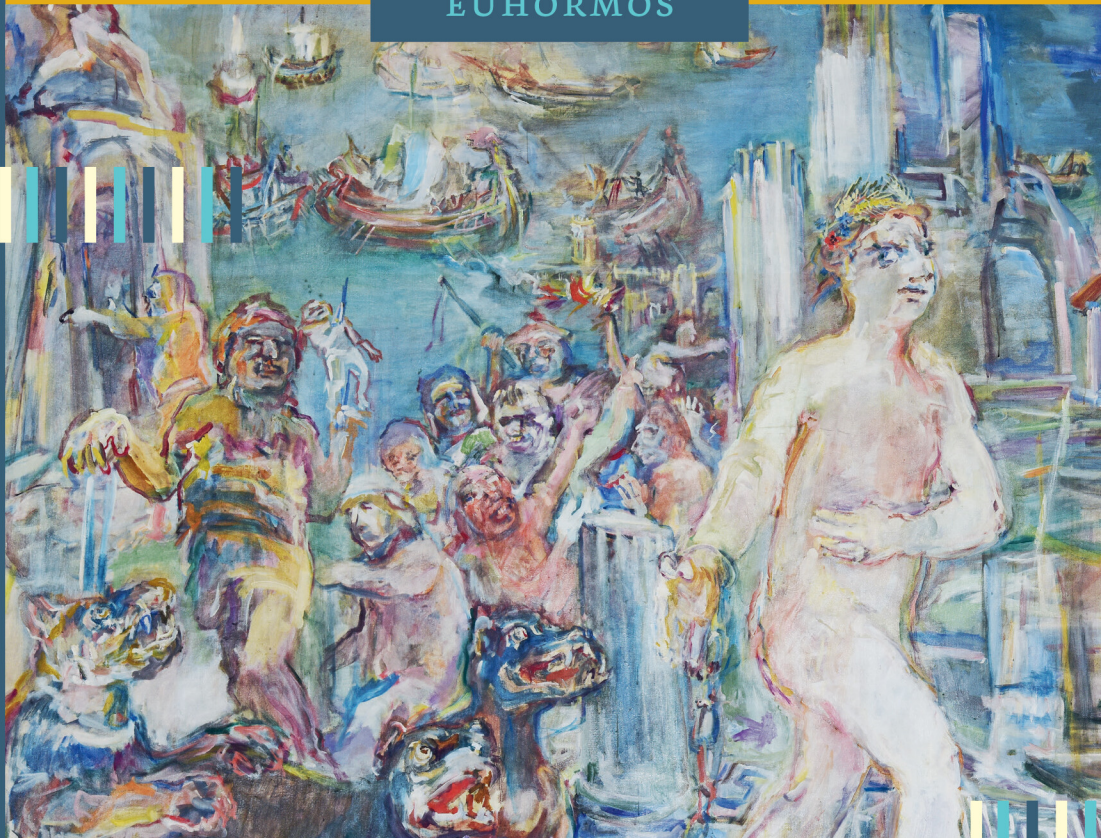


480 BCE

*The Persian Attack on Athens and its Impact
on the Study of Ancient Greece*

EUHORMOS



Edited by

Janric van Rookhuijzen, Josine Blok and Floris van den Eijnde

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Foreword

EUHORMOS is an international book series intended for monographs and collective volumes on Greco-Roman Antiquity. Specifically, we welcome for publication manuscripts related to the concept of ‘anchoring innovation’ by classical scholars of all disciplines from all over the world. Books in this series will be published as much as possible in Open Access. EUHORMOS is one of the results financed by the Dutch so-called Gravitation Grant (2017), awarded to a consortium of scholars from ΟΙΚΟΣ, the National Research School in Classical Studies. See <https://anchoringinnovation.nl/>, where we also list earlier results from this research programme.

The ancient world saw many examples of change and innovations. The unique accessibility of materials from and about this period in the ancient Mediterranean frequently makes it possible to analyze successful and unsuccessful ‘anchoring’ of change: the various ways in which ‘the new’ could (or could not) be connected to and embedded in what was already deemed familiar. ‘New’ and ‘old’ are mostly not used as objective labels, but also a matter of the perception, framing, and valuation by relevant social groups and actors. ‘The new’ is not restricted to the technical or scientific domains, but can also include the ‘new information’ imparted by speakers through linguistic anchoring strategies; innovations in literature and the arts; political, social, cultural, legal, military, or economic innovation; and new developments in material culture.

The name ‘Euhormos’ itself is well-anchored. It is the Homeric term for a harbor ‘in which the anchoring is good’, although the careful reader will notice that danger is never far away. This dynamic nature of ‘anchoring’ and the risks involved in it are embraced by our research team as part of this title. For now though we will focus on its auspicious aspect, since we are looking forward to affording ‘good anchorage’ to studies contributing to a better understanding of ‘anchoring innovation’ in Greco-Roman Antiquity.

Ineke Sluiter

Academic Director, Leiden

On behalf of the Governing Board of the Anchoring Innovation Programme

Preface

The present volume is a result of a conference entitled ‘480 BCE: Reconsidering the Chronological Anchor of Archaic and Classical Greece’, which took place in Conference Center Soeterbeeck, Ravenstein, the Netherlands (part of Radboud University, Nijmegen) from 23 to 26 June 2022. Its content is largely based on the papers and discussions at that event.

The conference was organized under the aegis of *Anchoring Innovation*, the Gravitation Grant research agenda of the Dutch National Research School in Classical Studies, ΟΙΚΟΣ. This program is financially supported by the Dutch ministry of Education, Culture and Science (NWO project number 024.003.012). The working hypothesis of the program is that for innovations to take hold in a group or society, they need to be ‘anchored’ in something familiar to that group or society. ‘Innovation’ is ‘what is *perceived* or *constructed* as innovation, the successful adoption of something ‘new’; while ‘anchoring’ operates as ‘a label for the many different ways in which people connect the new to the old, the traditional, the already known.’¹ The research program centers on technological innovations in Antiquity. The present book aims to add a new perspective on the program’s tenets, by considering research itself as an endeavor in which new views, in order to become accepted in the scholarly community, need to be anchored in an existing scholarly conception—in this case, in the Persian attack on Athens as a watershed in Greek history.

Our gratitude goes out to all the participants of the conference and this volume for contributing to a most stimulating and enriching forum of discussion during the challenging times of the Covid-19 pandemic, and for their diligent and collaborative efforts in the preparation of this publication. We also thank Marek Węcowski for acting as respondent to the papers; Conference Center Soeterbeeck in Ravenstein and student assistant Thomas van Tussenbroek for their organizational efforts; the ΟΙΚΟΣ Anchoring Innovation board for their generous financial support; the Gerda Henkel Stiftung for funding of the postdoc project that led to the realization of these proceedings; and finally Euhormos editors Irene de Jong and Eric Moormann as well as Giulia Moriconi of Brill for their editorial assistance.

1 Sluiter 2017: 21. For more information about the research program and its results, see the website www.anchoringinnovation.nl.

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Introduction: The Impact of the Persian Attack on Athens on the Study of Ancient Greece

Janric van Rookhuijzen

With their power to reshape political, societal, and cultural landscapes, wars can—in retrospect—mark the end of eras and the beginning of new ones. For the Greek world, the Persian attack on Athens in 480 and 479,¹ a decisive event in Xerxes' invasion of Greece during the Graeco-Persian Wars, has traditionally been seen as such a turning point.

By the beginning of the fifth century, much of the Near East, including all of Anatolia and Egypt, in addition to parts of the Balkan, had come under Persian control. In 490, the Achaemenid king Darius launched an invasion of Greece, as a response to punish Athens and Eretria for their support of the Ionian Revolt of 499–493. The Persians landed on the Attic coast at Marathon, where they were defeated by a mainly Athenian army. In September 480, Persian armies, this time led by Darius' son Xerxes, returned to Attica. Large parts of the Athenian population had already been evacuated. After a difficult siege, the Persians plundered the Athenian Acropolis and destroyed the buildings on it. Soon after, the fighting continued at sea in the nearby strait of Salamis where the Persian armada was defeated. The Greek success led to Xerxes' departure from Greece. However, the land army commanded by the Persian general Mardonios stayed and set up its base in Thebes. The victory at Salamis roughly coincided with the victory of Sicilian Greeks against Carthaginian forces at the battle of Himera.

In 479, following failed diplomatic endeavors, Mardonios led the Persians in another assault on Athens. What was left of the city was then destroyed. The Persian invasion of Greece ended in August of that year with the battle of Plataea. At some point afterward—the exact timeline remains uncertain—the Athenians started restoring and rebuilding their city including, from 450 onward, the buildings on the Acropolis.

The fullest account of the events surrounding the Persian attack on Athens is found in Herodotus' *Histories*, written in the second half of the fifth century.² This work, along with a few testimonies by other ancient authors (not always

¹ All dates are BCE unless otherwise indicated.

² Siege of the Acropolis: 8.51–56; the battle of Salamis: 8.57–112; destruction of the lower city: 9.13.

independent from Herodotus),³ attests to the enduring prominence of these events in the collective memory of the city and Greece at large. Consequently, the text is foundational for our knowledge about these events.

Since the nineteenth century, modern scholarship sought and recognized material evidence for the Persian attack on Athens in excavations of the Acropolis and the lower city. Given the total destruction of the city reported by Herodotus as well as its reconstruction and rapid growth in later years, the year of the attack, 480, became a caesura marking the end of the Archaic period (800–480) and the beginning of the Classical period (480–323). Accordingly, the attack itself seemed to have paved the way for the great advances in Athenian, and by extension Greek arts, architecture, literature, and society. In other words, the attack on Athens became a defining moment in a grand narrative about innovation in ancient Greece. This point of view also had concrete consequences. In archaeology, for example, Greek objects from the late sixth or early fifth century are often dated by a terminus before or after 480, depending on assessments of their Archaic or Classical appearance. Thus, the Persian attack on Athens has left deep marks on the physical structure of the city and on collective memory, both in Antiquity and in modern historical and archaeological scholarship.⁴

However, in recent years scholars have been reassessing the cultural changes in the Greek world during the late Archaic and early Classical periods, putting less emphasis on the attack as a caesura, i.e., as the impetus for a grand cultural revolution.⁵ A divide between the Archaic and Classical periods based on this event alone, they say, is superficial. Judy Barringer even dismisses any link between stylistic developments in Greek art and the year of the Persian attack on Athens.⁶ Indeed, to associate Classical innovations with this event and year alone, is misleading. As the Anchoring Innovation program shows, innovation does not happen in isolation: if an innovation takes hold and proves successful, it likely builds on something familiar.⁷ With twenty-first-century scholarship leaving the grand historical narrative behind, new research can focus afresh on the underlying question of how the Persian attack on Athens has shaped discourse, both in Antiquity (for example in historiography) and in scholarship today.⁸

3 Other ancient authors mentioning the Persian attack on Athens and Attica include Thucydides (1.89), Diodorus Siculus (11.14, 11.28) and Pausanias (1.1.5, 1.27.2, 10.35.2).

4 Camp 2020 is an overview of the literary sources and the archaeological record about the Persian destruction.

5 E.g., Sioumpara and Palagia 2019; Meyer and Adornato 2020 (esp. Meyer 2020).

6 Barringer 2020.

7 Sluiter 2017.

8 E.g., van Rookhuijzen 2018; Yates 2019; Proietti 2021.

To this broad and layered historical question, the present multidisciplinary volume aims to provide a variety of answers from several angles. The individual chapters focus on one of the following three subquestions:

- (1) What responses did the Persian attack on Athens elicit in Antiquity?
- (2) How did the Persian attack on Athens become a caesura?
- (3) What role does the Persian attack on Athens still play in modern scholarship?

The remainder of this introduction elaborates on these subquestions and summarizes the contributions of each paper to their answers. Although the year 480 and the city of Athens are central to this volume, the broader chronological and geographical context is explicitly included in the discussion. This is relevant because the events in Athens have traditionally tended to dominate the discourse on the history and archaeology of this period, to the point of fostering a kind of Athenocentrism, as several of the contributions to this volume demonstrate.

1 What Responses Did the Persian Attack on Athens Elicit in Antiquity?

An investigation into the significance of the Persian attack on Athens must begin with Antiquity itself. While the distinction between an Archaic and Classical age is modern, the event was certainly a major historical turning point for the Athenians. As made clear by the wealth of literary, epigraphical and archaeological material, it caused the devastation of the city and was the subject of extensive commemoration efforts. Two contributions to this volume discuss Athenian strategies for commemorating the attack.

Giorgia Proietti (Chapter 1) approaches Athenian commemoration of the attack from the perspective of communal trauma. The Athenians attempted to make sense of the devastating events and to redefine their collective identity. Through public burials, casualty lists, and funeral orations, they de-individualized the fallen and emphasized their role as citizen-soldiers serving the common good. The preservation and commemoration of war ruins, such as in the north Acropolis wall, and the subject matter of theatrical plays played a role in healing this trauma. This communal approach to trauma helped Athens to reconstruct its identity and made the Persian sack a foundational event in Athenian collective memory.

Likewise addressing the Athenian commemoration of the attack, **Marion Meyer (Chapter 2)** focuses on the monument in the Kerameikos that features the so-called Persian War epigrams. This cenotaph honored the men lost in the

battles of Salamis and the earlier battle of Marathon (490). Meyer argues that the monument marks a shift in commemoration from the battlefield to the city. This shift coincides with a new emphasis on repatriation of the war dead, as illustrated by the transfer of Theseus' remains to Athens.

The impact of the Persian attack on Athens can also be examined in ancient historiography. **Mathieu de Bakker (Chapter 3)** studies the different depictions of the Battle of Salamis by Herodotus, Aeschylus, and Diodorus Siculus. Whereas Herodotus emphasizes the contribution of the Athenians in the battle, Diodorus glorifies the Sicilian Greeks. Diodorus is furthermore found to simplify the narrative by attributing decisions solely to Xerxes, minimizing internal Greek discord, and portraying Themistocles as the sole architect of the victory. Aeschylus, in the tragedy *Persians*, underlines the unity and heroism of the Greek forces against Persian hubris, while presenting the conflict from the perspective of the defeated enemies to explore themes of pride and downfall. De Bakker thus demonstrates the variety in narrative responses in Greek historiography as a result of the events surrounding the Persian attack on Athens—none of which, he argues, provides a clear window onto the historical details of those events, as all are shaped by literary and dramatic influences as well as genre expectations.

If the Persian attack on Athens elicited varied responses in Greek historiography, the often-criticized response by the Greek historiographer Ctesias, whose lost work was summarized by the Byzantine patriarch Photius, is of special interest. Ctesias depicts Xerxes burning Athens, including the Acropolis, but the story is very different from Herodotus' version. How can we reconcile Herodotus and Ctesias? **Hans van Wees (Chapter 4)** argues that Ctesias' narrative of Xerxes' invasion deserves reconsideration, particularly when seen in conjunction with the Ionian Revolt. Herodotus described the first revolt of 494 as a disaster for the Ionians, leading to the destruction of Athens, and the second one of 479 as the Ionians' liberation. By contrast, Ctesias reports less destruction in 494, but significant Persian damage to Ionian temples in 479 (traceable in the material record in Asia Minor, much like in Athens). If as much weight is given to Ctesias as to Herodotus, Ionia becomes more central in our view of the history in this period.

2 How Did the Persian Attack on Athens Become a Caesura?

Although the Persian attack on Athens left deep marks on the cityscape, commemoration practices, and historiography, it is less clear whether the Greeks themselves conceived of the event as a caesura (i.e., as an epoch-making event).

However, **Angelika Kellner (Chapter 5)** discusses an indication of a caesura in Herodotus' text: by mentioning the Athenian archon Kalliades, Herodotus gives a solid date for the Persian attack on Athens. It is on this basis alone that we know that the event happened in the year 480. The fact that the attack is the only event for which Herodotus provides a hard date suggests its extraordinary salience to Athenians and other Greeks. Herodotus' mention of this date has had repercussions: events in the Archaic period until the Ionian Revolt in 499 can only be dated by using Herodotus' relative chronological framework, in which the year of the attack is a rare fixed date.

After the fifth century, the Persian Wars remained a historical landmark, as, for instance, shown by references in Athenian rhetoric, by Plutarch's lives of Themistocles and Aristides, and by Pausanias' frequent reference to the Wars when discussing monuments throughout Greece. A rare literal testimony that something fundamental had changed after these Wars appears in Aristotle's *Politics* (8.1341a): the philosopher writes that afterwards, the Greeks, in their pride of victory, started to learn many new things. However, there are no indications that specifically the Persian attack on Athens continued to be awarded a singular status, as Ctesias and Herodotus seem to have done. Nevertheless, Kellner shows that ancient authors until Late Antiquity used Herodotus' chronology with the unique archon date of the Persian attack to construct their own chronologies.

After Antiquity, interest in the Persian attack on Athens dissipated and Athens lost much of its political and cultural status. Even if Athenian literature and philosophy were still widely studied, the city itself does not appear prominently in Byzantine writings, let alone in those of the Latin West. **Suzanne Marchand (Chapter 6)** shows that, at the beginning of European modernity, the Persian attack on Athens still did not have much currency in historical discourse, as the Roman Empire and Christianity loomed larger on history's horizon. Dutch and French thinkers of the Enlightenment appear to have been the first to emphasize its importance. Voltaire, in particular, made much of the heroic narrative of Greek victory over the despotic East. The Persian attack on Athens and the glory after Salamis thus developed into a universally relevant story of the defeat of oriental despotism by a state committed to freedom and the arts. The narrative of the Greek defeat of the Persians as a world-historical moment gained momentum through the nineteenth century, when it began influencing imperialist discourse.⁹

9 See also van Rookhuijzen 2022; Murray 2024.

Besides in general history, the Persian attack on Athens gained importance in archaeology, beginning with the history of art. As the early relevance of the Persian attack in art history is not prominently discussed in the contributions to this volume, a rough outline is in place in this introduction.

Johann Joachim Winckelmann may have been the first to associate the attack on Athens with developments in Greek art. In the *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764), he provided a foundational narrative of ancient art, in which he associated artistic developments with political contexts. He regarded Greek political freedom as the most important catalyst for advance and identified Athens in particular as the epicenter for this blossoming: the city's rise to power in the Greek world in the wake of the expulsion of the tyrants would have led to a new *Geist* promoting a remarkable cultural evolution centered here.¹⁰ He distinguished between an 'Old Style' and a 'High Style', roughly coinciding with the later appellations of 'Archaic' and 'Classical', to describe distinct styles in Greek art. Although Winckelmann supposed that the High Style itself had not appeared until the middle of the fifth century with the works of Phidias,¹¹ he directly linked this achievement to the new elan after the Greek victory over the Persians:

Here begins the most remarkable fifty years of Greece. From this time on, all the forces of Greece seemed to be in motion, and the great gifts of this nation began to show themselves more than ever. The extraordinary men and great spirits which had been formed from the beginning of the great movement in Greece now came forth all at once.¹²

In his thinking, the Persian attack on Athens became even the *sine qua non* for the Greek cultural acme:

The disaster itself, which had affected Greece, would serve to stimulate it.¹³

10 Winckelmann 1764: 315–333. See p. 319, where Xerxes' invasion is mentioned as a watershed.

11 Winckelmann 1764: 213–227.

12 Winckelmann 1764: 325: 'Hier fangen die merkwürdigsten fünfzig Jahre von Griechenland an. Von dieser Zeit an schienen alle Kräfte von Griechenland in Bewegung zu kommen, und die großen Gaben dieser Nation fingen an, sich mehr als jemals zu zeigen. Die außerordentlichen Menschen und großen Geister, welche sich von Anfang der großen Bewegung in Griechenland gebildet hatten, kamen jetzt alle mit einem Male hervor.'

13 Winckelmann 1764: 326: 'Das Unglück selbst, welches Griechenland betroffen hatte, mußte zur Beförderung derselben dienen.'

These notions, through the immense influence of Winckelmann's work, became part of the narrative of the history Greek art and Greek culture more generally.

Winckelmann would never visit Athens, but others who did began looking for locally preserved evidence for the Persian attack on Athens, hitherto only known from the ancient texts. From the mid-eighteenth century, travelers started to recognize evidence for the Persian attack in architectural blocks from a destroyed temple built into the north wall of the Acropolis.¹⁴ When in 1833 Athens was added to the growing Greek kingdom, the Acropolis, the main object of Persian aggression, was declared an archaeological site and excavations could start. The first excavator active here, Ludwig Ross, already related some of the deposits that he had unearthed with Herodotus' historical scenario of the Persian destruction. He reasoned that the objects had been deposited in the Acropolis following the clearing of the citadel shortly after 480 and, therefore, to constitute a time capsule of material antedating that clearing.¹⁵ In a burnt layer which he interpreted as destroyed by the Persians, he found a red-figure plate of the Brygos painter. He concluded that by the time of the Persian attack on Athens, the red-figure technique had already been developed.¹⁶ This reasonable argumentation would contribute to the establishment of the so-called Studniczka-Langlotz chronology of Greek vase painting. However, it was later revealed that this particular linkage of the textual record with archaeology, which underpins the chronology, was possibly circular.¹⁷

During the great excavations of the Acropolis by Pangiotis Kavvadias and Georg Kawerau northwest of the Caryatid Temple and south and east of the Parthenon (1885–1890), many objects, including pottery and broken sculptures, were discovered.¹⁸ The archaeologists assumed that these objects had been present on the Acropolis when the Persians attacked and that they had been violently destroyed along with the temples. Shortly after the war these remains would have been interred by the Athenians. By 1887, Wilhelm Dörpfeld and Franz Studniczka had baptized the newly found material '*Perserschutt*' (Persian debris).¹⁹ Dörpfeld characterized it as follows:

14 E.g., Le Roy 1758: 8 (legend to plan of the Acropolis); Leake 1821: 282–283; Stuart and Revett 1825: 12.

15 On the history of the concept of *Perserschutt* and critical assessments of these, see Tölle-Kastenbein 1983; Lindenlauf 1997: 50–54; Steskal 2004: 21–34; 77–88.

16 Ross 1855: 140–141; Graef and Langlotz 1933: 3; pl. 1, 20.

17 Studniczka 1887: 159–168; Langlotz 1920: 98–99; 177 (overview table). On the circular argument, see Steskal 2004: 21–22; 77–88.

18 Kavvadias and Kawerau 1906. See also Bundgaard 1974.

19 Dörpfeld 1887: 60; Studniczka 1887: 159–168. In 1902, Dörpfeld (1902: 392, 408–409) restric-

Herodotus describes to us how the Persians, during their two stays in Athens, set fire to and destroyed almost all the buildings of the lower city and the castle; only the houses in which the Persian leaders lived were spared. With the numerous buildings and works of art of the citadel, our temple [i.e., the temple that stood on the foundation in the middle of the Acropolis] also perished at that time. The total destruction of the citadel is eloquently demonstrated by the statues and architectural elements that have now emerged from the rubble. Everything that could be broken was smashed, the columns overturned, everything that could be burned was set on fire, and everything that was precious was stolen. The traces of the flames can still be seen clearly on many works of art and architectural pieces.²⁰

From the 1930s onwards, the excavations of the Athenian Agora added many similar deposits and wells, thought to contain remains of Mardonios' destruction of 479.²¹ As explained below, these deposits are under extensive discussion in three contributions in this volume.

The Perserschutt was most welcome evidence, as it held the promise of providing a clear and solid chronological order for Greek material culture. For the Archaic and Classical periods, many events and materials cannot be precisely dated. Chronological reconstructions for individual objects thus require intricate solutions in which they are assigned a place in a relative chronology. Such relative chronologies of individual objects are connected to those of other objects. Over time, intricate webs of relative chronologies have evolved in which indications from the textual record offer rare fixed points. The chronological caesura of 480 offered by Herodotus was applied to archaeological deposits and became such a peg in this structure, as in the Studniczka-Langlotz chronology of Athenian pottery mentioned above.

ted the term 'Perserschutt' to only one context close to the south retaining wall of the Acropolis. See also Steskal 2004: 32, 85.

20 Dörpfeld 1887: 30: 'Herodot schildert uns, wie die Perser bei ihrem zweimaligen Aufenthalte in Athen fast alle Bauten der Unterstadt und der Burg in Brand steckten und zerstörten; nur die Häuser, in denen die persischen Grossen wohnten, blieben verschont. Mit den zahlreichen Bauten und Kunstwerken der Burg ging damals auch unser Tempel zu Grunde. Wie total die Zerstörung der Burg war, dafür legen die jetzt aus dem Schutte wieder hervorkommenden Statuen und Bauglieder ein beredtes Zeugnis ab. Alles was zerschlagen werden konnte, wurde zertrümmert, die Säulen umgestürzt, alles Brennbares angezündet und alles Kostbare geraubt. Die Spuren der Flammen erkennt man noch jetzt deutlich an sehr vielen Bildwerken und Baustücken.'

21 E.g., Shear 1993.

The chronological pegging of the year 480 also happened in the more complex case of the so-called Severe Style of Greek sculpture. This style, characterized by naturalistic proportions, contrapposto poses, and stylistic simplicity, is often thought to have begun after 480. This viewpoint was first proposed by Vagn Håger Poulsen in 1937.²² However, in this case, the *terminus post quem* of 480 was not provided by identifying the Persian attack on Athens in archaeological excavations, but by a different pathway: the earliest Severe Style sculptures, the Tyrannicides, are mentioned on the *Marmor Parium* as having been installed on the Athenian Agora in the year of the archon Adeimantos, i.e. 477/6.²³ Even if the beginning of the Severe Style was not thought to relate directly to the Persian attack on Athens, it was still close enough to 480 to confirm the Winckelmannian notion of artistic advance after the Persian attack on Athens.²⁴

The Severe Style revolution has for a long time remained the clearest example of a chronological conception in which the Persian attack on Athens features as an epoch-making event. Alternative chronologies, however, could be based on the fact that the Perserschutt also contained Severe Style sculptures such as the Blond Boy and the Kritios Boy, indicating that the style had begun before the Persian attack on Athens. Yet, studies by Jeffrey Hurwit and Andrew Stewart, who both indicated that supposed Perserschutt deposits could have contained material postdating 480,²⁵ confirmed Poulsen's old view that the style was a product of the years immediately following the Persian attack on Athens. Stewart's views of the dating have led to a dense discussion. Gianfranco Adornato, in a reassessment of the onset of the Severe Style in 2019, argued that it was rather the result of a gradual development from Archaic into Classical times, as shown by many much earlier Archaic sculptures which already show traits of the Severe Style. In this view, the Persian attack on Athens did not function as a caesura for sculpture at all.²⁶

22 Poulsen 1937; Richter 1970. Earlier, Kramer (1837: 101) had defined a Severe Style dating to 460–420.

23 *IG XII 5 444*.

24 For bibliography (both old and recent) in which the Severe Style is regarded as caused by the Persian attack on Athens, see Adornato 2019: 557–561.

25 Hurwit 1989; Stewart 2008a; 2008b.

26 Adornato 2019. Response in Stewart 2021.

3 What Role Does the Persian Attack on Athens Still Play in Modern Scholarship?

As indicated above, scholars today typically do not regard the Persian attack on Athens as the impetus for a grand revolution in Athens. However, the event continues to play a role in modern scholarship on the Greek past. Two main pathways can be identified:

- (1) the identification of direct evidence for the attack in Athens; and
- (2) an indirect reliance on the attack when interpreting other material.

First, direct evidence of the Persian destruction itself continues to be recognized in Athens and elsewhere. For example, the so-called Dörpfeld foundations in the middle of the Acropolis are universally acknowledged as the former carrier of an Archaic temple destroyed in the Persian attack on Athens.²⁷ In addition, marble column drums in the north wall of the Acropolis are seen as belonging to the so-called Older Parthenon, begun shortly after 490 and also destroyed (in an unfinished state) in the attack.²⁸ The *Perserschutt* of the Acropolis is a more complex issue, which has been scrutinized in detail in recent decades. In 1997, Astrid Lindenlauf offered a close analysis of the sculptures found in these deposits. She addressed the problem of how evidence of Persian violence might be recognized in these objects and concluded that in most instances it is impossible to establish that they have been destroyed by the Persians. In 2004, Martin Steskal critically addressed the *Perserschutt* and resulting problems of chronology. He pointed out that the Studniczka-Langlotz chronology is based on a circular reasoning, which, as discussed above, depends on finds in the fills south of the Parthenon. And in 2008, Andrew Stewart's study of the deposits of the Acropolis demonstrated that the term *Perserschutt* is, at least in part, a misnomer because the fills south of the Parthenon could have been deposited in Periclean times and thus include material postdating 480.²⁹ These studies have refined the *Perserschutt* model. They leave only the so-called Kore deposit found near the Caryatid Temple as pure *Perserschutt*, i.e., as exclusively containing material predating the attack.

Beyond the Acropolis, some Agora deposits can be directly related to the Persian attack on Athens. Nevertheless, three chapters in the present volume argue that a nuanced approach is necessary when establishing chronologies using this material and that the contexts must be very closely examined to draw conclusions from them. First, **Michael Laughy and Floris van den Eijnde**

27 E.g., Ferrari 2002; van Rookhuijzen 2021.

28 E.g., Dörpfeld 1902; Hill 1912: 556–558; Korres 1997: 239–240; Rous 2019: 37, 85.

29 Lindenlauf 1997; Steskal 2004; Stewart 2008a; 2008b.

(**Chapter 7**) argue that the wells on the Agora likely remained in use for some time after the sack, at least until material from large-scale landscaping operations in the Agora from the late 470s onwards (perhaps related to the construction of the Tholos and Stoa Poikile) ended up in the wells. The reasons behind the closing of these deposits after the destruction is varied and probably attributable to practical considerations. Although it cannot be excluded that the Persians deliberately contaminated some Athenian wells, it would have been physically impossible for them to destroy all of them. Many wells remained open in the years after the invasion and some undoubtedly were still used until large-scale landscaping finally made them obsolete. This was a protracted process that probably took up to three decades.

Second, **Kathleen Lynch (Chapter 8)** argues that the Agora deposits are the result of coordinated post-479 clean-up efforts by the Athenians. While scholars initially thought that these deposits only contained 490–480 material, it has meanwhile become clear that some of these contexts included later pottery. Although this complexity challenges the traditional chronology for pottery, Lynch argues that the Persian attack on Athens can be materially recognized in these deposits and that 480 still holds as a chronological marker.

Third, **Stephen F. Matter and Susan I. Rotroff (Chapter 9)** discuss the so-called Stoa Gutter Well. Excavated in 1954, it yielded a significant Late Archaic deposit, initially interpreted as a pottery sales room destroyed by the Persians. In their article, the authors apply statistics to the material data from the well, helping to distinguish between post-Persian and pre-Persian deposits. The tests reveal significant differences in the dates of the black-figure pottery, which aligns well with other instances of Persian destruction debris. The analysis supports a date shift from 490 to 480 for the Stoa Gutter Well.

Apart from this direct evidence for the Persian attack on Athens, there are also different, more indirect ways in which the conception of the attack as a watershed in material culture is still a major influence in modern scholarship. Despite earlier attempts to revise the conventional chronology,³⁰ the concomitant caesura between Archaic and Classical Greek art is maintained in, for instance, the Studniczka-Langlotz chronology and Stewart's examination of the Severe Style. The final three chapters present other indirect channels by which traditional views of the Persian attack on Athens influence modern scholarship.

30 Francis and Vickers 1988 proposed to lower the dates of Athenian art, which had previously been based on Perserschutt, and many buildings on the Agora by approximately fifty years. See also Shear 1993; Steskal 2004 and Lynch in this volume.

Federico Figura (Chapter 10) examines how the Persian attack on Athens currently still plays a role in the understanding of Athenian vase painting by the relatively indirect pathway of a comparison with large-scale painting. Scholars have traditionally attributed innovations in vase-painting, such as spatial experimentation, foreshortenings, polychromy, and the expression of emotions, to the influence of large-scale painting, thought to have begun after the attack with new building projects in Athens (e.g., the Stoa Poikile). Figura, however, shows that the innovative features were already present in vase-painting before 480. Contrary to the conception of the changes in vase-painting after the Persian attack on Athens as a revolution, Figura argues for a gradual evolution in which the event played no role at all, not even indirectly through the development of large-scale painting.

Another repercussion of the Persian attack on Athens is still seen across the Aegean in western Asia Minor. Traditionally, the dating of archaeological objects in this region has been based on analogies with Athenian material, by way of the chronology derived from the Persian attack on Athens. **Anja Slawisch (Chapter 11)** critiques this method. With analyses of Phokaian electrum coinage and Klazomenian sarcophagi, she argues that an overreliance on Athenian chronologies has obscured the unique developments in regional craftsmanship and alternative transmission routes for cultural change. Slawisch advocates dating and interpreting archaeological finds in Asia Minor independently, without recourse to the Athenian chronologies.

Finally, as **André Lardinois (Chapter 12)** shows, the Persian attack on Athens also still plays a role in the standard periodization of literature, where the event represented by the year 480 is considered to mark the transition from the Archaic to the Classical period. Lardinois challenges this traditional idea and argues that for literary history the date is arbitrary and ideologically driven. He proposes that, if Greek literature needs any periodization at all, 400 can be identified as the beginning of literary production specifically for reading and thus would be a more convincing caesura.

4 Conclusion

The contributions to the present volume examine how the Persian attack on Athens has affected today's understanding of a central part of the history and material culture of Ancient Greece. The attack featured prominently in Athenian discourse and was commemorated on a large scale. It is the only event that Herodotus provided with an archon date. Yet, despite its salience in the consciousness of ancient Athens, there is no firm evidence that the attack on

the city was then regarded as an event heralding a new era of innovation. Only from the Enlightenment onward, the event came to be interpreted as a world-historical moment, paving the way for a view of history in which the attack made Athens a cradle of revolutionary change.

Few scholars today would still support this sweeping reconstruction of cultural change in Ancient Greece. Instead, scholarship is taking stock of existing viewpoints and developing new ways to assess the significance of the event. Beside the destroyed architecture and parts of the Perserschutt deposits on the Acropolis, the material found in the excavations of the Agora can justifiably be designated as evidence for the Persian attack on Athens. Here, the event remains tangible in a very direct way. Less directly, in the study of Greek figurative arts and Greek literature, the attack had made its mark on chronologies and a periodization hinging on 480 as a pivotal year. The fact that the Persian attack on Athens underlies these constructions is easily lost from sight.

Despite the attack's significance for the Athenians and its archaeological visibility, it is unlikely to have been the primary cause of the cultural transformations in the Greek world during this period. Closer examination of the evidence often reveals a lack of a clear cut-off point or an unequivocal marker of innovation directly connected to the event, within Athens and even more emphatically elsewhere. In the light of these findings, the Persian attack on Athens is difficult to maintain as a chronological divide between supposed Archaic and Classical periods. A reassessment of this chronology is a huge endeavor, encompassing all the subdisciplines of ancient Greek studies. It is the aim of this volume not to conclude, but rather to advance this debate.

Finally, our volume also deals with the more general question of how new ideas, in order to gain acceptance within the scholarly community, must be anchored in existing academic paradigms—in this case, the Persian attack on Athens and the chronological compartmentalization of the Greek past based on it. Following the main hypothesis of the research agenda 'Anchoring Innovation', innovative research on the Greek past that challenges established anchors may face resistance. The present volume aims to address this resistance by critically examining the development of the Persian attack on Athens in 480 as an anchor for scholarship and offering a more nuanced understanding of its legacy. Hopefully, this will encourage scholarly acceptance of research that, with reasonable argumentation, departs from the old paradigm, as well as inspire similar discussions in other parts of the study of the Ancient World where single years have been treated as epoch-making watersheds.

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The Trauma of 480 BCE as an Anchor: The Destruction of the City and the Rebuilding of the Community

Giorgia Proietti

εἰ γὰρ δεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν εἰπεῖν, πόλεώς ἐστι θάνατος ἀνάστατον γενέσθαι.
Indeed, the plain fact is that for a city destruction is like death.

LYCURG. *Leoc.* 61

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The year 480/79 also marks the traditional divide between the archaic and classical periods of Greek history. Though that is sometimes seen as a rather arbitrary division, there are good grounds for supposing that, when the Athenians returned to their homes and took the full measure of the destruction of their temples and tombs, they did indeed draw a line between the events of the past and what they imagined to lie ahead.

GARLAND 2017, 126

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1 Introduction¹

480 is a two-sided coin in Greek—and especially Athenian—history. It marks the epochal victory at Salamis, on the one hand, and the destruction of Athens, on the other. My chapter aims to contribute to discussing the significance of 480 as a watershed in ancient Greek history. It does so by focusing on the

1 I would like to thank the organizers of the 480 BCE conference in Ravenstein for creating such a perfect atmosphere for constructive debate and lively discussion, as well as the participants for their valuable comments and feedback. I am also grateful to the anonymous referees for their advice and criticism.

most neglected side of the coin, the aftermath of the Persian sack. Looking at it through the lens of the modern concept of trauma, I will try to investigate the dark side of the celebrative mood surrounding the military victory and detect the traces of a collective trauma and the community's responses to it. First, I briefly review the treatment of the Persian sack in extant literature. Then, I place it within the framework of trauma studies. In a further step, I focus on three different types of evidence: sacred ruins, commemoration of the war dead, and post-war theatre. These datasets make it possible to investigate the Athenians' reactions, feelings, memories, and fears in the aftermath of the Persian sack and their ways of working through trauma. Based on theoretical and methodological insights from trauma studies and the so-called sociology of disaster, I will conclude that the city's destruction represented an epochal break in the Athenians' perception of their history, and at the same time an anchor of their renewed identity as a civic community.

2 The Persian Sack of Athens in Extant Literature

The destruction of Athens and its aftermath have been investigated widely, and from different perspectives, on strictly archaeological grounds,² but also concerning Herodotus and the other extant literary representations.³ In this latter framework, special attention has been devoted to the so-called 'oracle of the wooden wall' and its role in the historiographical tradition concerning the evacuation and subsequent destruction of the city.⁴ Two discussed epigraphic documents, the so-called 'Themistocles decree' and the 'Oath of Plataea', are also almost omnipresent in the investigation of the Persian sack.⁵ However, the impact of the Persian sack of Athens on the overall representation, narration, and commemoration of the Persian Wars from the immediate post-war period to Herodotus and beyond is still remarkably underexplored. Only recently, a few isolated studies have approached the archaeological and literary evidence from innovative perspectives, trying to point out how the destruction

2 Thompson 1981; Shear 1993; Lindenlauf 1997; Hurwit 1999, ch. 7; Stewart 2008; Kousser 2009; Lynch 2011; Lippolis 2014; Di Cesare 2018; Sioumpara 2019b; Camp 2020.

3 Hdt. 8.53; 8.140, 2; 9.3, 1–3; 13, 1–2; cf. 8.53. Cf. Strauss 2004; Graninger 2010; Vannicelli 2014; Garland 2017; Ferrucci 2020; Yates 2024.

4 On the oracle of the 'wooden wall' (Hdt. 7.140–141) see most recently Bowden 2005: 100–107; Vannicelli 2017: 465–473.

5 On the so-called 'Themistocles decree' see most recently Johansson 2001 (with previous references). On the 'Oath of Plataea' see Cartledge 2013; Vannicelli 2014; Rhodes-Osborne n° 88 (with previous literature).

impacted the formation and development of the Athenian historical traditions of the Persian Wars. Building upon the concept of ‘sense of landscape’, Margaret Miles offered a survey of all the temples burnt by the Persians, focusing on their impact on landscape and its perception and on their becoming part of the social memory of the Persian invasion.⁶ Meanwhile, Eduard Rung has isolated the Persian sack of Athens and other places as a recurring historiographic motif, setting the rhythm of the development of the Graeco-Persian conflict in the *Histories*.⁷ Combining a perceptive reading of Herodotus’ account with Jan Assmann’s concept of mnemotope, Janric van Rookhuijzen has focused on the narration of the Persian siege of the Acropolis in the *Histories*, demonstrating how it coalesced around specific sites to which collective memories of the Athenian myth-historical past were already attached.⁸ Finally, the topic has been approached through the lens of trauma. Marion Meyer first has drawn on a conception of ‘trauma as a potential cause in cases when decisions and actions taken in the aftermath of a catastrophe are not in line with the usual, attested behavior and habits and do not serve apparent purposes’. She hence interpreted two actions which the Athenians undertook in the aftermath of the Persian sack, the re-erection of the Tyrannicides statues in the Agora and the transfer of the *agalma* of Athena Polias, as responses to the ‘emotional trauma’ following the Persian sack.⁹ Elsewhere, I have shown how trauma effectively appears as a productive framework to think with to approach the Persian destruction and the Athenians’ reactions to it.¹⁰

In this chapter, I will engage with different kinds of evidence, dating to the war’s immediate aftermath—well before the writing of Herodotus’ *Histories*—to look at the Persian sack as a comprehensive historical event. This impacted the Athenian civic community in different ways, was dealt with in a plurality of forms, prompted several kinds of collective reactions, originated multiple narratives, and served as an anchor for the rebuilding of the community itself.

3 The Persian Sack and Trauma Studies

The scholarly attention devoted to the Persian sack as a traumatic event in Athenian history is framed within the growing interest into the so-called ‘*revers*

6 Miles 2014.

7 Rung 2016.

8 Van Rookhuijzen 2018.

9 Meyer 2020 (quote from p. 99).

10 Proietti 2019b; 2022.

*de la guerre*¹¹ which has recently been developing across ancient history. Moving away from the long prevailing emphasis on the celebrative side of military events, several studies have focused on the brutalities of war. Scholarship investigated the traumatic consequences of war on soldiers, veterans, and civilians, as well as the coping mechanisms which entire groups and communities elaborate to face harmful events such as the destruction of their city, mass enslavement, a high number of casualties, and the sufferings of war in general.¹² War trauma was identified in the twentieth century as a historical phenomenon and a historiographical category.¹³ It entered the field of military psychopathology in the aftermath of WWI, as shell-shock, and was first classified as a type of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after the Vietnam War. Today, because of the massive military engagement of the Western world in Iraq and Afghanistan, it has become an urgent issue of public interest, especially in the USA, and, though with comparatively minor mordant, in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. Apart from the study of war-induced PTSD, the Holocaust is 'the determining catastrophe that inaugurates the trauma paradigm'¹⁴ and that has generated a significant thread of research, the so-called trauma studies, focusing on trauma not only in a psychological but also in a social, cultural, and historical perspective. Here, trauma refers not only to individual trauma, in strictly clinical, medical terms, but also to the mechanisms according to which trauma develops on a collective scale, how it roots and perpetuates, generation after generation, in a group's collective memory, until it becomes a feature of their cultural identity.¹⁵

The appropriateness of the concept of trauma to the ancient Greek world has been disputed: following Jonathan Shay, who is both a psychiatrist and a classicist, known for his seminal use of Homer in the clinical treatment of today's veterans affected by PTSD, as well as subsequent studies inspired by him,¹⁶ it has been questioned whether the ancient Greeks shared the same psy-

11 From Payen 2012's book title.

12 E.g., Payen 2012; Raaflaub 2014; Bearzot 2015. On the background of this wide historical interest in the dark side of the experience of war in antiquity, a first turning point is represented, in the wider field of military history, by John Keegan's *The Face of Battle* (1976), and, inspired by Keegan's work, Victor David Hanson's *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (1991), which focuses on the Greek hoplite battle experience.

13 For a history of war trauma see Crocq-Crocq 2000; Shephard 2001; Hunt 2010.

14 Luckhurst 2008: 5.

15 The seminal work of LaCapra (1994; 2001) and Caruth (1995; 1996) set the field for the use of psychoanalysis and trauma theory for historical analysis. Most recently, see Hirsch 2012.

16 Shay 1994; 2002. See Proietti 2019a, 80–85 for further references and discussion.

chological, societal, cultural, and environmental features which cause today's veterans to develop any clinically acknowledged form of war trauma.¹⁷ A mid-way position argues in favor of the absolute relevance of the concept of trauma to ancient Greece, provided that it is de-medicalized and, in particular, detached from modern clinical cases of PTSD. When referring to the ancient Greek world, the expression 'war trauma' or 'combat trauma' should, therefore, not indicate a mental disorder necessitating clinical treatment (as proper PTSD implies). Instead, it refers to a psychological injury, ranging from emotional distress to psychic wounds, in consequence of dramatic events which are 'outside the range of usual human experience and [...] would be markedly distressing to anyone'.¹⁸ As argued here, this perspective has the advantage of not requiring a proper medical diagnosis (unrecoverable for ancient people). Yet, it offers a valuable hermeneutical tool to detect traces of psychological distress as a response to catastrophic events, such as the Persian sack of Athens indeed was. The profitability of such an approach was shown, for instance, by Bernd Steinbock concerning the disastrous Athenian Sicilian expedition in the years 415–413 BCE. Steinbock framed his case study within a solid theoretical background, binding together literary and historical trauma studies (especially LaCapra and Caruth on the Holocaust) and the concept of social and cultural trauma, as explored by several scholars (see below). From this standpoint, he concluded that the retreat from Syracuse in 413 BCE, as Thucydides recounts it, should legitimately be read as a war trauma-inducing event for those who experienced it.¹⁹ However, nothing comparable to Thucydides' account, richly detailed as it is about the feelings and psychological status of the Athenian soldiers, is available for the destruction of Athens in 480.

Nonetheless, the Persian sack can be usefully observed from a different vantage point, considering not the feelings and mood of the soldiers during and just after the traumatic event itself, as in the Sicilian case, but rather the actions and behaviors which were collectively undertaken by the civic community in the following years and decades. As in Steinbock's analysis, two approaches are combined here. On the one hand, scholarship on traumatic memory as observed at work clinically is mobilized. On the other hand, the paper leverages

17 In particular Crowley 2012. For a synthesis of the encounter between ancient Greek history and trauma studies in connection with war, and a discussion of the major hermeneutical problems and methodological challenges involved, see Proietti 2019a, 80–85; Steinbock 2020: 74–81; Rees 2022: ch. 1.1.

18 Shay 1994: 166.

19 Steinbock 2020.

insights from the collective experience of trauma as it is addressed in historical and sociological research. The goal is to offer new insights into our understanding of the meaning of 480 in Athenian history.

In particular, the psychoanalytical concepts of ‘acting out’ and ‘working through’, which Dominick LaCapra has effectively applied to historical research (as shown by Steinbock), show a remarkable interpretive potential, allowing us to understand how the Athenians tried to cope with the psychological consequences of the Persian sack.²⁰ Both processes are meant as responses to trauma: not antithetical, but interacting ways of overcoming it. In brief, ‘acting out’ means to relive the past traumatic event as if one were still steeped in it in the present, to repeat it through intrusions such as flashbacks or nightmares, or the compulsive repetition of words. In other words, it means to live in the present as if still fully in the past. ‘Working through’ means instead to gain critical distance on the traumatic event and be able to clearly distinguish between past, present, and future. Although the two kinds of responses do not come necessarily or regularly one after the other, but might alternate and interact for a while, in psychoanalytical terms ‘working through’ usually represents the healthy part of the process, leading to healing from trauma: at that stage the traumatic event is located clearly in the past, and the traumatized individual has disengaged from it as an ethical agent. By contrast, if the mnemonic process activated by a traumatized individual or community stops midway, i.e., remains stuck at a mimetic level and fails to reach the critical distance implied in the working-through process, the result is a defective, i.e., traumatic, memory.

The principal extant conceptions of trauma at a community level, albeit addressed from a variety of disciplinary angles and addressed with a different terminology (e.g., ‘historical trauma’, ‘cultural trauma’, ‘collective trauma’, ‘social trauma’), all underline the capacity of trauma of causing a rupture in a group’s self-perception and entering the group’s identity as an intergenerational feature.²¹ For instance, cultural sociologists such as Alexander define ‘cultural trauma’ as something that

occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group conscious-

20 LaCapra 1999.

21 Giesen 2001; Alexander 2004; Neal 2005; Hirschberger 2018. See Hamburger 2021 for an overview of the approaches to trauma, which are however far from being neatly bounded, but significantly overlapping. A wider presentation of trauma and memory studies is provided by Ball 2021.

ness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.²²

Psychologist Gilad Hirschberger, in turn, contended that:

The term collective trauma refers to the psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society; it does not merely reflect an historical fact, the recollection of a terrible event that happened to a group of people. It suggests that the tragedy is represented in the collective memory of the group, and like all forms of memory it comprises not only a reproduction of the events, but also an ongoing reconstruction of the trauma in an attempt to make sense of it. Collective memory of trauma is different from individual memory because collective memory persists beyond the lives of the direct survivors of the events, and is remembered by group members that may be far removed from the traumatic events in time and space.²³

This long-term perspective, dealing with the collective processing of trauma across generations, might be equally valuable for the analysis of the impact of the Persian sack. Indeed, this event was handed down as a crucial aspect of Athenian identity and history well into the late fifth and fourth centuries. In this process, the disruptive power of trauma at the same time plays a constitutive role of stimulus for the group towards its restoration and renovation: 'trauma is not merely a destructive event, but also an irreplaceable ingredient in the construction of collective meaning'.²⁴ In this regard, with its broader historical clout, the so-called 'sociology of disaster' might also be enlightening. Even though it is mainly devoted to natural disasters such as earthquakes, epidemics, and famine, its peculiar focus on the subsequent following reactions, especially those related to resilience and reconstruction, provides insights into post-war responses.²⁵ Of special interest are studies concerned with traumatic events as foundational points for a renewed temporal order and a new self-conception of the involved communities. Catastrophes are not only catalysts for social change, as is widely acknowledged from Prince's seminal study in

22 Alexander 2004: 1.

23 Hirschberger 2018: 1.

24 Hirschberger 2018: 2.

25 For an introduction to the field see Drabek 2017. On the role of war in the development of disaster studies, from the 1950s onwards, and the general relationship of the field of disaster studies to military concerns see Meyers 1991.

1920.²⁶ Historically, they also represent pivotal points around which a group builds a new narrative of its history. They determine the end of ‘what is before’, and the beginning of ‘what comes after’. To put it differently, they mark a sort of zero point around which all three temporal dimensions—present, future, and past—are re-shaped and re-organized in a new narrative representation, which will become the backbone of the group’s renewed collective identity.²⁷ In heuristic terms, catastrophes, or more generally trouble times, offer an occasion to explore memory’s retrospective aspects (i.e. how the past is shaped and mediated in the present) and prospective memory. It is about the construction of ‘forward looking, socially progressive and sustainable memories’ which in turn allow the community to keep living together.²⁸ Since ‘what comes after’ differs from ‘what was before’, traumatic events ‘mark a discontinuity. Therefore—quite paradoxically—they require the construction of a sense of continuity’²⁹ for the group to still recognize itself as such. This is precisely why the rupture with the past requires a deep engagement with the not-anymore-existing past, to build the future: ‘not only the present and the near future are under reconstruction, but the past itself, which comes to be rebuilt, together with the houses and the streets, according to the perspectives and needs generated by the catastrophe itself.’³⁰

Emotions also play a role in the restoration and renovation of group identity following trauma: trauma not only has a profound impact on a group’s historical consciousness and agency but also reinforces group solidarity as an emotional, or affective, community. Albeit in a different field, that of international politics, Hutchison has refreshingly investigated the interconnection between trauma, emotions, and political communities. She astutely pointed out that

26 Prince 2009 [1920]. For trauma as ‘a catalyst for change and adjustment’ in a wider perspective, ranging from biology to psychology and sociology, see Ursano, McCaughey and Fullerton. 1994 (quote from the preface by B. Raphael, xiii).

27 Cavalli 1989; 1995; Musolino 2013; 2020. The narrative organization of group identity along a multi-temporal trajectory, involving the past as much as the future, is one of the significant points in Jan Assmann’s theorization of cultural memory and Hans Joachim Gehrke’s intentional history. These models are not explicitly treated here, but need to be taken implicitly into account as the present investigation unfolds, as its focus is not on the Persian sack as such, but rather on what the Athenians did with it: how they responded to it on a practical side, but even more how they coped with it emotionally, how they represented it in their urban environment, how they narrated it in literature and public discourse, how they signified it in their history. For a summary of this mnemo-historical approach, see Proietti 2021: 12–35.

28 Citation from Erll 2011: x. For this approach see for instance Hajek, Lohmeier and Pentzold. 2016.

29 Cavalli 1995: 2.

30 Musolino 2013: 238 (my translation).

trauma ‘involves a fundamental paradox, and this paradox has a dual nature: trauma isolates individuals, yet it can also seep out, affecting those who surround and bear witness and, in doing so, shape political communities’.³¹ While individual trauma might produce introversion and isolation from the social fabric, collective trauma helps to construct political communities. Due to the combination of its socio-political dimension with its emotional resonance of the traumatic events, it usually strengthens the cohesion of a community. This happens admittedly even more so if people are actively committed together in a process of reconstruction, such as that in the aftermath of the Persian sack: Thucydides’ account of the post-Persian reconstruction vividly describes urban reconstruction as a collective effort, a concrete manifestation of the collective resilience of the civic community (Thuc. 1.89.3).

From all these perspectives, trauma studies offer valuable insights to compose the actions carried out by the Athenians following the Persian sack in a coherent picture and understand their deep historical meaning. In the following paragraphs, I will try to show that several forms of commemoration of the Persian Wars can be understood as the expression of collective strategies elaborated by the Athenians to cope with the traumatic destruction of their city and (re)build their identity as a political community.³²

4 The Monumentalization of Sacred Ruins: Neutralizing Trauma on Site?

One of the first civic undertakings in the immediate aftermath of the war was building a retaining wall around the north side of the sacred rock. This wall incorporated some portions of the destroyed temples of the Acropolis: from east to west, several drums of the so-called Older Parthenon, which is generally thought to have been still under construction at the time of the Persian sack, and parts of the epistyle of the late Old Temple of Athena Polias (Fig. 1.1).³³ According to the dominant view, first established by Ludwig Ross, this reuse of the ruins served an ideological, not pragmatic, purpose.³⁴ Most scholars have

31 Hutchinson 2021: 3.

32 Proietti 2021: ch. 3.

33 Within a broad body of literature, see Dörpfeld 1902; Correa Morales 1998; Di Cesare 2010 for the pre-Parthenon; Dörpfeld 1885; Korres 1997; Ferrari 2002; Pakkanen 2006 for the *Athēnaion*, or Gigantomachy temple. For a discussion of the topography of the Acropolis in pre-Persian times see Hurwit 2004: 67–74; Sioumpara 2019a; and, with a general topographic and historical reassessment, van Roohuizen 2021.

34 Ross 1855: 129.

followed this line of thought: the monumentalization of the sacred ruins is generally thought of as an *upomnēma*,³⁵ as a perpetual reminder of the Persian sack and the dual implications thereof: the impiety of the barbarians, on the one hand, and the self-sacrifice of the Athenians for the sake of Greece, on the other.³⁶

While a memorial intentionality for this structure seems reasonable, one precise aspect of reusing the destroyed temples' architectural blocks might be scrutinized further to narrow down the perimeter of this mnemonic activation. Ruined pieces were collected—and in the case of the Older Parthenon's drums even transported from one side of the plateau to the other—and were rebuilt precisely in the same order and fashion as they were *in situ*, one upon the other (even though larger column drums are placed on smaller ones). Even if one might stress that they were sacred materials, the property of the goddess, which could not be moved away from the citadel, 'when we examine how and where the temple materials were placed in the wall, an intentionality beyond pragmatism is clear.'³⁷ The architrave of the Old Temple of Athena Polias, which does not bear any sign of fire and was therefore intentionally dismantled, was rebuilt on the wall, in the stretch northwest of the future building convention-

35 See Lycurg. *Leoc.* 81: καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν τῶν ἐμπρησθέντων καὶ καταβληθέντων ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων οὐδὲν ἀνοικοδομῆσω παντάπασιν, ἀλλ' ὑπόμνημα τοῖς ἐπιγιγνομένοις εἶσσω καταλείπεσθαι τῆς τῶν βαρβάρων ἀσεβείας.

36 E.g., Rhodes R.F. 1995, 32–33: 'a specific monument consciously constructed from the ruins of the Persian sack to commemorate that specific event, to warn of the Persian threat, to kindle against them, and, probably, to symbolize the Athenians' selfless sacrifice of their city to the general defense of the Greek mainland'; Hurwit 2004, 70: 'a moving display of ruins high above the city of Athens, looming testimony to Persian sacrilege, an eternal lament'; Rous 2019, 44: 'an overt war memorial, a reminder to the Athenians of the impiety of the Persian barbarians and an attempt, both physical and ideological, to prevent similar devastation in the future. The wall stood as a symbol of the ultimate triumph of the Athenians (at the head of the Greeks) over the Persians and as a goad to rouse them to action in the face of future threats to their homeland. We might liken it to a huge banner spread above the city exhorting its citizens to 'Never Forget'. See also Korres 2002; Di Cesare 2004; Kousser 2009: 269–272; Garland 2018: 117–119; Di Cesare-Sarconi 2019: 354–356; Kostopoulos 2019: 98–111; Proietti 2021: 237–242; Yates 2024: 191–192. I do not agree with those who argue that this operation instead was not a meaningful symbolic act, but had a merely pragmatic, economic function: e.g., Steskal 2004: 210–211; Sioumpara 2019a, *passim*. If so, the transportation of architectural pieces of several tons each from one side to the Acropolis to the other would be senseless, if not anti-economical: see already Di Cesare 2004. I do appreciate instead van Rookhuijzen's methodological caveats in interpreting the Athenian Acropolis a priori as a memory landscape: see van Rookhuijzen forthcoming.

37 Rous 2019: 39. To underline this intentionality, she speaks of 'upcycling' ('that involves an intention to convey meaning through the act of reuse', 45), instead of generic 'reuse'.



FIGURE 1.1 The post-Persian northern wall of the Acropolis
PHOTO BY AUTHOR

ally known as the Erechtheion, with a length of 43 m, equal to the original, to reproduce the now missing temple (Fig. 1.2). The same holds for the drums, which were relocated northeast to the Erechtheion, in one and two rows, for a length of 24 m, along with the marble blocks of the stylobate, in this case also reproducing the earlier aspect of the temple (Fig. 1.3).³⁸

There was much more at stake than the ‘never forget’ motto implied in most studies. I suggest instead that the rigorous, ‘almost philological’, re-installation of the sacred ruins into the North Acropolis wall might work as an attempt to give a rational order, i.e. to externalize and narrativize the trauma of the Persian sack. Ruins were no longer traumatic reminders of the destruction but prompts for a narrative memory of what happened. If ruins were just kept as ruins—therefore, semiotically, as symbolical traces of the destruction—they would have probably played the role of triggers for acting out and thus enticed the Athenians to relive the destruction; on the contrary, their rational reinstallation on the most visible side of the sacred citadel meant instead shaping them

38 See Kousser 2009: 271; Di Cesare-Sarcone 2019: 356; among others, for details.



FIGURE 1.2 Detail of the architrave of the Old Temple of Athena Polias

PHOTO BY AUTHOR

as items to tell a story, therefore processing them as items of the community's past. In other words, trauma was worked through in an attempt to overcome it in the process.³⁹ The monumentalization of the ruins implies the transformation of the Acropolis from a merely destroyed place to a cultural ruinscape,⁴⁰ and more precisely a proper trauma site, in Patrizia Violi's definition:⁴¹

39 Van Rookhuijzen 2021 makes a strong case also about the 'Dörpfeld foundations' as a reminder of the war. This is certainly true (see already Ferrari 2002: who defined them as 'the centerpiece of an extensive choreography of ruins', 25; Proietti 2021: 234–236: who suggests that instead of sliding into the 'archival memory' of the city as disrupted, inactive remains, they were monumentalized as such, entering this way the dimension of 'functional memory'). However, the restoration of some architectural portions in the northern wall represents in my view a further, qualitatively different stage in the handling of and engagement with ruins in order to rationalize the associated trauma.

40 For ruins and ruinscape as cultural artifacts and social phenomena (even though in a different sense, namely remains of ancient cities and sites, and in a different geographical context, namely Palestine/Israel), see Berlejung's theoretical considerations (2024: 23–27).

41 Violi 2017: 18. Another important definition to be taken into account in this regard, despite relating to a different type of trauma sites (museum and institutions), is the following: 'By 'trauma site' I mean a memorial that elaborates an existing trace and arises in the very place where horrors and carnage on a huge scale have taken place; concentration, prison



FIGURE 1.3 Detail of the drums of the Older Parthenon
PHOTO BY AUTHOR

a trauma site is far more than a place that conserves the memory of the past; rather, it is a *mediator and producer of memory*, a subject operating new rewritings, one agent among others that contribute to the creation of the interpretive habits of a given collective historic experience.

The rational handling of the ruins, their ‘philological’ restoration and public exhibition exactly points in this direction, suggesting a process of interpretation which was continuously activated and, potentially, re-activated by the Athenian civic community. When looking up in their daily walk past the sacred rock, and even more in their everyday activities in the agora just below the northern wall, the Athenians could remember the Persian sack and neutralize the associated trauma. The ruins allowed them to acknowledge the sack as an event that happened in the past, as a story that could be narrated, and as a landmark that could become constitutive of the history of the polis.

and torture camps subsequently transformed into museum places and opened to the public. We might say that sites are traumatic places institutionalized and musealized in the form of memorials or museums, places in which access and visiting becomes regulated and formalized as specific practice. The passage from place, understood generically as a portion of space where traumatic events have occurred, to site, can be interpreted as that of a semiotic transformation that is public in nature: a given place is vested with value, semiotically marked and institutionally recognized as a sign of the event.’ (ibid. 14).

5 The Civic Commemoration of the War Dead: De-personalization as an Antidote to Trauma?

The second type of evidence that can be approached—and questioned—through the lens of trauma concerns the commemoration of the war dead. In this case, too, the fallen were not only lamented with empathetic grief, but also publicly commemorated with a set of commemorative practices, including collective burials (*polyandreia*) in the Outer Kerameikos, public honors such as a funeral oration (*logos epitaphios*), and funeral games (*agōnes epitaphioi*). The funerary monuments were accompanied by casualty lists, listing the names of the fallen, deprived of their family name and demotic, and divided instead according to their tribes, as well as by inscribed epitaphs, celebrating their courage. In the same vein, the funeral oration which was delivered each year by a chosen orator raised the fallen into an undefined spatial-temporal dimension and praised them collectively for their sacrifice for the common good: the polis.⁴²

Two interconnected commemorative strategies can be identified, de-individuation and collectivization of the fallen, which can both be read as coping strategies aimed to overcome the trauma associated with the unprecedented number of war casualties. On the one hand, the war dead were not commemorated as private individuals, but as citizen-soldiers: they were somehow deprived of their private role and identity as sons, brothers, and husbands, and commemorated as members of the ten tribes defining the Athenian citizen body and army; on the other hand, they were commemorated as a collective, as a civic category deserving special attention, independent from their individual performances and regardless of the outcome of the battle in which they were killed.⁴³ This ‘mnemonic displacement’ (as Arrington calls it) had the result of creating a collective category of the fallen, on the one hand, and a community of civic mourners, on the other. The collective psychological implications of such an operation are meaningful: the intimate grief for the loss of a relative ended up behind the awareness that their death resulted in a public, praiseworthy benefit. This cognitive shift was encoded at the very time of burial of one’s own kin, consolidated and retrieved each year on the occasion of the annual ceremony. It therefore resulted in a steady form of collective remembrance.⁴⁴

42 Within a vast bibliography, see most recently Arrington 2015: esp. ch. 3.

43 Arrington 2015.

44 Arrington 2015: 120–123.

This rhetorical, emotional, and performative emphasis on the public side of death in war is usually understood as typical of a democratic ideology, in Classical Athens as it is today, from the *consolatio ad parentes* in Pericles' funeral oration to the twentieth-century rhetoric of the 'unknown soldier' in various countries. Yet, there is much more at stake than this ideology alone. The collectivization and de-personalization of the war dead were also powerful antidotes for the Athenians to cope at a community level with the sudden, violent, and premature loss of hundreds of family members. With these discursive devices, on the one hand, traumatic memory was *narrativized*. The commemorative emphasis on the war dead as a collective of citizen-soldiers rather than single individuals made them officially enter the polis' history. They became part of a story, which every year was narrated (and, again, celebrated) by the orator who pronounced the *logos epitaphios*, and became intrinsic to the Athenian civic identity.⁴⁵ On the other hand, traumatic memory was *reframed*. According to a specific semantic strategy, both in the funeral oration and in the epigrams accompanying the casualty lists, as well as in other contemporary literature, the polis was described as the mother of its fallen sons,⁴⁶ as well as of war orphans, of which the city itself would take care in the future.⁴⁷ Unlike private grief, in the intimate, reassuring relationship between the mother (polis) and her sons (fallen), the former does not mourn the latter: she celebrates them. If narrativization and reframing are two acknowledged ways of working through trauma, this is precisely what the Athenians did in commemorating the war dead publicly. In the next section, we will see that they also did so on the tragic scene as well.

6 The Persian Wars on the Athenian Stage: Theatre as a Means of Collective Catharsis

In the tragic theatre, an attempt of narrativization and reframing, aimed at working through trauma, can be identified, together with other peculiar traits of the genre. Inspired by modern uses of ancient tragedies as a means of cultural catharsis for veterans suffering from PTSD,⁴⁸ Peter Meineck states that

45 Loraux 1986: with nuances, developments and updates in Pritchard 2023.

46 For the polis as a mother see e.g., Aesch. *Sept.* 16–20; for the Athenians as *paides Athenaion*, see e.g., *IG* I³ 784; Sim. XVIII *FGE*; Pind. Fr. 77 Maehler. On discursive strategies of the Athenian funeral oration, see in general Loraux 1986.

47 For a syncretical presentation of the treatment of war orphans in Athens, see Giannotti-Proietti 2021: 138 ff.

48 The most famous examples are *Theatre of War* by Brian Doerries (on which see Doerries

Athenian tragedy offered a form of performance-based collective ‘catharsis’ or ‘cultural therapy’ by providing a place where the traumatic experience faced by the spectators was reflected upon the gaze of the masked characters performing before them.⁴⁹

According to Aristotle, the ultimate aim of tragedy was catharsis, which resulted from a combination of terror (*phobos*) and pity (*eleos*).⁵⁰ How these feelings and the whole process exactly worked has been long debated,⁵¹ also depending on the scholarly focus, if placed on knowledge and deliberation (as, e.g., in Bowie 2008), or on imagination and empathy (as, e.g., in Berzins McCoy 2013). One central point that has been raised is the following from Berzins McCoy herself, who noted that⁵²

While much of the discussion of *katharsis* focuses on how individuals’ emotions are affected, the performative nature of tragedy in the context of a political-religious festival ought to lead us to consider the effects of *katharsis* on the community as a whole.

In this framework, what is sure is that a process of alternate closeness and distance between the audience and the scene was at stake:⁵³ ‘tragedy gives license to a community to explore difficult issues *in a mediated way* through moving its audience back and forth between experiences of closeness to and distance from the experiences of the characters and events of the tragedy’.⁵⁴ Thanks to this process, tragedy worked as a means for the civic community to engage with its own vulnerability: ‘First, the audience depends upon the idea that the scene before him or her is a performance if he or she is to engage more deeply with the difficult emotional upheaval of witnessing suffering’. Then, ‘the distance

2015), the *Ancient Greeks/Modern Lives Project*, and the *Warrior Chorus* by Peter Meineck’s *Aquila Theatre* (see Meineck-Konstan 2014).

49 Meineck 2016: 7.

50 Arist. *Poet.* 1452b–1453b. See also *Poet.* 1149b, 20–24; and *passim*; *Rh.* 2.1382a (on terror); 1385b (on piety); *Pol.* 1342a 5.

51 Among many others, see Konstan 1999; Bowie 2008; Berzins McCoy 2013: 173–176. LaCourse Munteanu 2011: 238–250 offers a resumé of the different interpretations, spanning from moral cleansing to religious purification, to intellectual clarification.

52 Berzins McCoy 2013: 195.

53 According to specific filters which Sourvinou-Inwood called ‘zooming’ and ‘distancing devices’: Sourvinou-Inwood 2005: 297–298. On ‘tragic filters’ see also Bowie 1997.

54 Berzins McCoy 2013: 183 (*italics added*).

afforded to the spectator by the knowledge that the play is ‘only a play’ provides the space for entering into the experience and remaining with it.⁵⁵

A comparison with modern theatrical catharsis for traumatized veterans shows that Greek dramas did not only enable a generic engagement with vulnerability by the Athenian civic community, but likely offered a proper means for coping with trauma. In this perspective, Aristotle’s fear and pity can be interpreted as the two feelings that a successful play should arouse to bring the audience towards catharsis, i.e., the externalization and narrativization of a traumatic memory. Fear is the outcome of the mimetic part of the process, when the audience identifies itself and its own pains with the sufferings on the scene; pity belongs instead to the allopathic process, when the audience gains critical distance from the scene and discerns an ‘us’ from ‘them’. Catharsis was not a matter of purification, but of balance. ‘Katharsis enlarges our field of vision by forcing us to encounter and to process imaginatively and discursively our feelings of fear and pity.’⁵⁶ From the perspective of psychoanalytical trauma theory, Aristotle’s terror and pity appear as exactly equivalent to La Capra’s responses to trauma, namely acting out (reliving the traumatic event as if still going on) and working through (gaining critical distance and placing the event in the past).

The audience’s response to Phrynichus’ *Sack of Miletus* points precisely to this interpretive direction. Herodotus (6.21.2) narrates that the Athenians, when seeing the Persian sack of Miletus on the scene, were reminded (*anamimneskō*) of their pains (*oikeia kaka*), broke desperately into tears, fined Phrynichus and banned every future reproduction of the play. An excess of *sympatheia* was clearly at stake, and *phobos* overwhelmed *eleos* with no following detachment. The destruction of Miletus reminded them of their city’s destruction, which must have happened just before.⁵⁷ The traumatic memory of their pains was still acute, their mimetic identification with the Milesians’ desperation was complete and was not followed by the allopathic part of the process. Catharsis failed: the trauma of the sack of the city was re-lived instead of being remembered, objectified, and narrativized. The Persian sack was still too close and too present in the minds of the Athenians to be properly worked through, and the Milesians were perceived as too close—long-aged

55 Ibid.

56 Berzins McCoy 2013: 196.

57 The play is therefore likely to be dated to 478/77 (see already Roismann 1988; Badian 1996), and not 492/91 as is argued by many scholars on the basis of an incorrect methodological assumption: for a more detailed discussion see Proietti 2019b; 2021: 249–253.

allies, almost ‘relatives’—to work as effective ‘filter’ and bring the Athenian audience to the required detachment.⁵⁸

Subsequent plays, such as Phrynichus’ *Phoenician Women* (476) and Aeschylus’ *Persians* (472) and *Seven against Thebes* (467), show that in the two following decades the experience of the Persian Wars was still going through multiple mnemonic processes at a civic level, and that the Persian sack was still at the core of a developing traumatic memory.⁵⁹ In the *Persians*, Aeschylus, who mentions the destruction of Greek temples with dramatically vivid details (ll. 809–812), put on stage a tragic overall representation of the human costs of war for both soldiers and civilians: deaths in battle, the soldiers’ anguish for their comrades, the women’s anxiety for their husbands and sons, and the veterans’ pain after homecoming. Thus, the play enacted all the pains the Athenians had just gone through and were still going through in the enduring maritime war against the Persians in the 470s and 460s. Yet, the suffering on stage was that of the enemies: the Athenians could first perceive them as theirs, but then take a distance from them. The play was a success. Therefore, we can assume that some collective catharsis was accomplished.⁶⁰ It can be considered, however, that the dramatic moment of the Persian invasion was still perceived as a living memory in the 460s, when on the stage of the *Seven against Thebes* (467) are the threatened community, the city under siege, the terror of the civilians in the face of the invading army. Aeschylus masterfully represents the civic community’s emotions, feelings, and fears on the eve of an enemy invasion.⁶¹ Again, the feelings on the stage were analogues to those of the audience, but not their own: they could distance from them, feel pity, and reach the expected catharsis. All in all, post-Persian tragedies seemed to work precisely as a means of collective catharsis, helping the whole civic community cope and work through the unprecedented pains suffered in the second Persian War, related to its human costs and the city’s destruction.

58 We know that Phrynichus made a better choice one year later, in 476: when he won the Great Dionysia with the *Phoenician Women*, where the mnemonic displacement necessary towards the accomplishment of catharsis was favored by the choice of the enemies as the protagonists of the sufferings on the scene.

59 The validity of using tragedy as a measure for public feeling, while debated at times, has been recently reassessed: see e.g., Gołąb 2023, who, bearing on cognitive theories, strongly argues in favor of the audience’s emotional response to drama.

60 Perdrizet 1921; Ebbott 2000; Proietti 2021: 257–267; 2022.

61 For this reading of the play see Hilton 2015; Bakewell 2016; Echeverría Rey 2017; Proietti 2021: 253–257.

7 Conclusion: The Persian Sack as an Anchor for the Renewed Civic Community

So far I have focused on three different collective actions undertaken in the immediate aftermath of the Persian sack, each regarding a completely different realm of experience—the monumentalization of ruins, public mourning of the fallen, and theatre as a means for cultural catharsis—and I have tried to show that they can all be read as strategies of coming to terms with trauma, combining features of acting out and attempts of working through (which are not neatly discernible for us). Together, they consistently show that the Athenians attempted to make sense of what happened and to rebuild a new historical course for their community.

If we consider not only the tremendous transformations of post-Persian Athens, in terms of urban environment, socio-political organization, and cultural expressions, but even more the associated ‘memory boom’ which materialized in public monumentality and discourse,⁶² it appears that the traumatic event of 480 played a prominent role in stimulating a new self-focus and self-conception by the Athenian community. This renewed self-perception featured a clean-cut focus on the representation of the Athenians themselves as historical agents: it is no coincidence that the so-called Athenian *Tatenkatalog*, the list of glorious deed of the city’s myth-history, present and future backbone of the Athenian cultural memory and civic identity over the Classical age originated after the Persian Wars, and circulated prominently in the Athenian public discourse and monumentality already in the central decades of the fifth century: at that time the Stoa Poikile in the Agora provided its primary figurative expression.⁶³ Remarkably enough, in this narrative reconfiguration of their own myth-historical past, the Persian sack held an ambiguous place. On the one hand, a mythical counterpart for the Persian invasion (notably: not for the sack of the city itself) was identified with the Amazonomachy, featuring the Amazons invading Attica after Antiope’s abduction by Theseus, and the ensuing battle.⁶⁴ On the other hand, the most explicit and predictable mythical precedent for the sack itself, the *Ilioupersis*, was remarkably absent as such during

62 Proietti 2021: 45–52, and *passim*.

63 Francis 1990; Castriota 1992; Hanink 2013; Proietti 2015; 2021, esp. 336–349; Kapach 2020.

64 On identifying the Attic Amazonomachy with the second Persian War, the canonical reference is Castriota 1992: 49–52; 2005: 208–128. In Proietti 2015: 521–522; 2021: 343–344, the Amazonomachy example is squared within a broader socio-anthropological framework of homeostatic correspondences between the memorialization of the Persian Wars in the earliest decades of the activity of the Delian League and the available myth-historical episodes.

the first post-Persian decades and was represented instead, in its non-Homeric version, with a focus on post-war collateral episodes.⁶⁵ It seems reasonable to assume that, analogous to the case of tragic plays, any explicit representation of the destruction itself should be avoided.⁶⁶ Mythical transfiguration behind the Amazonomachy, or side-treatment of the main episode, can be therefore conceived of as a means through which the Athenians tried to narrate, somehow exorcise, the trauma of their own suffered sack.

According to Hirschberger's definition quoted above (§ 3), a distinctive feature of collective trauma is its passing down over generations as part of a community's collective memory and identity. The development of Athenian historical traditions throughout the fifth century and even later shows that the evacuation of Athens and its subsequent Persian sack for a long time remained something which the Athenians had to confront, as both a trauma to accept and overcome, and a shame to explain and justify within the broader framework of the events of 480/79.⁶⁷ Herodotus' overall account of the events in 480/79 shows clear traces of this need to legitimize, for instance by involving a decisive religious influence, in the form of Delphic oracles, on the nefarious choice of evacuating the city, and leaving it at the mercy of the Persian fury (Hdt. 7.144), while at the same time some imagined dialogues among the principal Greek commanders bear clear traces of the impact of the Persian destruction on the Athenian reputation in the face of other poleis (e.g., Hdt. 8.61).⁶⁸ At the time of the Peloponnesian war, too, the public debate about Pericles' defensive strategy during the Archidamian war was still affected by the memory of the Persian sack, albeit in ways that still need to be explored systematically.⁶⁹

If observed through the lens of trauma studies, in all of their extant disciplinary developments and scientific focuses introduced above (§ 3), the double-

65 On the absence of the Homeric *Ilioupersis* in the early versions of the Athenian *Tatenkatalog* see Loraux 1986, 69–70; Thomas 1989, 212; on the choice of representing instead the non-Homeric *Ilioupersis*, in the attempt of emphasizing the Athenian presence in the northern Aegean sea in Kimon's time see Proietti 2015: 519–520; 2021: 344–345, and Proietti forthcoming, with earlier literature (e.g., Castriota 1992, 77–78). More in general on the representation of the *Ilioupersis* in Athenian art and literature see Anderson 1997.

66 The focus on the destruction of Troy itself appears, as it seems, one generation later, on the northern frieze of the Parthenon, not coincidentally right in front of the ruined 'Dörpfeld foundations': see Proietti 2021: 449 and n. 5 for further comments, and the relevant references.

67 In this vein of thought, see also Ferrucci 2020 and Yates 2024: esp. 208–218.

68 On the Persian sack as a problematic aspect in the Athenian master narrative, see most recently Yates 2024.

69 For some suggestions in that direction, to be developed elsewhere, see Proietti 2021: 448–455.

sided effect of the Persian sack becomes apparent: destruction played the role of a trigger for renovation—not only mere reconstruction—of both the urban landscape and the civic community itself. The trauma of the Persian sack was not removed, neither it was crystallized as a past ghost. On the contrary, it was actively used as a container for historical meaning. As such, it was incorporated as an intrinsic ingredient of the Athenian way of dealing with the past and the present generations ahead. In that sense, as a constitutive feature of the Athenian collective identity, considering 480 as an anchor of ancient Greek history might still be meaningful.

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After Evacuation and Victory: A Turning Point in the Creation of the Athenian State Burial

Marion Meyer

1 Introduction

The creation of the Athenian state burial was a process that took some time.¹ In this chapter, I claim that the monument that is reconstructed as having carried the so-called epigrams for the Persian Wars (*IG I³ 503 + 504*) marks the decisive step in this process. I argue that it was a *polyandreion-cum-cenotaph*: the communal grave for the war dead of the battle of Salamis in 480 BCE, as well as a memorial for them and the Athenians who had fallen in the battle of Marathon in 490 BCE.

In this chapter, I use the term ‘monument’ for any built structure that either marks a grave (or graves) or a cenotaph, reserving the term ‘funerary monument’ for markers of actual tombs. The term ‘memorial’ stresses the commemorative function of such monuments. A ‘polyandreion’ is a mass grave; a ‘cenotaph’ is a substitute for a grave (or graves). These terms, by definition, refer to the deposition of the dead (a polyandreion as the site of many persons buried together, a cenotaph as, literally, an ‘empty grave’). They can, however, also be used for markers of mass graves (*IG I³ 1313*) or for memorials without a grave or graves. ‘Polyandreion’ and ‘cenotaph’ can therefore refer either to the kind of burial or to a monument. I define *polyandreion-cum-cenotaph* as the combination of a mass grave with the lack of a grave and therefore, by implication, as a monument that combines the commemoration of those buried in the mass grave with the commemoration of persons buried elsewhere.

¹ Most recently: Wienand 2023. I will discuss the statue burial more thoroughly in my ongoing project on the commemoration of the dead in Athens in the fifth century BCE.

2 A Problem of Definition

The *locus classicus* for the Athenian state burial is Thucydides 2.34.1–8 (the passage that precedes Pericles' famous speech about Athens' grandeur). He says that the Athenians, following the *patrios nomos*, buried all those who had fallen in the first year of the (Peloponnesian) War *δημοσίᾳ* ('ordered by the *dēmos*'), with a ceremony celebrated in winter that comprised the usual rites (i.e., a *prothēsis*, offerings by the family, and an *ekphora* with a procession, wailing by the female relatives at the grave) and focused on the dead as members of their *phylai*, as their remains were contained in ten *larnakes*, one for each phyle.² An empty *klinē* was carried for those whose bodies could not be recovered. The fallen were buried in the *dēmosion sēma*, situated in the Kerameikos,³ and praised with an *epitaphios logos*, spoken by a distinguished man chosen by the polis.⁴

Thucydides is the only one ever to speak of a *dēmosion sēma*; this term is not attested elsewhere in recorded Greek. *Sēma* refers to an object, not a space or an institution; later authors speak of *dēmosia mnēmata* (public memorials)⁵ In Thucydides' text, the *sēma* is the tomb for the fallen of the first year of the Peloponnesian war (the speaker goes from the *sēma* to the *bēma*, Thuc. 2.34.8). We know that the state monuments were situated along the road that led from the Dipylon gate to the Academy (Fig. 2.1) and, as the analysis of the archaeological evidence demonstrates, also along the road farther east, from the Erian (Leokoriou) gate to Kolonos Hippios, and the connecting pathways (Fig. 2.2). This area was not a space exclusively used for public burials, as there were private graves and workshops as well.⁶ And because there was no reserved space for state burials there was no special term for the location in which they were situated.

Finds from this area show what the monuments looked like in Thucydides' time.⁷ Marble stelai recorded all the names of those who had died, inscribed

2 For the term 'cremains' see Rees 2018: 167, 170–177.

3 Circumscribed by Thuc. 2.34.5 ('the most beautiful suburb'); explicitly: Aristoph. *Av.* 395–396. Arrington 2010: 499.

4 Loraux 1986; Shear 2013: 511–536; Wienand 2023.

5 Patterson 2006: 10, 23–32 (on the persistence of the idea of a 'national cemetery'); Bravo 2009: 109–119, 129 (see n. 44); Low 2012: 31–32; Walter-Karydi 2015: 164–165. — Dem. *or.* 18.208; 57.37; cf. Lys. 2.63; Plat. *Menex.* 242b–c.

6 Clairmont 1983: 44; Patterson 2006: 29; Arrington 2010: 499–539 figs. 2–4 (for the denomination of the gate, see p. 500); Low 2010: 344–345; Low 2012: 23–25, 28–32 fig. 2.7; Marchiandi 2014a: 1423–1433 (workshops); Arrington 2015: 55–90; Stöhr 2020: 53–56; Wienand 2023: 50, 95–97, 448.

7 A loutrophoros (fragment) shows five tapering stelai in front of a white tumulus, two of

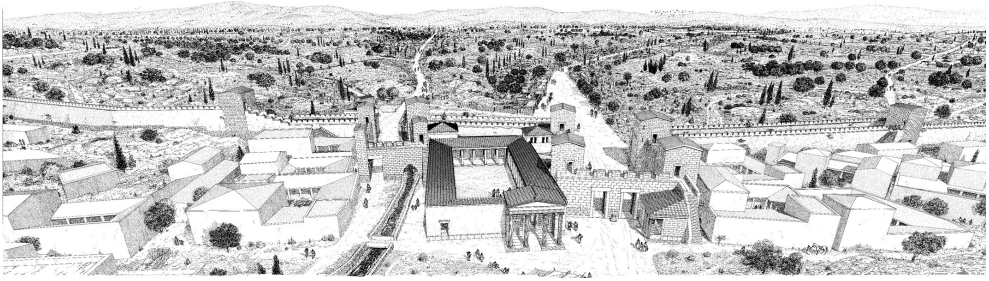


FIGURE 2.1 Reconstruction of the Kerameikos area: Sacred Gate, Pompeion and Dipylon Gate with the road to the Academy by Th. Eliopoulos

THE KERAMEIKOS ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, ATHENS 2009, FIG. 4. DRAWING K. RAFTOPOULOS; © HELLENIC MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS, EPHORATE OF ANTIQUITIES OF ATHENS

in columns, without any father's name or *dēmotikon*. The men were listed as members of their phyle. Either separate stelai, one per phyle (Fig. 2.3),⁸ stood next to each other, or a single stele contained the names of all the fallen. The battle sites were indicated at the top of the lists.⁹

The earliest casualty list found in Athens, *IG I³ 1144*, has been identified as the one for the men who fell in campaigns in Thrace, which ended with the defeat at Drabeskos (465/464 BCE).¹⁰ According to Pausanias (1.29.4), they were *πρῶτοι δὲ ἐτάφησαν* (the first who were buried) in the Kerameikos.¹¹ For Felix Jacoby, Pausanias' statement and the lack of evidence for annual mass burials of those

them inscribed 'from Eleutherai' and 'in Byzantion': Amsterdam 2455; BAPD 42150; Marchiandi 2014b: 1449–1450 fig. 946; Rhodes and Osborne 2017: 167–168 (no. 129); Wienand 2023: 89 fig. 34. The monument shown has been identified as the one of 447 BCE (*IG I³ 1162*) but see Meyer 2016: 371 n. 182 (*IG I³ 1144*, see below with n. 10).

8 E.g., *IG I³ 1147* (459/58 or 460/59 BCE): Rhodes and Osborne 2017: 54–62 no. 109; Wienand 2023: 71–74, 82–92, 103, 119–120, 334 fig. 7 (the earliest evidence for *Jahresbestattung*; see n. 14).

9 *IG I³ 1144–1193bis*; *11² 5221–5227*. Stupperich 1977: 4–22; Clairmont 1983; Lewis 2000–2003: 9–17; Arrington 2011: 183–212; Arrington 2012: 61–75 fig. 3; Low 2012: 14–28 (on the diversity of the lists); Arrington 2015: 91–123; Meyer 2016: 371–372; Meyer 2017: 205–264 (on the novelty of writing in columns); Schröder 2020: 215–221; Stöhr 2020: 65–73; Wienand 2023: 49–152, 326–360 figs. 1–32.

10 Thuc. 1.100.3. Pritchett 1985: 148: 178–179 no. 23; Humphreys 1999: 132–134; Rhodes and Osborne 2017: 58–59 (no. 109); Tentori Montalto 2017: 16, 170. On Drabeskos and *IG I³ 1144*, see Meyer 2020: 24 n. 9–11. Wienand 2023: 73–82, 86–87, 333–334, 450–451 figs. 5–6.

11 It is disputed whether *πρῶτοι* refers to the chronology of the burial (Jacoby 1944: 48–50, 53–54; Pritchett 1985: 112–113, 122–123, 179; Humphreys 1999: 132) or to its location (Gomme 1956: 94–98; Kierdorf 1966: 83–89; Clairmont 1983: 13; Bravo 2009: 125–131; Arrington 2015: 41).

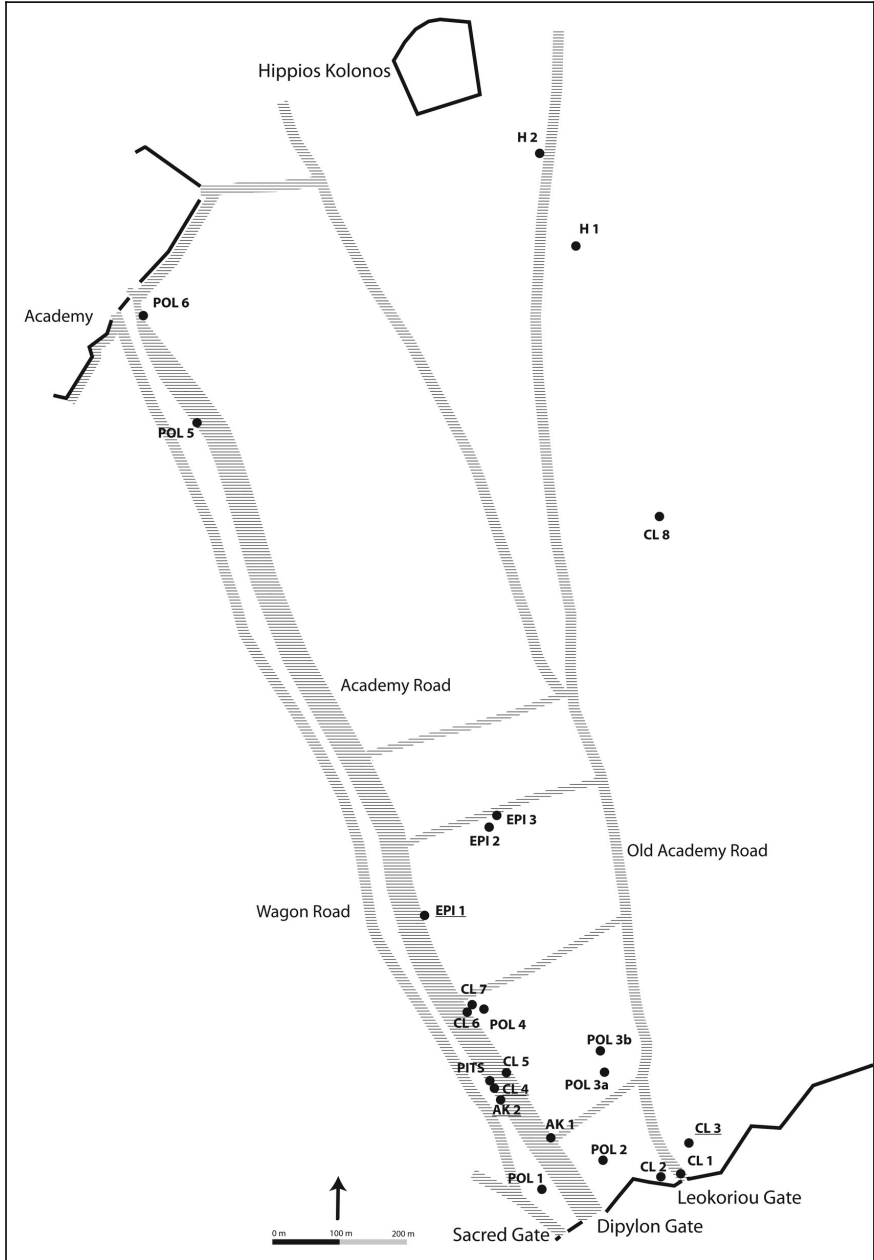


FIGURE 2.2 Reconstruction of the roads lined by state burials, with the find spots of casualty lists (CL), polyandria (POL), and hippic material (H)
BY N.T. ARRINGTON 2010 © REPRODUCTION OF ARRINGTON 2010, 513
FIG. 4; COURTESY OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS



FIGURE 2.3 Top of casualty list IG I³ 1147 (459/58 or 460/59 BCE). Paris, Louvre Ma 863
© 1972 MUSÉE DU LOUVRE / MAURICE ET PIERRE CHUZEVILLE

who had fallen in the campaigns of a whole year earlier than that attested by IG I³ 1144 were compelling reasons to date the introduction of the state burial to this year.¹²

But should one take the joint burial of all the war dead at the end of one year's campaign as the decisive (defining) element of the state burial?¹³ Or should one consider the possibility that the annual burial of all the war dead marked the final step in a longer process, with subsequent decisions taken by the *dēmos*? Thucydides explicitly says that the Athenians, after the first year of the Peloponnesian War, followed the *patrios nomos* 'in this way' (2.34.1), which implies that there were (or had been) other ways. I would rather base the definition and the dating of the institution on an analysis of the actual innovation(s) in Athenian burial and commemoration practices.¹⁴

12 Jacoby 1944: 46 n. 46; 48–55, 60, followed by Clairmont 1983: 10–15; Pritchett 1985: 112–124.

13 As Wienand 2023: 84–85 and *passim* does.

14 The dating depends on the definition. For an older tradition, because of previous public burials, also in the Kerameikos (cf. nn. 65–68): Gomme 1956: 94–100; Kierdorf 1966: 83–89; Bradeen 1969: 145, 154–155; Stupperich 1977: 200–238; Keesling 2020: 217; Schröder 2020: 181–186, 211. Arrington 2010: 499–539; Arrington 2015: 39–49 (the decisive elements—'the

3 The Persian War Epigrams (IG I³ 503 + 504)

The fate of the war dead in Archaic times is disputed. It is assumed that they were buried in mass graves near the battlefield.¹⁵ Another possibility is that they were taken home and individually buried, if the families could organize the transport.¹⁶ The burial of the dead was the traditional duty of the family. After Kleisthenes' democratic reforms, the *dēmos* assumed responsibility for the Athenian war dead. An epigram preserved in the *Anthologia Planudea* probably refers to the first burial organized *δημοσίᾳ* ('ordered by the *dēmos*'), in Euboea, for the men who fell in 506 BCE fighting the Chalkidians.¹⁷

After the battle of Marathon in 490 BCE, a huge tumulus was built on the battlefield for the 192 fallen Athenian citizens.¹⁸ Subsequently, the *demos* erected ten stelai, one for each phyle.¹⁹ The one for the phyle Erechtheis was found in the villa of Herodes Atticus in the northeastern Peloponnese (now stored in the Museum of Astros, inv. 535). It lists the names of twenty-two fallen men, their

repatriation of all cremated remains, the mass burial at public expense, the common location of burial in a public cemetery, and the use of commemorative lists' [40]—all in effect around 500 BCE, connected with the nascent democracy), followed by Stöhr 2020: 20–26. Kucewicz 2020: 120–131 (standard repatriation only since the 460s; previously: burial on the battle site as a special honor). For Wienand 2023: 22–23, 49–152, the *Jahresbestatungen* (annual mass burials of all those killed in the campaigns of one entire year) are the characteristic feature of the state burial. He persuasively links their introduction with the intention to disconnect death in war from victory and from the success of individual strategoi and argues that this was the standard practice only from the 450s (see n. 8) to 394 BCE.

- 15 Jacoby 1944: 42–47, 63; Jacoby 1945: 175; Gomme 1956: 94–98; Kurtz and Boardman 1971: 247–248, 257; Pritchett 1985: 94–97, 249–251 (with 'many variations' [95]); Marchiandi and Mari 2016: 178–179; Olson 2016: 7–8; Schröder 2020: 91–100, 165–175, 200.
- 16 Kucewicz 2020; Pritchard 2022: 285, 295, 301. Bergmann 2019: 111–117 argues that most graves (or cenotaphs) for war dead in pre-Classical times resulted from action taken by the community. Hans van Wees, however, pointed out (in the Ravenstein conference in June 2022) that there is no way of knowing how many war dead were left unburied.
- 17 *Anth. Graec.* XVI.26; Hdt. 5.77.1–2. Most recently: Keesling 2020: 217 n. 36; Kucewicz 2020: 122–123; Schröder 2020: 98–99; Wienand 2023: 53–54. Sceptical: Bergmann 2019: 115 n. 17. An Athenian casualty list was found on Lemnos: IG I³ 1477; Meyer 2016: 360, 367, 370 (500–490 BCE); Tentori Montalto 2017: 15; Kucewicz 2020: 123; Schröder 2020: 100; Wienand 2023: 51–54, 60, 328.
- 18 Paus. 1.29.4; 32.3; cf. Thuc. 2.34.5. Pritchett 1985: 126–129, 166–167 no. 2–3, 13; Whitley 1994: 213–230; Valavanis 2010: 73–98; Schröder 2020: 165–169, 292–295 fig. 7; Wienand 2023: 56–57.
- 19 Paus. 1.32.3. Palaeography cannot decide whether the stelai (see n. 20) were inscribed at the time of the burial or after the Persian Wars (*pace* Tentori Montalto 2017: 96: 480–470 BCE).

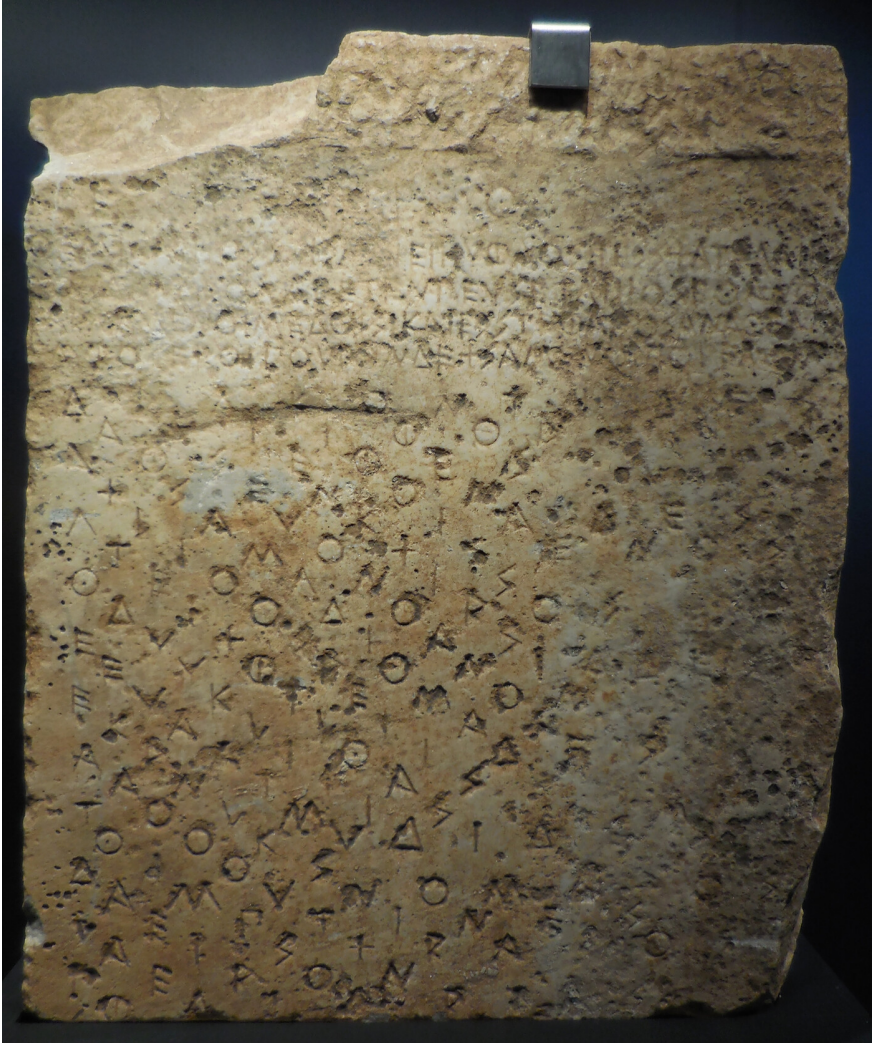


FIGURE 2.4 Casualty list of the phyle Erechtheis. Astros, Archaeological Museum 535

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names conspicuously arranged in imitation of the formation of a phalanx (thus illustrating how the men had fought), and an epigram was added that praised them for their virtues and for having brought glory to Athens (Fig. 2.4).²⁰

20 *SEG* 56:430 (found with fragments of two further stelai, *SEG* 56:431–432); *SEG* 62:188; 63:246; 64:186; 65:214; 66:235; Steinhauer 2004–2009: 679–692 figs. 1–4; Steinhauer 2009: 122–123;

Thucydides (2.34.5) claims that the burial of the fighters at Marathon on the site was an exception and a special honor. However, in 490 BCE, their burial was not exceptional. As discussed, the Athenians who had died fighting the Chalkidians in 506 BCE had been buried in Euboea, and those fallen in the battle of Plataea (479 BCE) also received a tumulus on the site, as did the fallen of their allies.²¹

The Marathonomachoi were, however, not only commemorated at the site of the battle, and that is probably the reason why Thucydides comments on their burial there.²² A monument that praised them stood along the road to the Academy (approximately 350 m from the Dipylon gate). A block found there (lapis C; Fig. 2.6) was joined by Angelos Matthaïou to the two fragments with these so-called Persian War epigrams (lapis A; *IG* I³ 503 + 504; Fig. 2.5) that had been found farther east in later contexts.²³ This new find provides a new basis for the discussion of the monument. For one thing, it establishes its original location in the Kerameikos. According to Matthaïou's and Manolis Korres' persuasive reconstruction (Fig. 2.7),²⁴ the monument consisted of at least four blocks that served as a base of more than 5 m length for at least three stelai.²⁵

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- Steinhauer 2010: 99–108 pls. 1–2; Ameling 2011: 10–23; Keesling 2012: 139–148 fig. 1; Petrovic 2013: 53–61; Tentori Montalto 2014: 34–44 (with corrected text and translation). Proietti 2015a; Proietti 2015b; Butz 2015: 82–97; Meyer 2016: 368–372 fig. 16; Olson 2016: 2–7, 10, 16–23; Petrovic 2016: 372–376; Tentori Montalto 2017: 15, 18–20, 92–102 figs. 12.1–2; Keesling 2020: 213 fig. 14.2; Lagogianni-Georgakarakos 2020: 355 no. 21 with fig.; Schröder 2020: 167–169; Proietti 2021: 65–73 figs. 2a–b; Wienand 2023: 57–60, 67–70, 85, 329, 451 fig. 1.
- 21 Hdt. 9.85.1–3; Thuc. 3.58.3–5; Isocr. 14.61; Strab. 9.2.31 p. 412; Paus. 9.2.5–6. Jacoby 1944: 40; Clairmont 1983: 103–105 no. 11a–c; Pritchett 1985: 174–175 no. 17; Prandi 1990: 56–61; Wienand 2023: 62.
- 22 See below n. 44.
- 23 *IG* I³ 503 + 504; *SEG* 38:29; 60:108; 63:45; 64:49; 66:50; *AIO* 1410; Meritt 1956: 268–280 fig. 1 pl. 36; Matthaïou 1988: 118–122 figs. 1–2 pls. 17–18; Page 1981: 219–225; Barron 1990: 133–141; Matthaïou 2000–2003: 147–152; Matthaïou 2003: 198 (findspot of lapis C; see CL 6 in fig. 2.2); Petrovic 2007: 158–177; Arrington 2010: 505–508, 519, 522 figs. 1–4 CL 6; Keesling 2010: 116–118, 127–129; Proietti 2011: 41–47 figs. 1–3; Petrovic 2013: 45–53, 61; Tentori Montalto 2013: 139–154 figs. 1–3; Marchiandi 2014b: 1450–1451 fig. 947); Arrington 2015: 43–49; Meyer 2016: 367–372 fig. 15; Olson 2016: 12–17; Tentori Montalto 2017: 102–118 no. IV figs. 13.1–3; Keesling 2020: 213, 217–218 figs. 14.8–9; Kroustalis 2020: 314–319 fig. 3; Bélyácz 2021: 154–158 *Corpus Mon.* 5 fig. 25; Proietti 2021: 127, 133, 144–152, 214, 286–292, 362 figs. 6a–c; Wienand 2023: 63–68, 329–331 figs. 2–3.
- 24 Matthaïou 1988: 118–122 figs. 1–2; Matthaïou 2003: 195–196. A reconstruction with casts is shown in the Stoa of Attalos, Agora Museum.
- 25 Lapis B (*Agora* I 6963; Peek 1953: 305–312 pls. 69c; 70a; Peek 1960: 498), also attributed to the monument by Matthaïou 1988: 119–120, has to be excluded for technical reasons. Proietti 2011: 45–46 fig. 4; Proietti 2021: 144 n. 78; 149. Wienand 2023: 63–65, 78, 329–331 fig. 4 (he suggests that *Agora* I 6963 belonged to a corresponding cenotaph, possibly for Salamis/Psyttaieia). *Contra*, most recently: Arrington 2015: 43–49 (apparently unaware of Peek 1953 and Proietti 2011). There must have been a block between lapides A and C because



FIGURE 2.5 Persian War epigrams, lapis A. Athens, Agora Museum Ag I 303a+b
 © EPHORATE OF ANTIQUITIES OF ATHENS CITY, ANCIENT AGORA, ASCSA:
 AGORA EXCAVATIONS 2009.01.0414. HELLENIC MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND
 SPORTS/HELLENIC ORGANIZATION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES DEVELOP-
 MENT [H.O.C.RE.D.]



FIGURE 2.6 Persian War epigrams, lapis C. Ephorate of Antiquities of Athens City M 3258
 © HELLENIC MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS, EPHORATE OF ANTIQUITIES OF
 ATHENS

Two epigrams were inscribed in block A, in letters of the early fifth century. A I, written stichedon on the smoothed surface at the top, reads:

ἀνδρὸν τὸνδ' ἀρετῆ[ς ⁷ ... λάμπει κλέο]ς αἰεὶ, [ι:] / ||[.... ⁸]ν[.]ρ[..... ¹⁹
 :] / ἔσχον γὰρ πεζοί τε [..... ¹⁷]ν: / ἑλλά[δα μ]ε̂ πᾶσαν δούλιο[ν
 ἔμαρ ἰδῆν :]

‘[The glory] of these men’s excellence [shines] always ... For, both on foot [and] ...’ (the stone is broken here)²⁶ ‘they held ... so that all Greece might not [see a day] of slavery.’²⁷

a (final) word of the text of this block encroaches on lapis C, see Matthaiou 1988: 118–119 pl. 17.

26 Hiller von Gaertringen 1934: 204–206 restored line 2 of A I πεζοί τε [καὶ ὀκυπόρων ἐπὶ νεῶ]ν, taken from *Anth. Pal.* 7.258 (epigram for the fallen at the Eurymedon). Meritt’s suggestion (Meritt 1956: 268–280 pl. 36.1; Meritt 1962: 294–298; Meritt 1964: 417) that *Agora* I 4256 (with the mention of ‘quick-going ships’) was a copy of A I was persuasively rejected by Matthaiou’s new reading (Matthaiou 2000–2003: 143–152; Matthaiou 2003: 197 n. 24); Tentori Montalto 2017: 20, 104–105, 157–158; Wienand 2023: 331.

27 Translation by Chris de Lisle, *AIO* 1410. Cf. the translation by K. Hallof: <http://telota.bbaw.de/ig/digitale-edition/inschrift/IG%20I%20C2%B3%20503>.

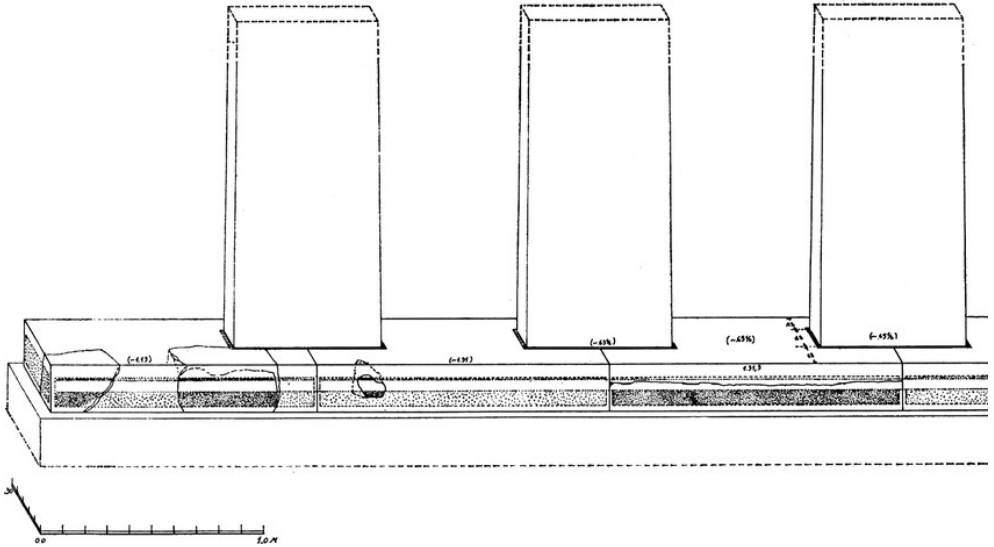


FIGURE 2.7 Reconstruction of the monument with the Persian War epigrams by M. Korres

© REPRODUCTION OF MATTHAIU 1988, 122 FIG. 2, USED WITH PERMISSION

Below these verses, part of the block had been stippled, and in this stippled area a second epigram (A II) was added, written non-stoichedon and by a different hand, after the surface had been smoothed for it. Because the band into which A II was inscribed is slightly recessed in relation to that of A I, A II must have been added later.²⁸

ἐν ἄρα τοῖσζ ἀδάμ[αντος ἠυπέρβιον ἔτορ], ἠότ' αἰχμὲν / στῆσαμ πρόσθε πυλῶν
 ἀν[τία ---] / ἀνχίαλομ πρῆσαι ῥ[---] / ἄστυ βίαι Περσῶν κλινα-
 μένο[ν ---].

Then, theirs was a [heart stronger than] adamant, when they set their spear before the gates [against the] ... by the sea, to burn ... the town, when by force the Persians were turned back ...²⁹

28 Wilhelm 1898: 489–491 pl. 9.1; Meyer 2016: 367–368; Tracy 2016: 22–23.

29 Translation by Chris de Lisle, *ATO* 1410. Floris van den Eijnde points out that the more common restoration κλιναμενῶ[ι] better captures the likely focus of this text on the Athenians, while the negative connotation of βίαι in turn falls to the Persians. He thinks the medial voice of κλιναμενῶ[ι] is best translated as: 'having fallen through Persian aggression/force'.

The adjoining blocks apparently followed the layout of lapis A. All in all, there had been at least eight epigrams. Lapis C preserves the epigram in the lower zone (non-stoichedon, in letters similar to A II). It speaks of a *herkos*,³⁰ Pallas, ‘the fertile promontory of the calf-nourishing plain’ and ‘all-blooming prosperity’:

ἡέρκος γάρ προπάροιθεν [~---~---~] / τεσ[~---]μεμ Παλλάδος ἡιπο
[~] / οὐθαρ δ’ ἀπείρο πορτιτρόφο ἄκρον ἔχοντες ~ / τοῖσιμ πανθαλές ὄλβος
ἐπιστρέ[φεται].³¹

Most scholars agree that the epigrams in the lower zone (A II and C) refer to the battle of Marathon,³² fought with spears before gates (A II).³³ Of the original epigrams in the upper zone only A I is preserved. Its interpretation has remained controversial. It cannot be based on the mention of ships in line 2, because the restoration ‘on foot and [quick-going ships]’, as plausible as it might be,³⁴ has turned out to be hypothetical.³⁵ The claim to have saved all Hellas from slavery became a *topos* after the battle of Salamis,³⁶ but it cannot be excluded that it had been made earlier (and therefore cannot date the epigram).³⁷ The combination of A I with verses praising the Marathonomachoi (A II and C) speaks for the Persian Wars as a context and in these the Athenians

30 This might refer to the temenos of Heracles or Athena in the Marathon plain (Matthaiou 2003: 190–197, 200–202) or, metaphorically, to a wall of men (Derderian 2001: 105–106). See also Tentori Montalto 2013: 146–154.

31 AIO 1410. Translation by Proietti 2020: 28: ‘In fact in front of the precinct/wall (of men) ... of Pallas ... / holding the fertile promontory of the calf-nourishing plain to them all-blooming prosperity returns.’ Proietti (2020: 27–42) convincingly argues that πανθαλές ὄλβος referred to war dead.

32 Jacoby 1945: 165; Meritt 1956: 268–280; Pritchett 1960: 161–162; Meritt 1962: 294–298; Hammond 1968: 26–27; Page 1981: 221; Pritchett 1985: 167 and the authors cited in n. 39.—*Contra*: see n. 38.

33 The gates might be those of the city (Jacoby 1945: 166–167; Amandry 1960: 7; Page 1981: 221; Proietti 2021: 298–299) or ‘gates by the sea’: Matthaiou 2000–2003: 148–149 (in Marathon, between Mt. Agrieliiki and the sea); Matthaiou 2003: 194, 200; followed by Petrovic 2007: 172–173; Bowie 2010: 207; Arrington 2015: 44–45; Olson 2016: 15.

34 Gomme 1956: 99 convincingly identified the fighting ‘on foot’ (A I) with the fighting on Psyttaleia; see Proietti 2021: 153–158. Proietti (2011: 43 n. 7; 2021: 150–151) points to Pind. *Pyth.* 1.74 (ἠκυπόρων ἀπὸ ναῶν, probably referring to Salamis) and the epigram for Eurymedon, already used by Hiller von Gaertringen for his restoration (see n. 26).

35 See n. 26.

36 Amandry 1960: 4–5; West 1970: 273–282; Jung 2006: 92–93, 96; Gehrke 2009: 88. Most recently, Proietti 2021: 123–138, 151, 286–292.

37 See Keesling 2010: 111, 128 on the epigram for the Nike of Kallimachos.

excelled twice: at Marathon and at Salamis. Either of these victories continues to be suggested as being celebrated by A 1,³⁸ but recently there seems to be a tendency to follow Matthaïou who argues that A 1, too, celebrates the fighters of Marathon (who had been buried in the tumulus on the battlefield, see above) and that, consequently, IG I³ 503 + 504 was a cenotaph for them.³⁹

Even in their fragmentary state, the verses of A 11 highlight two characteristics of the battle of Marathon: it was fought with spears, that is, by hoplites, outside the gates of the city, and the Persians were prevented from burning the city. These are the decisive differences to the naval battle of Salamis, fought mainly (but not exclusively) by non-hoplites and after the city had been burnt.⁴⁰ Why would something that had not happened (the burning of the city) be mentioned unless it had indeed happened—at another time? The verses of A 11 do not convince as an elaboration of A 1, thus celebrating the same event. They praise the Marathonomachoi for having fought a battle as it ought to be, i.e., without danger for the city itself.⁴¹ This points to the high price that had been paid for the victory of Salamis (the sack of Athens). However, as A 1 proclaims, it had been worth it, because it had saved all of Hellas. An interpretation of all the epigrams as referring to Marathon ends in aporia, because the later addition of verses in the lower zone (with A 11 and C preserved) cannot be plausibly explained. I agree with those who see the monument as a memorial for the Athenian fighters at both Salamis and Marathon.⁴² I contend that epigram A 1 (and, probably, the lost epigrams in the upper zone of the adjoining blocks) celebrated the recent victory at Salamis and that the praising of the Marathonomachoi (A 11 and C and, probably, the lost epigrams in the lower zone of the adjoining blocks) was an afterthought.

38 See the analysis of the discussion by Proietti 2021: 145–147. A 1 for Salamis, A 11 and C for Marathon: see n. 42. All for Salamis: Gomme 1956: 98–100; Stupperich 1977: 209–212 (including Artemision); Barron 1990: 133–141; Jung 2006: 84–96; Bowie 2010: 208–212 (A 1 for Marathon and Salamis); Schröder 2020: 176–181; Gehrke 2023: 92 n. 29.

39 Matthaïou 2000–2003: 147–152; Matthaïou 2003: 194–202; Arrington 2010: 505–506; Keesling 2010: 117–118, 128–129; Steinhauer 2010: 104; Tentori Montalto 2013: 139–154; Arrington 2015: 43–48; Meyer 2016: 367–369; Olson 2016: 2–3, 16; Tentori Montalto 2017: 105–106; Keesling 2020: 217–218; Stöhr 2020: 22–23; Wienand 2023: 64–65, 329 (with ‘?’). Oliver (1933: 486) and Jacoby (1945: 165, 170 n. 46; 178–179) had argued that the monument must have been destroyed in 480 BCE and *ergo* erected for Marathon because its epigrams were never quoted.

40 See n. 34.

41 On the Marathon legend, see Hölkeskamp 2001: 329–353; Jung 2006; Gehrke 2009: 85–99.

42 Pritchett 1960, 160–168; Meiggs - Lewis 1988: 54–57 no. 26; Clairmont 1983: 106–111; Proietti 2011: 41–47; Proietti 2021: 144–152, 286–292.—Cenotaph for all Athenian casualties of the Persian Wars: Amandry 1960: 1–8; Bowie 2010: 209; Petrovic 2013: 51–52.

If we see the epigrams for the fighters at Marathon added to those for saviors of freedom we cannot only give a plausible reason for their existence but also draw conclusions about the impact of the memorial.

The epigrams reveal that the monument marks a decisive step in the making of the state burial as an institution.⁴³ With the praise of the Marathonomachoi, the monument brought the fighters of Marathon back to the city, as it were, although they were buried in northern Attica, and it demonstrates the Athenians' interest in commemorating their war dead near the city. It pointed to the physical absence of the Marathonomachoi which, apparently, had previously not been an issue (but still irritated Thucydides who tries to explain their absence⁴⁴). The monument also gave a reason for the awareness of this absence because the epigrams praised not only the performance of the fighters but also their service to the community. This is conspicuous in A 1, in which the fighters are credited with having saved all Hellas. Elena Walter-Karydi and Cezary Kucewicz have emphasized that Athenian grave epigrams of the Archaic period focused on praising the dead individual; the community of the fallen was never mentioned—notably unlike in epigrams for dead warriors in other parts of Greece.⁴⁵ In Archaic times, the Athenians had died for their own glory. The Persian War epigrams (*IG* I³ 503+504) and the epigram for the phyle Erechtheis on the stele that stood in Marathon (*Astros* 535) are the first Athenian inscriptions that document appreciation of the war dead for their service to the community.⁴⁶

In sum, the Persian War epigrams displayed along the road to the Academy attest to two innovations: they praised Athenians, collectively,⁴⁷ for having fought for a common goal and having served the community; and, with their

43 Keesling 2010: 129 and Walter-Karydi 2020: 100 agree (but both regard the monument as a cenotaph for the Marathonomachoi, cf. n. 39). Wienand 2023: 56, 62–64, 68–70 sees it as the earliest memorial for the dead of more than one battle.

44 A tomb for the fighters of Salamis in the Kerameikos raised the question of why the Marathonomachoi were not buried there as well. In Thucydides' times, when repatriation was the normal practice and the Marathonomachoi had become a legend, the appreciation of their outstanding *arete* was a satisfactory explanation, as anachronistic as it was. Cf. Toher 1999: 497–501; Arrington 2015: 42.—Unconvincing: Porciani 1996: 579–588 (Thucydides speaks only about those buried in Attica); Bravo 2009: 109–131 (the reference to the Marathonomachoi in Thuc. 2.34.5 is an interpolation).

45 Kucewicz 2020: 108–110; Walter-Karydi 2020: 99–101. Cf. Derderian 2001: 97–113.

46 On honoring the war dead, see most recently: Pritchard 2022: 285–305.

47 Wienand 2023: 85–86 emphasizes the difference between the individual epigrams for each phyle in Marathon and the collective praise on stelai for *Jahresbestattungen*. *IG* I³ 503+504 is a forerunner of the latter.

praise of the Marathonomachoi, they honored men who were buried elsewhere (and honored by epigrams at their tomb).

4 A Polyandreion-cum-cenotaph: The Tomb of the Athenian Victims of the Battle of Salamis

The monument in Athens, however, was not purely honorific, as can be shown by the following arguments:

- (1) The location of the monument in the Kerameikos, an area that had traditionally been the site of burials, speaks for a tomb monument. If it had been intended to be an honorific monument, the Athenians would have chosen the Agora as the appropriate space.
- (2) As Matthaïou has observed, the design of the monument (a long base that supported stelai) corresponds to that of later monuments for state burials.⁴⁸
- (3) Matthaïou points to a honorific inscription for ephebes of 176/75 BCE, published only recently (*IG* II³ 1313) that says, in lines 15–18,

παραγενόμενοι δὲ καὶ εἰς Μα[ραθῶ]να
 [τό τε] πολυανδρείον ἐστεφάνωσαν καὶ ἐπιτάφιον ἄγωνά ἐποίησαν, καθάπερ
 ἐ[πί νν]
 [τοῦ] πρὸς τῷ ἄστει πολυανδρείου γίνεσθαι νόμιμόν ἐστιν, καλὸν εἶναι κρί-
 νον[τες ἀξί]-
 [ως τ]ῶν τούτους ἡγωνισμένους ἐνδοξότατα περὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίας.

the (ephebes) also visited Ma[ratho]n and there crowned [the p]olyandreion and performed a funeral contest, according to what is customarily done [in front] of the city polyandreion, since they judged it a fine thing to pay [due] honour to those who fought most brilliantly for freedom.⁴⁹

Matthaïou identifies the monument attested by the Persian War epigrams as the city polyandreion; he bases this suggestion on the reference to the Marathonomachoi in the epigrams and on the observation that *IG* II³ 1313 connects

48 Matthaïou 2003: 195; Wienand 2023: 82–83, 89 on *IG* I³ 1147 (n. 8) and Amsterdam 2455 (n. 7); cf. Meyer 2016, 370–372.

49 Translation: Matthaïou 2003: 197. Franchi and Proietti 2015: 232; Henderson 2020: 214, 224, 246–247, 312 T7.13. On the ephebes in the Hellenistic period, see Henderson 2020: 197–256.

a polyandreion in the city with their commemoration.⁵⁰ The passage in *IG* II³ 1313 is the decisive evidence for his claim that *IG* I³ 503 + 504 belonged to a cenotaph for the Marathonomachoi⁵¹—an interpretation that previously had been based solely on the epigrams.⁵² But was the monument a cenotaph?⁵³

The use of the term ‘polyandreion’ in *IG* II³ 1313 speaks against this interpretation. A ‘polyandreion’ is a mass grave. The ephebes performed rites in Marathon because the men they honored were buried there and the term polyandreion pointed to this fact. The ephebes crowned the polyandreion and made an *epitaphios agōn* (*IG* II³ 1313, lines 15–16), ‘as customarily done’ at the city polyandreion (lines 16–17). Matthaïou and his followers have to assume that the grave and the cenotaph (for the same men) were both called polyandreion (in the same inscription), although the monument in the city did not contain any burials.⁵⁴ This blurring would have diminished the relevance of the actual grave of the Marathonomachoi—which is, however, contradicted by the honors the ephebes paid to it. If rites were performed at a city polyandreion (as attested by the inscription), they must have been performed at a grave, too. I think that the inscription attests to the existence of a mass grave in the city. The rites performed there were connected with those performed at Marathon, and this connection was the duty to honor ‘those who fought most brilliantly for freedom’ (*IG* II³ 1313 l. 18). The fighters of 490 BCE were not the only ones who had done so. I infer that the city polyandreion was *also* a site of commemoration for the Marathonomachoi although it was not these fallen warriors but others who were buried there. This conclusion does imply an identification of the city polyandreion with the monument reconstructed with the so-called Persian War epigrams, as Matthaïou proposes. However, I argue that this monument was not erected as a cenotaph, but rather as a funerary monument for the

50 Accepted by Meyer 2016: 368 with n. 167; Tentori Montalto 2017: 101; Proietti 2021: 152 n. 104. Cautiously: Wienand 2023: 65–66.

51 Matthaïou 2000–2003: 147–152; Matthaïou 2003: 194–202.

52 See above with n. 39.

53 Cenotaph for Salamis: Jung 2006: 84–85;—for all Athenian war dead of the Persian Wars: Bowie 2010: 209; Petrovic 2013: 51. Arguments against a cenotaph: Welwei 1970: 299–303. On cenotaphs: Pritchett 1985: 257–259; Haussker 2009: 26–41; Schröder 2020: 175–181.

54 Matthaïou 2000–2003: 149–150; Matthaïou 2003: 197 (rejected by Proietti 2021: 147 n. 87; 152 n. 104 as arbitrary; followed by Henderson 2020: 247); cf. Jacoby 1945: 175.—Arrington 2015: 46–47 thinks that lapis B (tentatively connected with the war against Aegina by Stupperich 1977: 209 and Clairmont 1983: 102 no. 7b) belongs to *IG* I³ 503 + 504 (see, however, n. 25) and speculates that the monument combined a cenotaph of the Marathonomachoi with a tomb of other war dead of 490 BCE, namely those who fought the Aeginetans (see, however, nn. 65–68).—*polyandreion* cannot be a denomination of the area of state burials, *pace* Marchiandi 2014b: 1443, 1450.

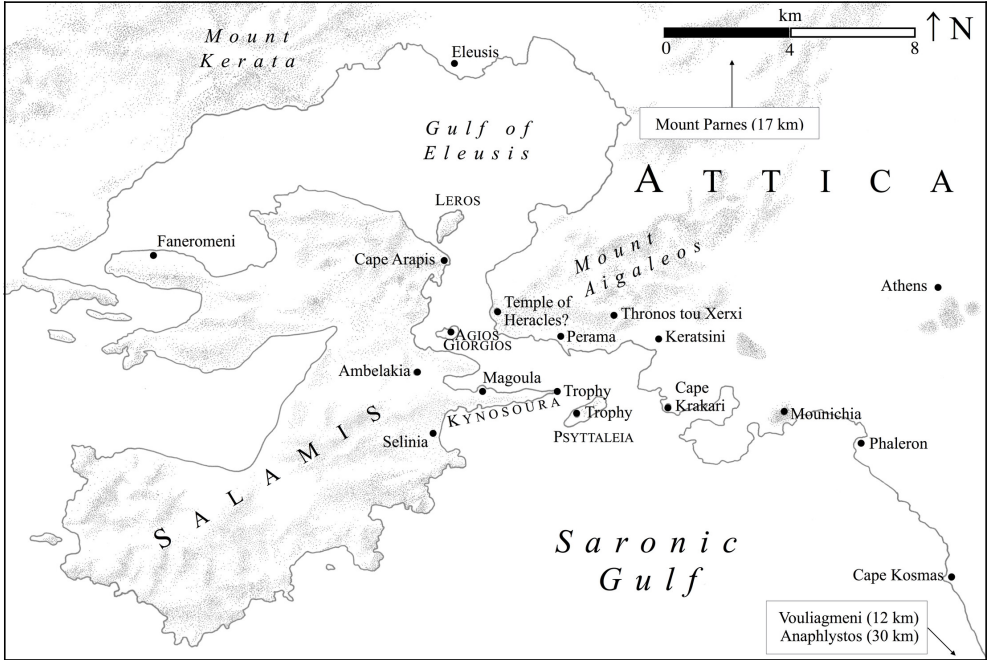


FIGURE 2.8 Map of Salamis and the Saronic Gulf

© REPRODUCTION OF VAN ROOKHUIJZEN 2018, 215 MAP 6. COURTESY OF J.Z. VAN ROOKHUIJZEN, RENÉ REIJNEN, AND DE GRUYTER

war dead of the battle of Salamis, who were praised by the epigram(s) in the upper zone of the base.

It is not reported where the Athenians buried their war dead of the naval battle. Excavations of the tumulus of Magoula hill on the Kynosoura peninsula of Salamis (Figs. 2.8 and 2.9), the prime candidate for a mass grave of the Athenians, have not yielded indicative clues.⁵⁵ There is no evidence for the burial of the Athenian war dead on Salamis.⁵⁶ Among the commemorative rites

55 See most recently Frielinghaus 2017: 63–66; Chairidakis 2019: 137–160; Kroustalis 2020: 312–319 (grave for the war dead of various cities, probably including the Athenians); Lolos 2020: 218–229 figs. 5–9 (tomb of the Salaminomachoi); Bélyácz 2021: 153 figs. 23–24.

56 As pointed out by Proietti 2021: 152 nn. 101 and 104. It is far from certain that the polyandreion on Salamis, mentioned in *IG II² 1035 l. 33* (*SEG* 26:121; late first century BCE) in connection with Themistocles' tropaion over the Persians refers to the tomb of the war dead of Salamis, as suggested by Stupperich 1977: 212; Chaniotis 2005: 239–240; Jung 2006: 178 n. 28; Tentori Montalto 2017; Kucewicz 2020: 115 n. 3; 124, 233 n. 29; Schröder 2020: 174. Wienand 2023: 61–62, 70 considers the possibility. After the lacuna in *IG II² 1035 l. 36*, the



FIGURE 2.9 Monument for the fighters of Salamis, erected in 2006. Salamis, Kynosoura
 © PHOTO: MARION MEYER, OCTOBER 2019

recorded for the ephebes in inscriptions of the second and the beginning of the first century BCE there are those at the polyandreion in Marathon and at the one in the city,⁵⁷ and also rites on Salamis—without, however, any mention of a polyandreion or a monument for the war dead on that island.⁵⁸ This strongly speaks against the existence of a grave for the Athenian war dead of the naval battle on Salamis. Their burial in Athens has already been hypothesized by some scholars,⁵⁹ but only Arnold W. Gomme, Reinhard Stupperich and

war with the Megarians for the island (of Salamis) is mentioned. Proietti 2021: 152 n. 104 shares my skepticism.

57 *IG* II³ 1313 ll. 15–18 (see above with n. 49); *IG* II² 1006 l. 22 (*hoplitodromos* from ‘the polyandreion’, apparently the one in the city because in ll. 26–27 and 69–70 the ephebes are taken to the polyandreion in Marathon for a different rite). See *IG* II² 1006, 1008, 1009, 1011, 1028, 1029 and 1030 (122/21 to 94/4 BCE). Henderson 2020: 234–235, 246, 249.

58 Participation in the Aianteia: *IG* II² 1313 ll. 21–22, 95–96; 1006 ll. 30–31, 72–73; 1008 ll. 22–23, 76–78; 1028 ll. 24–26; Agora I 286 (*SEG* 15:104) ll. 21–23, 130–131.—Boat trip to the tro-paion and sacrifices: *IG* II² 1313 ll. 21; 95; 1006 ll. 28–29, 71; 1008 ll. 17–18; 1028, ll. 27–28; cf. Agora I 286 l. 22.

59 Robertson 1983: 84; Ferrandini Troisi and Cagnazzi 2007: 68–69, 75.

Giorgia Proietti connect the epigrams *IG I³ 503 + 504* with the actual tomb of the fighters at Salamis.⁶⁰

Aristotle mentions ‘the *taphos* of those who fell at Salamis’ when he speaks about the *epitaphios logos* (the funeral speech held for the war dead, following the burial). The speech he quotes was delivered for men who had fought for the salvation of Greece in the late fifth century.⁶¹ His association of the tomb for the war dead of the battle of Salamis with an *epitaphios logos* is, however, suggestive. It not only confirms the topos of the Salaminomachoi as the prototypical freedom fighters but also suggests that their *taphos* (which came to Aristotle’s mind in this context) was well known and located where the *epitaphioi logoi* were given—in the Kerameikos.

I suggest that in the aftermath of the battle of Salamis, the Athenians buried their dead in the Kerameikos and praised them with a monument and epigrams. Because the verses for the fighters at Salamis (A I) and those for the fighters at Marathon (A II) start with demonstrative pronouns that point to the names listed on the stelai on top of the base (A I: ἀνδρῶν τῶνδ’ ἀρετε; A II: ἔν ἄρα τοῖσζ),⁶² their chronological difference can be only a slight one (because they presuppose the existence of the stelai). This can be best accounted for by the following scenario: In 479 BCE, the Athenians, still shocked by the second Persian sack (in the summer of that year) and at pains to cope with the high price they had had to pay for their victory at Salamis, decided to add praises for the Marathonomachoi and a stele bearing their names to the funerary monument of their war dead of Salamis. Either the monument erected in 480 BCE, after the naval battle, had survived the second occupation of the city by the Persians (and the additional epigrams were inscribed in the previously stippled zone of the base and another block joined, for a stele with the names of the 192 citizens who had fallen in 490 BCE) or the monument had been damaged or destroyed

60 However, Gomme 1956: 98–100 and Stupperich 1977: 209–212 connect *IG I³ 503 + 504* only with Salamis (Stupperich includes Artemision). Proietti 2021: 152 shares my interpretation.

61 Arist. *Rh.* 3.10.7 (1411a, 30–33): ‘And as in the Funeral Oration, that it was right that Greece should cut her hair at the tomb of those who fell at Salamis, since her freedom was buried along with their valor.’ (transl. J.H. Frese 1926). The *epitaphios logos* is the one ascribed to Lysias who speaks only of ‘this grave’ (*Lys.* 2.60; ca. 392–387 BCE). Todd 2007: 152, 160–164, 259–260 (on the authorship and date of this funeral speech and the relationship to Aristoteles’ quotation).

62 Oliver 1933: 487–488; Oliver 1936: 225, 232; Page 1981: 222; Matthaiou 2003: 199; Bowie 2010: 209, 211; Keesling 2010: 117; Meyer 2016: 369; Proietti 2021: 145. Meritt (1962: 294–298) argued that these demonstrative pronouns must refer to the same men, not to participants of different campaigns. *Contra*: Petrovic 2007: 166–170; Petrovic 2013: 50–51.

during the second Persian occupation in 479 BCE. In that case, after the Persians had left for good, a new monument (with A I and more epigrams on the adjacent blocks to the right⁶³) would have been erected and, when its construction was underway, the decision to add the praise of the Marathonomachoi would have been taken (and a block added for a stele with their names).⁶⁴

5 Repatriation

The burial of the war dead of the battle of Salamis in the Kerameikos does not mark the beginning of repatriation as the standard practice of the state burial because the transfer of the fallen from the shore to this part of Athens hardly qualifies as such. The Kerameikos had been used before for the burial of the victims of a naval battle fought near the city.

According to Pausanias (1.29.7), one of the state monuments in the Kerameikos was a *taphos* for the Athenians who fought the Aeginetans prior to the invasion of ‘the Mede’. Their naval battle cannot be exactly dated within the time span of 491 to the mid-480s,⁶⁵ but this *taphos* was surely the oldest public mass grave in the Kerameikos. It can be excluded that the Athenians, allies of the Aeginetans in the battle of Salamis,⁶⁶ created a retrospective memorial for those who had fallen in a war against Aegina only after the Persian attack.⁶⁷ This burial did not, however, inaugurate a tradition of burying Athenian war dead in the Kerameikos. The Athenians continued to bury their war dead on the site (as the tumuli in Marathon and Plataea show). The burial of the fighters with the Aeginetans cannot be seen as a change of this practice.⁶⁸ After a fight at sea, any *taphos* would necessarily be at some distance from the spot of

63 These epigrams will not have been exact copies of the ones inscribed in 480 BCE (why should the texts have been stored?), but they will have caught the spirit.

64 According to Arrington (2010: 505 n. 29), the lower series of epigrams (A II and C) was either added when the cenotaph for the Marathonomachoi was re-erected after the Persian sack or it had been added before the destruction and the preserved fragments belong to this destroyed monument. Arrington 2015: 46–47 (epigrams added after 480). Meyer 2016: 368: ‘... if it was in place by 480 and damaged ... in the invasion, it was then reerected or rebuilt.’—On later destructions in the Kerameikos, see Schröder 2020: 306–307.

65 Hdt. 5.81–86; 6.87. Figueira 1993: 113–149; Scott 2005: 546–552; Weilhartner 2010: 363–364; Watson 2011: 93, 104–113; Arrington 2015: 40–41, 46 n. 125; Kucewicz 2020: 124.

66 Rhodes and Osborne 2017: 74 (no. 113).

67 For Schröder 2020: 100–101, 181–186, this is one of the main arguments for dating the introduction of the state burial ca. 490 BCE. Cf. Low 2012: 28.

68 Cf. Clairmont 1983: 12, 101–102; Pritchett 1985: 123 (‘For the dead of a naval war fought in the Saronic Gulf, burial in Athens, rather than on some Attic promontory, would seem

the encounter, and a burial site a few kilometers inland (instead of right on the shore) would still pass as burial on the site.

A decisive difference between a naval battle and combat on land was the fate of those who were killed or heavily wounded in action. On the battlefield, dead or wounded fighters did not get lost; they could be carried home. For the fallen and the wounded participants of naval battles the chances of retrieval were smaller because they might be carried away by the water. To 'have no grave but the sea' is a common fate of those who die in naval battles in all times.⁶⁹ Consequently, in a mass grave for the dead of a naval campaign, some of the men who had died would be missing. It would take a monument with an explicit statement to include those who were lost. The Kerameikos would have been chosen as the location for the fighters against the Aeginetans because it had a long tradition for burial.⁷⁰ A site close to the city would have been a comfort for those families whose kin had gone missing, as it gave them a place for mourning.

After the battle of Salamis, a few years after the encounter with the Aeginetans, the Athenians were confronted with a similar situation, but on a much bigger scale—an issue that I cannot discuss in detail here.⁷¹ I suggest that the Athenians, again, preferred the Kerameikos as a burial site to a place on the shore, because it would be a more prominent place for commemoration and praise. The monument with the so-called Persian War epigrams explicitly gives the reason why the war dead deserve public attention. It praises the fighters of Salamis for their service to the community—the salvation of all Hellas! And, because it had been a naval battle, it was understood that not all those who had given their lives for this cause could actually have been buried there.⁷² Inevitably, this monument also served as a cenotaph (for the dead fighters of Salamis who could not be retrieved). The Athenians had never before manned so many

logical'), 165–166, 249; Toher 1999: 497 ('the most natural place to bury the dead would have been in Athens'); Wienand 2023: 50, 54–56.

69 Cf. the inscriptions of the Tower Hill War Memorial in London for the dead of both world wars.

70 See, most recently, Wienand 2023: 55.

71 According to Diod. Sic. 11.19.3, forty Greek ships were lost in the battle. If half of them came from Athens (the Athenians had provided about half of the Greek fleet; Hdt. 8.43–48), ca. 4000 Athenians had lost their ships. How many of them would have survived? Herodotus (8.89.1–2) claims that only a few Greeks died 'since they knew how to swim', whereas 'many barbarians drowned in the sea'. But would the Ionian and Carian crews of the Persian fleet not have known how to swim as well?

72 On the fate of the victims of a naval battle, see Strauss 2000: 267–273. See Haussker 2009: 252–241 for Athenian burial rites for them.

ships, and it can be assumed that the losses of so many men at sea (no numbers recorded) was a new experience for them.

These circumstances might have instigated the idea to include the Marathonomachoi in the commemoration. By combining the functions of tomb and cenotaph, the memorial pointed to a gap that had not been felt previously: the absence of the tomb of the fighters of Marathon whose bodies were buried some forty km away. With the additional praising of men who were buried elsewhere this *polyandreion-cum-cenotaph* raised the issue of where to bury and commemorate the war dead and marks a decisive step toward the institution of the state burial. It paved the way for the introduction of repatriation, in order to combine grave and memorial site.

In which year the demos took the decision to institute repatriation as a regular procedure is unknown. A spectacular model was Kimon's transfer of the bones of Theseus from Skyros to Athens (probably in 476/475 BCE).⁷³ Pausanias (1.29.14) mentions a grave in the Kerameikos for those who had died in the battle at the Eurymedon (led by Kimon) in the early 460s, a case of repatriation from Asia Minor before the annual mass burial of all those who had fallen throughout one year of campaigning became the rule just a little later.⁷⁴

I see repatriation as the crucial innovation and a conceptual turning point in handling the burial and commemoration of the war dead. The decisive motivation for repatriation as standard practice was the appreciation of the service to the polis that was to be communicated to any passer-by. The commemoration of the war dead became linked to the city for which they had died. The monument for the fighters of the Persian Wars (IG I³ 503 + 504) had set the standard. It called for a burial site for the war dead near the city and for a commemorative monument to go with it. The repatriation of the war dead was the next step to take.

6 Conclusion

I have argued that the monument with the Persian War epigrams (IG I³ 504 + 504) was a key monument in the making of the Athenian state burial. The *dēmos* had taken responsibility for its war dead when it was acting as a decision-making body (after the Kleisthenic reforms), and in that capacity had organized

73 Plut. *Thes.* 36.1–2; *Cim.* 8,5–6. Shapiro 1991: 645–646; Humphreys 1999: 130–131; Culasso Gastaldi 2010: 138–139 (bibliography); Kucewicz 2020: 128 n. 45.

74 See above on IG I³ 1144 and 1147. Wienand 2023: 79–81 argues that this was the decisive impulse for the introduction of regular repatriation.

mass burials on the sites of the battles. After the victory of Salamis, it erected a monument at the road to the Academy that was intended to mark the communal grave of those who had died in this battle and to serve as a cenotaph for those who had been lost in the sea.

A few years earlier the Athenians had chosen the Kerameikos (instead of a place on the shore) as the burial site for those who had died in the naval battle against Aegina because they wished to provide not only a grave for those whose bodies could be retrieved, but also a place for the commemoration of all the victims.

The location of the memorial for the war dead of Salamis followed this logic. It was the tomb for the men who had died in a naval battle, and as a monument for their commemoration it inevitably also served as a cenotaph—for those who were irretrievably lost at sea. Given this situation, it was decided to include the commemoration of the Marathonomachoi as well. Epigrams that praised them were added to those that praised the fighters of Salamis, the names of whom would have appeared on one of the stelai that topped the base.

This monument, in addition to praising and commemorating all the fighters, pointed to those who were absent, either because they had been lost at sea (in the battle of Salamis) or had been buried elsewhere (those who had died in Marathon). It was thus a tangible expression of the wish to make the war dead present near the city for the frequent devotion of attention and commemoration. And it gave the reason in the epigrams: the men were praised because of their glorious deeds for the community. Hence, it was just a short step to the decision to collect the war dead, even on distant battlefields, and bring them home—a step that would follow within a few years.

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Rewriting History: The Battle of Salamis, 480 BCE

Mathieu de Bakker

1 Introduction¹

The year 480 BCE is widely regarded as a watershed between the Archaic and Classical periods. Following their successful resistance against Persian attempts at subjugation, the Greeks embarked on a period of expansion, prosperity, and accelerated cultural development. However, the extent to which 480 was truly crucial depends, in part, on an assessment of the historiographical sources. This study examines these sources, comparing their portrayals of the Battle of Salamis—an event that, based on these very accounts, is commonly seen as the turning point of the Persian Wars.

In 480, the Persians marched into Greece, overcame Spartan resistance at Thermopylae, took control of Attica, and razed Athens. Yet, their navy faced a setback in the Strait of Salamis, a pivotal moment in the war. This defeat weakened the Persian hold on the Aegean and compelled the king to withdraw from Europe, leaving his troops under the command of Mardonios. Due to the absence of physical remains, scholars rely mostly on ancient narrative sources to reconstruct this battle. The messenger speech in Aeschylus' *Persians* and the Salamis episode in Herodotus' *Histories* are considered crucial pieces of evidence, as witnesses were still alive to recount their memories.² Diodorus Siculus (first century BCE) offers a condensed account in his *Library*, crediting Herodotus but also drawing on later historians such as Ephorus, Theopompus and Ctesias.³ Additional information is found in Lysias' *Funeral Oration* (early fourth century BCE), and in the biographies of Themistocles

1 I am grateful to the editors of this volume for meticulously reviewing my chapter and providing numerous valuable comments.

2 Aeschylus is reported to have taken part in the battle himself by Pausanias (1.14.5) and Schol. in *Persians* 432 (ed. Dähnhardt), which refers to Ion of Chios (fifth century BCE) as a source. Caution is needed, however, as biographies of ancient writers tend to include elements derived from their works. For Aeschylus, see Lefkowitz 1981: 69–70.

3 Credit to Herodotus: Diod. Sic. 11.37.6 (see below). For the other sources, see Marincola 2007a: 107–111. For Diodorus' use of Ephorus in particular, see Hornblower 1994: 36–38; Flower 1998: 370; Green 2006: 14–16; 27–28; 70 n. 72; Marincola 2007b.

and Aristides by Nepos (first century BCE) and Plutarch (first to second centuries CE).⁴

Despite this wealth of sources, reconstructing the Battle of Salamis proves challenging since these accounts solely originate from Greek perspectives, with a noticeable absence of independent Persian sources. Moreover, the narratives are shaped by generic conventions that impose limitations on their historical reliability.⁵ Some scholars argue that Aeschylus, while composing *Persians*, adhered closely to the actual events, given that many Athenians in his audience had been personally involved in the battle.⁶ However, his play was part of a religious festival and featured a Salamis narrative embedded in a fictional speech delivered by a messenger at the Persian court—a tale of Greek victory told through the imaginary lens of a defeated Persian.⁷ As a tragedy, *Persians* focuses on universal themes, portraying Xerxes' defeat in Greece as a consequence of *hubris* and staging him in utter consternation at the end of the play. Interestingly, the play avoids naming individual Greeks, possibly to prevent causing offence to bereaved relatives in the audience, as Goldhill suggests.⁸ Aeschylus, it seems, had more immediate concerns than writing a straightforward historical account. By crafting an immersive narrative rich in sights and sounds, the playwright aimed to address the collective trauma stemming from the battle, and, more broadly, from the evacuation, loss, and rebuilding of Athens and its sanctuaries.⁹

4 Aesch. *Pers.* 249–514; Hdt. 8.40–125; Lys. 2.32–44; Diod. Sic. 11.13.3–4; 11.15.2–19.6; Nep. 2.4–5; 3.2; Plut. *Them.* 10–17; *Arist.* 8–9. For historical analyses, see Hignett 1963: 193–239; Green 1970: 153–198; Burn 1984: 450–475; Lazenby 1993: 151–197.

5 In general, battle narratives pose challenges as their narrative format enables those involved to retrospectively make sense of the disorderly events on the battleground by imposing chronological, spatial, and causal order onto them. See the useful discussion by van Rookhuijzen 2021: 213–214 on the consequences for the topography of battlegrounds (see below) and Huitink's 2024 analysis of the narratives of the Battle of Cynaxa.

6 Lazenby, in his conclusion regarding Aeschylus' and Herodotus' narratives, asserts that 'the coincidences between the two accounts ... suggest that in relying on them, we can come close to the *truth*' (1988: 185, my italics). See Wallinga 2005: 114–119 for comparison. Parker 2007: 6 takes a more nuanced stance, highlighting the probability of distortions in the account due to patriotic and generic influences.

7 Pelling characterizes the messenger speech as 'a version of history ... fashioned, stylized, and elaborated according to some generic conventions and audience expectations' (1997: 1). See also Hammond 1956: 39, who points at generic aspects that make it impossible to regard the messenger speech in *Persians* as a comprehensive account of the battle.

8 Goldhill 1988: 192–193.

9 For the impact of trauma and memory on the accounts of the Persian Wars, see Proietti 2019, 2021, including references to scholarship on the broader effects of war trauma on (historical) narratives. See also Proietti's contribution to this volume, pp. 30–34. For the 'therapeutic'

Historiographical sources adhere to generic conventions as well. It is widely recognized that ancient historiography is rooted in epic traditions. When reading Herodotus' account, therefore, we, as Flower puts it, are 'viewing the events of the Persian Wars through the lens of Homeric epic'.¹⁰ Recently, van Rookhuijzen has introduced another perspective, shedding light on the challenges faced by a historian like Herodotus when reconstructing a naval battle like Salamis. He identifies Herodotus' 'littoral gaze', in which identifiable landmarks on the coasts of Attica and Salamis are intricately linked to the topography of the battle.¹¹ Most important for my argument here, however, is the polemical nature of ancient historiography, as discussed in insightful studies by Marincola and Thomas.¹² Beginning with Hecataeus, ancient historians examined their predecessors' works, aiming to correct, revise, and adapt them.¹³ In this process, they were driven by contemporary concerns, aligning their narratives with goals that lay beyond the narratives' temporal boundaries, as demonstrated by Grethlein.¹⁴ In Herodotus' narrative, for instance, references to disputes over the roles of the Aeginetans and Corinthians in the Battle of Salamis (Hdt. 8.84 and 8.94, respectively) appear to mirror later fifth century tensions between erstwhile allies turned opponents at the time when Herodotus composed his work.¹⁵

function of *Persians*, see Proietti 2022. For insights into the immersive effects of descriptive elements like sight and sound in battle narratives, see Allan 2018.

- 10 Flower 1998: 375. Strasburger 1972 is seminal for the influence of Homeric epic on historiography. Marincola's 2018 overview explores the diverse ways in which Herodotus' battle narratives are shaped by Homeric epic.
- 11 Van Rookhuijzen 2021, acknowledging that 'we will never be able to reconstruct in full detail what happened in 480 BCE' (2021: 217).
- 12 Marincola 1997: 217–257; Thomas 2000: 214–221.
- 13 Hence, the interdependence of these sources complicates the findings of those who reconstruct events by comparing sources as if they exist in isolation. In the case of Salamis, Wallinga argues for the credibility of the 1,207 ships in Xerxes' fleet, citing its occurrence in both *Persians* (341–343) and *Histories* (7.89.1) (Wallinga 2005: 32–46, and see 117–119 for his argument that Herodotus did not use *Persians* as a source). This claim elicited a varied response, with some reviewers supporting it (Meißner 2006; Papalas 2006; Evans 2008) and others dissenting (Potter 2006; Murray 2008). Parker 2007: 2–3 acknowledges that Herodotus derived the number from Aeschylus (cf. Lazenby 1993: 173–174), whose work he must have known. Verbal allusions to *Persians* by Herodotus have been pointed out by Lazenby 1988: 185, Pelling 1997: 215, Bowie *ad* 8.68γ, and Parker 2007.
- 14 Grethlein 2013.
- 15 Passages in Thucydides (e.g., 1.73–74) reveal that the Persian Wars held significance in Greek diplomacy in the period preceding the Peloponnesian War. For contemporary issues in Herodotus' historical narrative, see also Fornara 1971, Moles 1996, Thomas 2000, and

In a perceptive article, Marincola sheds light on this fundamentally ‘revisionist’ approach of ancient historiographers towards their predecessors by comparing the depictions of the battles in the Persian Wars.¹⁶ In the case of Salamis, he notes disparities between Aeschylus, who portrays the Greeks as a unified force, and Herodotus, who underscores internal divisions within the Greek alliance. Diodorus Siculus, on the other hand, emphasizes Greek unity, depicting Spartans and Athenians interacting more harmoniously than in Herodotus’ account. Here, Marincola identifies traces of a ‘decidedly panhellenic perspective’, probably derived from the fourth century historian Ephorus, in Diodorus’ version.¹⁷

In this contribution, I will build on Marincola’s findings and explore the narrative sources of the Battle of Salamis in relation to one another.¹⁸ First, I will examine the initial engagement of the battle and argue that Herodotus’ account responds to Aeschylus’ more glorifying rendition in *Persians*. Next, I will discuss four aspects in which Diodorus’ version reacts to Herodotus’ account, seeking insights into the reasons behind these differences. Additionally, I will examine chronological inconsistencies in Diodorus’ narrative and argue that they stem from a revisionist agenda.

2 Aeschylus and Herodotus on the Initial Engagement at Salamis

In a recent comparative analysis, Parker notes regarding the start of the battle that ‘Herodotus’ account in general agrees with Aeschylus’, as both authors depict the action at Salamis commencing with a Greek ship ramming an opponent (Aesch. *Pers.* 408–411; Hdt. 8.84.1).¹⁹ Parker, however, chooses to ‘omit’ the circumstances under which this initial engagement occurs.²⁰ Yet, their

Irwin 2013. Osborne 1996: 337 points out that stories about the Persian Wars ‘became so politically charged that no confidence can be placed in any claims about what went on’.

16 Marincola 2007a. See also van Wees in this volume (pp. 92–123) on Ctesias’ version of the Persian Wars as a deliberate departure from Herodotus’ account.

17 Marincola 2007a: 114–122, with 117–120 on Salamis. The citation from page 115.

18 For a comparable discussion of the sources of the Battle of Thermopylae (from a more formalist narratological perspective), see de Bakker 2018. For a comparison of Herodotus’ account of the Battle of Plataea with the encomiastic version of Simonides’ Plataea Elegy, see Thomas 2018: 276–282.

19 Parker 2007: 6. Compare Wallinga 2005: 114, who observes ‘no serious disagreements’ between Aeschylus and Herodotus.

20 Parker 2007: 17.

distinctions are noteworthy, as Aeschylus—in contrast to Herodotus—portrays the Greeks confidently initiating the attack on the Persians:

At that time, the Greeks chanted a solemn paean not as a signal for retreat but *advancing into battle with a confident spirit* (ἐς μάχην ὀρμώντες εὐψύχῳ θράσει).

AESCH. *Pers.* 392–394

As dawn breaks, the ships emerge ‘in proper order’ (εὐτάκτως, 399) and move forward, away from the coast of Salamis, as indicated by ‘the entire fleet set out’ (ἐπεξεχώρει, 401). However, in Herodotus’ account, the Persians take the initiative, as they ‘immediately attacked’ (αὐτίκα ἐπεκέατο, Hdt. 8.83.2) when the Greeks had set their ships to sea. The Greeks initially ‘backed water and ran their ships aground’ (πρύμνην ἀνεκρούοντο καὶ ὤκελλον, 8.84.1), only engaging when the Athenian Ameinias (or, in an alternative version, an Aeginetan ship) had attacked and set an example. Their initial lack of confidence is emphasized in the subsequent anecdote about a phantom woman, who rebukes ‘all’ (ἅπαν) Greeks for backing water (8.84.2). Thus, while in Aeschylus’ narrative the Persians are alarmed by the unexpected sight and sound of the approaching fleet (Aesch. *Pers.* 391–392), in Herodotus it is the Greeks who seem intimidated by the advancing Persians and almost yield under pressure.

Several scholars have noted the disparity between Herodotus and Aeschylus on this matter.²¹ Lazenby views the initial Greek retreat as a tactical maneuver, either a ‘momentary hesitation’ for the Greeks to complete their battle line or a deliberate strategy to entice the Persian fleet into the narrows.²² In Herodotus’ account, however, the initial Greek retreat is not attributed to a strategic motive. In other battles, the historian explicitly mentions instances when strategy guides these actions. For example, during the Battle of Thermopylae, the Spartans turn their backs to the Persians to surprise their pursuers (Hdt. 7.211.3). Similarly, in the Battle of Artemision, the Greeks ‘draw their sterns together’ (8.11.1) to maximize their chances of success against their numerically superior opponents. This contrasts with the opening engagement at Salamis, where the Greeks back water and run their ships aground, diminishing their effectiveness.

21 Hammond 1956: 39; Hignett 1963: 234; Pelling 1997: 7–8; Marincola 2018: 12, cf. p. 12 n. 31.

22 Lazenby 1988: 181, cf. 1993: 189. Compare Hammond 1956: 46–47, Green 1970: 187 (‘a simulated flight’), and Burn 1984: 460–461; Wallinga 2005: 125–129 believes that the Corinthian retreat (Hdt. 8.94) should also be explained as a tactical maneuver.

If we agree with Parker and others (see n. 13 above), that Herodotus was familiar with Aeschylus' *Persians*, the question arises: why did Herodotus opt to portray the Greeks as appearing fearful at the beginning of the battle? Given that he admits that he was in the dark about the precise course of the fighting (8.87.1), it seems unlikely that he had access to any better sources than Aeschylus' play. In this light, a thematic explanation of Herodotus' account may be more plausible. A comparison with Herodotus' two other major battle narratives of the Persian Wars (Thermopylae and Plataea) reveals three converging aspects in the passage under review. Together, these aspects seem to hint at an underlying message in Herodotus' battle narratives of the Persian Wars.

First, in these two battles Herodotus highlights Greek *fear* preceding the first encounter, creating the impression of a formidable enemy. At Thermopylae, the Greeks initially plan a complete withdrawal 'out of fear' (*καταρρωδέοντες*, 7.207), and prior to the Battle of Plataea, Pausanias, 'fearing the Persians' (*καταρρωδήσας τοὺς Πέρσας*, 9.46.1), asks the Athenians to swap positions and line up opposite the Persians instead of the Spartans.²³ Herodotus also notes Spartan fear of the Persian cavalry (9.56.2). Seeking refuge in the foothills of the Cithaeron, the Spartans urge the Athenians to supply assistance (9.60).²⁴ Ultimately, it is the Arcadians who initiate the attack on the Persians, with Pausanias and his Spartans joining only when their sacrifices prove favorable (9.62.1).

Second, in each battle, Herodotus highlights the *fragility* of the Greek coalition. In the case of Thermopylae, the Spartans' final stand is not so much motivated by a noble ideal of self-sacrifice, but rather attributed to the anger of the Phocians and Locrians. They have been promised security when invited to join the coalition and accordingly feel abandoned when the Peloponnesians plan to withdraw to the Isthmus (7.203; 207).²⁵ When Ephialtes' betrayal leaves the Greek forces surrounded, opinions are again 'split' (*ἔσχιζοντο*, 7.219.2). Only the Thespians decide to stand with the Spartans, while the rest of the coalition

23 Even before the outbreak of the war, the approaching Persian army instills 'great fear' in the Spartans, which makes them concede when Tisamenos demands Spartan citizenship (Hdt. 9.33).

24 Spartan problems escalate during the Battle of Plataea when their commander, Amompharetos, refuses to withdraw with Pausanias, thus jeopardizing the entire operation (9.53–57). Baragwanath 2012: 309–310 emphasizes the symbolic significance of this passage, highlighting how Amompharetos' stubborn steadfastness underscores the Spartan willingness to compromise.

25 De Bakker 2018: 73.

retreats.²⁶ Prior to the Battle of Plataea, the fragility of the coalition is once more evident when the Athenians consider striking a deal with the Persians if the Spartans fail to send troops (9.7; 11). Only at the last moment do the Ephors yield, following the advice of Chileos from Arcadia (9.9.2).²⁷

Third, Herodotus ascribes a *pivotal role to Athens*, which permeates his entire narrative of the war. Athens defies oracles predicting its destruction before the invasion, and, according to Herodotus, it is Athenian resilience in the face of danger that ultimately saves the Greeks from Persian enslavement. This opinion, he acknowledges, will be ‘begrudged by the majority’ (7.139), which reveals a perspective from the later fifth century, when Athenian policies had grown unpopular in Greece. Yet, in the admirals’ debate at Salamis, Eurybiades casts the decisive vote in favor of the Athenians, recognizing that the coalition stands no chance against the Persians without them (8.63). Moreover, their merits are not confined to sea battles but also extend to the battleground. At Plataea, Herodotus records significant interventions as the Athenians replace the battered Megareans (9.21) and deliver the decisive blow in besieging the Persian camp. In this endeavor—unlike the Spartans—the Athenians exhibit the ability to scale and tear down the wall ‘with courage and resilience’ (ἀρετῇ τε καὶ λιπαρίῃ, 9.70.2). Most crucial, according to Herodotus, is their readiness to accept Spartan overall command of the coalition, despite contributing the largest number of ships in the sea battles at Artemision and Salamis (8.1.1 and 8.44.1, respectively). They align with the Spartans in rejecting Gelon’s ambition to lead the coalition (7.161) and remain obedient to Pausanias even when they realize his leadership is challenged by the mutiny of Amompharetos (9.54).²⁸

Greek fear, coalition fragility, and Athens’ pivotal role converge in the buildup to the initial engagement at Salamis. Herodotus highlights the division among Greek admirals, portraying their discussions as ‘verbal skirmishes’ (ἔπεισι ἀκροβολισάμενοι, 8.64.1), ‘clashes of words’ (ὠθισμὸς λόγων, 8.78) and ‘disputes’ (λόγων ἀμφισβασίη, 8.81). Themistocles even engages in derogatory remarks about his Corinthian counterpart Adeimantos, threatening to withdraw from the coalition if the Greeks abandon their position at Salamis (8.61.2–

26 On the ambiguities in Herodotus’ characterization of Leonidas, whose choices in battle are not exclusively motivated by heroic ideals, see Baragwanath 2008: 64–78.

27 This is a second instance of Arcadian—rather than Spartan—alertness in the Plataea episode. Observe also that Arcadians are cited as the first to enter the Persian camp in the final phase of the battle (Hdt. 9.70.3).

28 For the Athens-centered perspective of Herodotus, see also van Wees in this volume (pp. 94–96, 100–102, 112–114).

62). At dawn, in his pre-battle exhortation, Themistocles urges the Greeks to ‘choose the better over the weaker’ (8.83.1), but their fearful retreat in the face of the Persian attack reveals a failure to motivate them. Crucially, the Athenian Ameinias (later praised as one of the best individual commanders, 8.93.1) puts an end to the initial Greek retreat by ‘charging forward’ (ἐξαναχθείς, 8.84.1) and colliding his ship with an opponent’s. When he is unable to dislodge, others rush to his aid, marking the commencement of the battle. In line with the special role Herodotus attributes to the Athenians, their ship is the first one named as igniting the spark in the tinderbox.

The contrast with Aeschylus’ portrayal of the confident and collective Greek attack is striking. In *Persians*, the Greeks initiate the attack and operate as a cohesive, united force, whose warlike qualities are attributed to the freedom of their citizens (Aesch. *Pers.* 231–245). In reaction, Herodotus seems to have chosen a different perspective in his battle narrative to align it with the overarching themes he intends to convey. Unlike versions that amplify Greek heroism and unity in a spirited defense, Herodotus’ account emphasizes Greek fears, division, and distrust.²⁹ It highlights that the war against the formidable armies of Xerxes was won with difficulty, and thanks to fortunate, well-timed, and dutiful interventions by the Athenians. Contemporary concerns may have inspired Herodotus to emphasize these themes. In a significant flash-forward, immediately after commending the Athenians for yielding command to the Spartans during the Persian invasion, Herodotus alludes to post-war developments: Athens continues fighting the Persians independently after taking command from the Spartans, a separation that ultimately leads to internal strife among the Greeks (cf. στάσις ... ἔμφυλος, Hdt. 8.3).

3 Diodorus’ Version of Salamis

Herodotus’ successors revisited and adjusted the Salamis narrative, seemingly in response to their predecessors. Their impact becomes evident in Diodorus Siculus’ rendition of the Persian Wars. Despite crediting Herodotus (Diod. Sic. 11.37.6), Diodorus does not follow Herodotus’ account of the Battle of Salamis obsequiously. Although Marincola notes a ‘fairly strict fidelity to the fifth-century tradition’ in Diodorus’ version of the battle itself, he detects a different

²⁹ Compare van Wees’ 2018 exploration of the historical aspects of the Thermopylae narratives, concluding that Herodotus probably revised an older, more legendary version of the events at Thermopylae.

portrayal of the surrounding events and debates, with more praise for Athenian and Spartan leaders than found in Herodotus' narrative.³⁰ Building on Marincola's insights, I will examine four aspects of Diodorus' account where notable divergences are apparent. These pertain to (1) the connection with the Greco-Carthaginian war in Sicily, (2) Xerxes' role, (3) the preliminary debates, and (4) the battle itself.

3.1 *The Sicilian Connection*

Diodorus' account of the Persian Wars pays more attention to the Sicilian Greeks than Herodotus' narrative. When Athens and Sparta seek assistance against the Persians at Syracuse, Herodotus portrays Gelon as unwilling to offer support unless he can lead the coalition (Hdt. 7.157–163.1). Later, Gelon shows a willingness to submit to Xerxes in the event of a Greek defeat (7.163.2). Herodotus also mentions Gelon's war against the Carthaginians as a reason for not supporting the Greeks (7.165). At this juncture, Herodotus brings up the Battle of Himera, which is claimed to have occurred on the same day as the Battle of Salamis (7.166).³¹

While Herodotus views Sicily and Greece as independent battlegrounds during Xerxes' invasion, Diodorus attributes both conflicts to Xerxes: when planning the invasion of Greece, the king urges the Carthaginians to attack the Greeks in the West, orchestrating a war across the Mediterranean (Diod. Sic. 11.1.4–5). The connections between battles in these wars are also more intertwined, even at the expense of chronological consistency. Diodorus' Salamis narrative (11.13.3–4; 11.15.2–19.6) precedes that of Himera (11.20–26), even though, in his version, the Battle of Himera did not coincide (as in Herodotus), but took place earlier in time, on the same day as the Battle of Thermopylae, creating a scenario where 'the greatest victory coincided with the most famous defeat' (11.24.1). Gelon's victory at Himera 'inspired the Greeks with courage' at Salamis, elevating Gelon alongside Themistocles as an architect of the victory over the barbarians (11.23.1–2). Despite Gelon's eagerness to join the Greeks

30 Marincola 2007a: 119. A complicating factor is that we can only tentatively reconstruct Diodorus' reliance on sources for this part of the narrative beyond Herodotus (most notably Ephorus). Furthermore, Diodorus himself should not be viewed as a mere copyist of his sources. It is important, as highlighted by Sacks 1990, to consider the late Hellenistic context in which he composed his work. For an overview of the debate regarding Diodorus and his sources, see Priestley 2014: 14; 162–168 and Muntz 2017: 14–26.

31 Pindar (*Pyth.* 1.75–80) already mentions the battles of Salamis, Plataea, and Himera in one breath. For the tradition linking the battles of Himera and Salamis as synchronous events, see Gauthier 1966.

against Xerxes after defeating the Carthaginians, he abandons this campaign upon learning of the Greek victory at Salamis (11.26.5).³²

Scholars attribute Diodorus' pro-Sicilian inclination to sources aiming to counter Herodotus' more unfavorable portrayal of the Sicilian Greeks. Marincola points to Ephorus, who asserted that Gelon, through his victory at Himera, liberated all Greeks.³³ Priestley identifies Timaeus, a Sicilian historian who 'reworked Herodotus' narrative to glorify Sicily's history for the years of the Persian Wars'.³⁴ However, Diodorus' own approach to writing universal historiography further reinforces the connections between Sicily and Greece. Clarke mentions the historian's principle of *symmetry*—his goal to ensure equal treatment of events of similar greatness in his work. Additionally, she notes 'narrative weaving', resulting from the annalistic organization of his work.³⁵ This involves dealing with events in different regions of the *oikoumenē* within the same chapter, emphasizing their synchrony.³⁶ Regarding the battles of Salamis and Himera, already linked in tradition, Diodorus' narrative techniques allow him to compare the battles at the end of his account (11.23) and enhance their causal connection, retrospectively portraying Gelon's victory as a contributing factor to the outcome of Salamis.³⁷

3.2 *Xerxes' Role*

Diodorus' account of the Battle of Salamis highlights Xerxes' supreme authority more than Herodotus does. In Diodorus' version, the king personally orders his admiral to engage (Diod. Sic. 11.18.3), while Herodotus describes initial Persian movements without explicit reference to commands (Hdt. 8.76; 84.1). Diodorus' version omits Artemisia's advice to Xerxes as well as Mardonios' counsel (see Hdt. 8.68; 100; 101–103). When the battle begins, Xerxes' position at Mount Aigaleos is mentioned by Diodorus (Diod. Sic. 11.18.3), excluding the references to his retinue found in Herodotus' version (Hdt. 8.90.4).³⁸ Unlike Herodotus, who

32 The pro-Sicilian revision also clarifies why Diodorus excludes Herodotus' references to Gelon's abstention from the fighting during Xerxes' invasion of Greece, aligning with Herodotus only in noting the Corcyrean abstention (Diod. Sic. 11.15.1, compare Hdt. 7.168).

33 Marincola 2007a: 112–113. See *FGrHist* 70 F 186 = scholion on Pind. *Pyth.* 1.146a.

34 Priestley 2014: 168.

35 Clarke 1999: 265–267. Cf. Rubincam 1987.

36 Green 2006: 10–12.

37 See Marincola 2007a: 111–114 for discussions about 'the decisive contribution' to the Persian Wars in later fourth century historiography, with Thermopylae, Himera, and Salamis as contenders.

38 In Aeschylus' *Persians*, we only discover the king's role as a spectator at the battle's conclusion (ll. 465–470).

reports that Xerxes beheaded the Phoenician admirals for slandering the Ionians (Hdt. 8.90.3), Diodorus has Xerxes killing them for their cowardice in battle (Diod. Sic. 11.19.4). On the whole, Diodorus' account simplifies Herodotus' portrayal of Xerxes, omitting his advisors and depicting the king as the sole architect and executor of his campaign.³⁹

The revision of Xerxes' character in Diodorus' version may have contributed to a second inconsistency in the narrative order of the events. After defeating the Spartans at Thermopylae, the king opts to undertake naval combat (Diod. Sic. 11.12.1). Inviting his admiral Megabates, he orders him to battle the Greeks 'with the entire fleet' (11.12.2). Megabates sets out from Pydna in Northern Greece and anchors at Magnesia, where he loses over 300 ships in a storm. With the remaining ships, he sails to Aphetai, opposite Artemision, where the first sea-battle of the war unfolds (11.12.3–11.13.2). At this point Diodorus' narrative order re-aligns with Herodotus' account, as it takes the news of the Spartan defeat at Thermopylae as the reason for the coalition's navy to withdraw (Hdt. 8.21.2, Diod. Sic. 11.3.3).⁴⁰ This chronological inconsistency suggests a clash between narrative strategies in Diodorus' version: while it seems to respect Herodotus' account in general, it subordinates its chronological order to an increased focus on Xerxes as the commander of the expedition.

3.3 *The Preliminary Councils and Meetings*

What sets Herodotus' account of Salamis apart from other existing sources is its detailed exploration of preliminary diplomacy. Xerxes seeks counsel from his admirals, while the Greeks grapple with the strategic challenge of choosing the optimal battleground, fearing entrapment at Salamis if defeated. Initially opting to retreat to the Isthmus, they reconsider under Themistocles' persuasion, aiming to protect Aegina and the refugees from Athens and Megara.⁴¹ However, internal unrest jeopardizes this decision, prompting Themistocles to covertly inform Xerxes about Greek withdrawal plans. In response, Xerxes dispatches a naval squadron to block any attempt at escape, making engagement at Salamis inevitable.

Diodorus provides fewer discussions and meetings in his much shorter account. He excludes Xerxes' council with his admirals and Themistocles' private

39 Compare de Bakker 2018: 73–74 for Xerxes' characterization in Diodorus' version of the Battle of Thermopylae.

40 Herodotus does not mention Xerxes' order to Megabates. In his account, the storm at Magnesia occurs before the Battle of Thermopylae (7.188–191), which coincides with the Battle of Artemision.

41 For a detailed study of Themistocles in Herodotus, see Blösel 2004.

TABLE 3.1 Overview of debates and meetings before the Battle of Salamis

		Herodotus	Diodorus Siculus
Debates	1. Xerxes seeks counsel from his admirals	8.67.2–69	not mentioned
	2a. Greeks decide to retreat to Isthmus	8.46; 56	not mentioned
	2b. Greeks reconsider and stay at Salamis	8.59–64	11.15.2–16.1
	2c. Greeks discuss withdrawal to Isthmus	8.74–75.1; 78–82	not mentioned
	2d. Greeks decide to fortify the Isthmus	8.71 (flashback)	11.16.3
	3. Themistocles encourages the troops	8.83	11.17.4
Private meetings	4. Themistocles meets Mnesiphilos	8.57	not mentioned
	5. Themistocles meets Eurybiades	8.58	not mentioned
	6. Themistocles meets Aristides	8.79–80	not mentioned
	7. Covert message to Xerxes	8.75	11.17.3–4
	8. Message from deserting Greeks	8.82.1 (Tenians)	11.17.3–4 (Ionians)

conversations with Mnesiphilos, Eurybiades, and Adeimantos. While Herodotus' narrative pays more attention to the preliminary debates compared to the actual battle (63% versus 37%), Diodorus allocates nearly equal space to both elements (51% versus 49%).⁴² Additionally, Diodorus' version lacks speeches in direct discourse, a prominent feature of Herodotus' account.⁴³

As mentioned above, Herodotus underscores the fragility of the Greek coalition, where each member state is primarily concerned with its own survival.⁴⁴ Themistocles faces an uphill battle in advocating the defense of Salamis due to the alliance's reluctance to fight in front of occupied territory (ἡ γὰρ Ἀττικὴ ἀπεῖτο ἤδη 'Attica was already ruled out', Hdt. 8.49.1). Upon Mnesiphilos' warning about the potential disintegration of the coalition if they withdraw to the Isthmus, Themistocles convinces Eurybiades to reconsider the decision (8.58). Publicly, he employs strategic arguments, emphasizing the Greek advantage in

42 In terms of *OCT* pages (Hude), Herodotus' preliminary debates span 9.25 pages, while the battle narrative covers 5.5 pages. In contrast, Diodorus' preliminary debates consist of 255 words, with the battle narrative comprising 244 words.

43 Speeches in direct discourse in Herodotus' Salamis narrative (aftermath included): 8.57.2; 59 (twice); 60; 62; 65.2–4; 4–5; 68; 75.2–3; 77.1–2; 79.3–4; 80.1–2; 84.2; 88.2–3; 94.3; 96.2; 100.2–5; 101.2–4; 102.1–3; 106.3; 109.2–4; 110.3; 114.2; 118.3; 125.2. Diodorus only includes speeches in indirect discourse: 11.15.3; 4; 17.1; 2; 3; 18.3; 19.4; 5.

44 Regarding the Greek deliberations at Salamis, Pelling 2006: 110–112 highlights the paradoxical circumstance that the 'danger of fragmentation ... imposed the victorious unity' (as quoted on page 112). See also Barker 2009: 163–172.

the narrow waters (8.6οβ), skillfully avoiding offense to the Peloponnesians, and countering Corinthian admiral Adimantus with two rejoinders (8.59; 61.2). Ultimately, his threat of coalition departure makes Eurybiades decide to stay at Salamis (8.63). However, the decision receives only lukewarm support and is revisited amid escalating fears and contentious meetings among the troops (8.70.2; 74.2; 78–82).

In Diodorus' more concise version of the debate, there is less focus on internal Greek division, and the verbal conflicts reported by Herodotus are omitted. Initially, the Peloponnesians are depicted as 'only concerned with their own safety' (τῆς ἰδίας μόνον ἀσφαλείας φροντίζοντες, Diod. Sic. 11.15.3). However, Themistocles persuades 'all' (ἅπαντας, 11.15.4) to recognize the strategic advantages of Salamis, which results in a 'communal decision' (κοινοῦ δόγματος, 11.16.1). Eurybiades and Themistocles jointly attempt to reassure the anxious troops. When these efforts prove fruitless, Themistocles, in his covert message to Xerxes, announces the imminent Greek withdrawal (11.17.1), but without including the suggestion found in Herodotus that part of the Greeks would defect to the Persians (Hdt. 8.75).

Unlike Herodotus, in Diodorus' narrative the troops are genuinely uplifted by Themistocles' exhortatory speech and 'enthusiastically' board the ships (προθύμως, Diod. Sic. 11.17.4). Another noteworthy distinction is the betrayal of the Persians by their Ionian allies (11.17.3–4). In contrast, in Herodotus' version, the Ionians remain loyal to Xerxes and their contributions to the battle are even highlighted (Hdt. 8.85.2–3: two Samian admirals; 8.87–88: Artemisia; compare 8.90.2: Samothracians).⁴⁵ These variations confirm Marincola's claim, mentioned above, that Diodorus drew from versions aiming to reshape Herodotus' narrative to emphasize a more united, panhellenic perspective, underlining the cohesion and loyalty of the Greek coalition instead of its fragility and division.⁴⁶

Once more, the review of this segment of the Salamis narrative by Diodorus and his sources has resulted in chronological inconsistencies. Both Herodotus and Diodorus agree that in the early stage of Xerxes' invasion, the Isthmus was chosen as the coalition's command center (Hdt. 7.172; Diod. Sic. 11.3.3). Later, the Peloponnesians decided to fortify the place to prevent the Persians from invading the Peloponnese. According to Herodotus, the Spartans unilaterally took this decision directly after the Battle of Thermopylae, and it was

45 Van Wees in this volume identifies Ephorus as Diodorus' probable source for the Ionian betrayal of the Persians in the Battle of Salamis (p. 109).

46 Herodotus' and Diodorus' accounts of the Battle of Thermopylae differ similarly in this respect. See de Bakker 2018.

executed swiftly (Hdt. 8.71; 74). The decision caused unease in the Greek coalition, as the Athenians, after withdrawing from Artemision, were ‘deceived in their expectation’ (ἐψευσμένοι γνώμης, 8.40.1) when Sparta chose to fortify the Isthmus instead of fighting the Persians in Boeotia. Attica now lay exposed and required a hurried evacuation. In Diodorus’ version, however, the decision to fortify the Isthmus is made by the coalition as a whole *because of* the fall of Athens, driven by the fear and despair of the Greek troops (Diod. Sic. 11.16.3).⁴⁷ This emphasizes communal zeal in the Greek defense. Yet, Diodorus’ version already refers to the completion of the fortification in the preliminary council that *precedes* the decision to fight the Persians at Salamis (Diod. Sic. 11.15.3: τετειχισμένου ... αὐτοῦ καλῶς, ‘with the place [Isthmus] now well fortified’). Moreover, the location of this council—where ‘all commanders’ had to jointly decide on strategy (cf. Diod. Sic. 11.15.2)—at the Isthmus is incongruous, as it implies that the Greek admirals left their fleet leaderless at Salamis, under the eyes of Xerxes and in the face of the advancing Persian fleet.

3.4 *The Battle*

Like the preliminary debates, Diodorus’ account of the Battle of Salamis is significantly shorter than Herodotus’ version. The sack of Athens receives only a brief mention (Diod. Sic. 11.14.5), contrasting with Herodotus, who embeds his elaborate, dramatic narrative (Hdt. 8.50–55) in the context of the first preliminary council (8.49; 56), emphasizing its impact on the Greeks at Salamis. Additionally, Diodorus’ version lacks a catalogue of ships (cf. Hdt. 8.43–47) as well as references to oracles, portents, and the statues of the Aeacids (cf. Hdt. 8.64.2; 65; 77; 83.2; 84.2; 96).⁴⁸ Aristides’ battle against the Persians on the islet of Psyttaleia is also excluded, with Aristides himself only appearing at Plataea as the Athenian commander (Diod. Sic. 11.29.4).⁴⁹ This omission places Themistocles in the spotlight as the architect of Greek victory, despite Eurybiades’ overall command, in alignment with Diodorus’ evaluative comment at the beginning of the Salamis narrative:

47 In Lysias’ encomiastic account of Salamis, the fortification of the Isthmus occurs even *after* the Battle of Salamis (Lys. 2.44). Apparently, this event was so flexible in the available traditions that authors could incorporate it wherever it suited their narratives.

48 Overall, the divine is notably absent in Diodorus’ account, a stark contrast to the significant role played by the divine in punishing Xerxes’ *hubris* in Aeschylus’ *Persians* (345–347; 361–362; 373; 454–455; 472–473; 514; 515–516; 519–520; 532–536; 601–602; 604; 739–742; 749–750; 809–815; 820–828; 911–912; 921; 1005–1007).

49 This contrasts with the biographers, who mention Aristides in the context of Salamis. See Nep. *Arist.* 3.2; Plut. *Them.* 11.1; *Arist.* 8–9.

Their admiral was Eurybiades the Spartan, but it was Themistocles the Athenian who was actually in charge of the disposition of the fleet, since on account of his sharp intelligence and strategic skill he was held in favor, not only among the Greeks throughout the fleet, but also by Eurybiades himself: he was the man to whom everyone looked for guidance, and whose word they eagerly accepted.

DIOD. SIC. 11.12.4, transl. Green, with adaptations

While in Herodotus some of Themistocles' plans falter and some of his words have no effect, in Diodorus' version all his words and actions are fully effective, and there are no challenges to his authority. Altercations with other Greek admirals are not mentioned, and anecdotes about his bribery by the Euboeans (cf. Hdt. 8.4) and extortion of Andrians, Carystians and Parians are absent (cf. Hdt. 8.111–112).⁵⁰ It is through undisputed directive actions of Themistocles and, on the Persian side, Xerxes, that the circumstances for the Battle of Salamis are arranged.

In Diodorus' account, the actual battle unfolds according to Themistocles' predictions. There is no mention of an initial Greek retreat as in Herodotus. The Persians manage to maintain order until they move from the open sea into the narrow strait (Diod. Sic. 11.18.4). However, the heroic death of the Persian admiral (11.18.5) leads to chaos and conflicting orders. This allows the Athenians to strike and chase away the Persian ships (11.18.5–6). The battle on the other side of the strait remains in balance until the Athenians arrive to deliver the decisive blow (11.19.2). In this context, Diodorus does not mention the Aeginetans, who play such a prominent role in Herodotus' narrative (Hdt. 8.91–93.1).⁵¹

The two accounts differ also in their explanations of Greek success. Herodotus underscores discipline as the decisive factor, highlighting the Greeks' ability to hold their line and 'fight orderly' (σὺν κόσμῳ ναυμαχεόντων, Hdt. 8.86),

⁵⁰ This more positive depiction of Themistocles is also evident in the biographies. Nepos (*Them.* 3.2) attributes to him a victory at Artemision, crediting him with the strategy of engaging in the narrows (*angustiae*), a tactic reminiscent of the Spartans' approach in Thermopylae (*Them.* 4.5). Nepos also acknowledges Themistocles for the triumph at Salamis (*Them.* 5.3). Plutarch attributes Xerxes' defeat to the consequences of Themistocles' naval strategy (*Them.* 4.5–6) and highlights Themistocles' success in maintaining the Greek coalition at Artemision, despite Eurybiades' apprehensions (*Them.* 7.5–7; cf. *Lys.* 2.42).

⁵¹ Marincola 2007a: 119–120 explains this as resulting from the disappearance of Aegina as a powerful state in the course of the fifth century. For fourth-century historians like Ephorus its prominence would have been hard to understand given its contemporary insignificance.

while portraying the Persians as battling ‘without sense’ (οὐ ... σὺν νόῳ, 8.86).⁵² Despite the Persians operating more bravely under the watchful eye of Xerxes, his presence ultimately leads to chaos as Persian ships collide in their eagerness to excel (8.89.2).⁵³ In Diodorus’ account, the emphasis shifts to the terrain itself, with the Persian fleet forced out of line upon entering the narrow street (Diod. Sic. 11.18.4), as Themistocles had predicted. Diodorus then summarizes how the Athenians systematically engage and repel one squadron after another (11.19.1–3). His version lists all the ethnicities of these squadrons, including Phoenicians, Cyprians, Cilicians, Pamphylians, and Lycians. This level of detail is perhaps intended as a polemic response to Herodotus’ admission of ignorance regarding the precise course of the battle (Hdt. 8.87.1).

4 Conclusion

This analysis of sources related to the Battle of Salamis illuminates the significance ascribed to the year 480 BCE, commonly seen as a watershed between the Archaic and Classical periods. Aeschylus addresses the Persian defeat at Salamis in *Persians*, the only surviving tragedy centered on a contemporary historical event. Herodotus’ extensively covers this year, devoting nearly one-fifth of his entire *Histories* to it.⁵⁴ Thucydides describes its battles as the ‘greatest of previous achievements’ (Thuc. 1.23.1). Diodorus Siculus, who wrote when Greece was under Roman rule, dedicates substantial attention to the battles of 480 BCE, while Nepos and Plutarch produced biographies of the Greek commanders involved.⁵⁵

52 In *Persians*, the Greek fleet also forms a closed formation (Aesch. *Pers.* 399). Although the Persians resist the initial onslaught (412–413), they quickly devolve into chaos, colliding with one another due to the confined space (413–416). Lysias portrays the battle as initially balanced (Lys. 2.38), with Athenians oscillating between hope and fear. The narrative perspective consistently adopts the viewpoint of an individual engaged in the battle (2.39) reminiscent of Aeschylus’ immersive approach in the messenger speech.

53 Both historians characterize the situation as a θόρυβος (Hdt. 8.87.2; 90.1; Diod. Sic. 11.18.4). At Diod. Sic. 11.18.6 there is an ironic allusion to Herodotus’ phantom woman rebuking the Greeks (8.84.2), when the Persians are reported to have ‘put an end to backing water’ (πρύμναν ... ἀνακρούεσθαι κατέπαυσαν), opting instead to turn their ships around and flee.

54 Herodotus’ narrative of 480 BCE (7.37–8.129) covers 155 pages, constituting 19% of the 805 pages of Hude’s OCT edition, the most of any single year. In Diodorus’ *Library*, the most extensive coverage within the surviving books 11–20 is dedicated to the events of 480 BCE (11.2.3–26.8), spanning 35 pages in Oldfather’s Loeb edition.

55 The Persian Wars were a popular topic for the Romans. A reenactment of the Battle of Salamis took place in Rome in 2 BCE as part of the festivities commemorating the inaug-

Yet, the analysis also reveals a lack of detailed knowledge about the events. The sources exclusively originate from Greek traditions and they rely on one another, while they conform to certain genre expectations, and also serve the interests of their contemporary audience. Due to the absence of testimonies independent from the Greek traditions (e.g., a contemporary Persian account), a more balanced reconstruction of the actual events remains elusive. Therefore, numerous historical aspects, including the fleet size and the admirals' roles, will continue to be subjects of debate.⁵⁶

Aeschylus, Herodotus, and Diodorus Siculus present varying narratives of the events of and surrounding Salamis, and the latter two historians seem to be responding to earlier accounts. Aeschylus depicts Greeks fighting heroically and united against a hubristic opponent. Herodotus, by contrast, downplays or omits this heroism, possibly in contrast to other post-war traditions.⁵⁷ Instead of portraying confident Greek attacks, he initially emphasizes their retreat. He also underscores the fragility of the Greek coalition, especially in the preliminary, acrimonious debates. Additionally, he highlights noteworthy achievements of Greeks fighting on the Persian side. These revisions probably reflect contemporary concerns, with the factionalism of the Greeks in the later fifth century mirrored in his portrayal of a fragile Greek coalition.

Diodorus' account appears to be based on fourth century sources like Ephorus, who revisited the events with a more panhellenic perspective. Diodorus' version highlights unity and harmony among the Greeks as they defend themselves against a tyrannical opponent orchestrating a total war across the Mediterranean. This revision results in serious inconsistencies in the narrative order of the events, with confusion arising about the Battle of Artemision, the preliminary council of Greek commanders before Salamis, and the fortification of the Isthmus. Unlike Herodotus, Diodorus' version offers a straightforward portrayal of leadership, casting Themistocles as the champion, Xerxes as the villain, and attributing the Persian defeat to the absence of effective leadership after the death of their admiral. While Diodorus makes the Persian fleet fall apart under Athenian pressure, Herodotus attributes the outcome to Xerxes' distorting presence as the supreme commander overseeing the events.

uration of the Mars Ultor temple in the Forum of Augustus. For details and references, see Spawforth 1994: 238 and Hardie 2007: 129.

56 Compare van Wees' observations on Ctesias and Herodotus in this volume pp. 93–120. These authors' substantially different versions of the Persian Wars reflect the interests and political conditions of their own time and place.

57 Compare the Plataea-elegy ascribed to Simonides and the 'Legend' about Thermopylae as reconstructed by van Wees 2018.

In summary, when investigating the history of the Battle of Salamis, it is crucial to be aware of numerous uncertainties, a challenge acknowledged by Herodotus himself:

About the others I cannot tell exactly how each squadron of Greeks and Persians battled.

HDT. 8.87.1

In a broader context, this sobering realization highlights the constraints on our comprehension of what is, in modern scholarship, considered an ‘epoch-making’ year. The assumption that, freed from foreign interference, Greece entered a ‘Classical’ or ‘Golden’ Age is prevalent. However, the extent to which the events of 480 BCE truly played a pivotal role in this transformation is an increasingly open question.

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Ctesias' *Persian History* and the Destruction(s) of Ionia

Hans van Wees

1 Introduction¹

'Preposterous', 'almost completely worthless', 'a great disappointment', 'quite fundamentally worse' than Herodotus: these are just a few choice judgements passed by eminent scholars on Ctesias of Knidos' account of the Persian Wars in his *Persian History*, written ca. 390–380.² The fullest discussion of this section of Ctesias' work—which survives only in a terse summary by Photius, patriarch of Constantinople—remains an article by Joan Bigwood, who concluded that 'there is exceedingly little in this whole account of the Wars which could be right and nothing which suggests concern for the truth or careful investigation. Instead we have ... reckless army statistics, misidentified characters, simplifications, astounding confusions, chronology which is muddled, some degree of anachronism, and a certain amount of bias'.³ What scholars mean when they complain of Ctesias' 'mistakes' is that he often, and at times radically, departed from the story told in Herodotus' *Histories*. Recent literary approaches have taken the view that Ctesias was not a historian at all but a prose poet, or a historical novelist, or a writer of 'historiographical metafiction', whose story, sources and perhaps even his autobiographical details were all imaginary, and whose aim was to amuse his readership with the 'wit and irony' of his free invention in 'playing with Herodotus'.⁴

1 This chapter has benefited from comments and suggestions by conference audiences, an anonymous referee, Janric van Rookhuijzen, Anja Slawisch and above all Christopher Tuplin. Its remaining failings are all my own.

2 Quotations from, respectively, Burn 1962: 253 (cf. 11–12: 'this ancient red herring'; 94: 'egregious'); Lazenby 1993: 7; Cawkwell 2005: 14–15; Jacoby 1922: cols. 2060–2061. Hignett (1963: 8–10) was less damning; Lenfant's path-breaking Budé edition and translation offered a balanced assessment but still judged Ctesias 'a poor historian' (2004: cxxiii–cxxvii; cf. lxxxv–c for the Persian War).

3 Bigwood 1978: 36.

4 The phrases are from Bichler 2011: esp. 37; 'historiographical metafiction' is the term used by Madreiter 2012: 118–133; esp. 122–125 and 71–72 n. 251 for a 'thoroughly negative' assessment

These approaches do not do justice to Ctesias. He deliberately diverged from Herodotus' account, but, in my view, with the aim of writing a more accurate and balanced history rather than in the hope of merely tickling his audience. The resulting history was sometimes worse than Herodotus' efforts, but in places offered a plausible alternative.

To establish Ctesias as a serious, if flawed, historian would require a comprehensive reassessment of the *Persian History*, but we will make a start by considering two episodes where Ctesias told a different but, in some ways, better story than his predecessor: the Ionian Revolt that ended in 494 and the second Ionian Revolt of 479. For Herodotus, the first revolt ended in disaster, with widespread destruction of cities and temples by the Persian army and fleet, while the second revolt ended with instant liberation to which the Persian empire had no response. In Ctesias, by contrast, the Persians apparently did little damage in Ionia in 494, but destroyed at least one major Ionian temple, and probably more, in 479.

Ctesias' narrative here, we shall see, provides important historical information. Although Darius besieged and destroyed Miletus in 494, as Herodotus reported, he did not destroy the oracle of Apollo at Branchidai or the other towns and temples of Ionia. This latter campaign of destruction was waged instead at the behest of Xerxes in or shortly after 479, as Ctesias and other fourth-century authors said in direct contradiction of Herodotus. This conclusion has dramatic implications for the end of the Persian Wars, which turns out to be far from a complete Greek victory, and for the start of the Athenian Empire, which proves to have been more modest at the outset than commonly assumed. Above all, Ctesias' *Persian History* throws new light on the history and archaeology of Ionia from 513 to ca. 450.

2 Ctesias versus Herodotus on the Ionian Revolt and Battle of Marathon

Photius' summary of Ctesias does not contain anything that sounds like Herodotus' account of the Ionian Revolt, and scholars have concluded that Ctesias omitted the episode.⁵ However, a closer look suggests that Ctesias did not so much skip it as offer an alternative account with a different focus, which has become hard to recognise due to Photius' extreme abridgement. A reconstruc-

of Ctesias on the Persian Wars. See also Llewellyn-Jones and Robson 2010: 68–87 (e.g., 81: 'a poet-cum-novelist working within the framework of history'); Stronk 2010; Waters 2017: 18 ('lackadaisical attitude'); Almagor 2018.

5 E.g., Jacoby 1922: col. 2059; Bigwood 1978: 21–22; Lenfant 2004: lxxxv with nn. 326–327.

tion of Ctesias' narrative and comparison with Herodotus' version will serve to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each, especially in relation to Ionian history.

According to Herodotus, the Ionian Revolt began in 499 with a raid on Sardis in which Athens and Eretria took part, with the result that the Persian king Darius became obsessed with getting revenge on the Athenians (Hdt. 5.105.2; 6.94.1; 7.1.1). The Revolt was suppressed in 494, brutal reprisals against the rebels followed in 493, and then Darius turned his attention to Athens. He sent an expedition under Mardonios in 492, which failed, and a second expedition in 490, under Datis, which culminated in the Battle of Marathon.

Ctesias narrates the events before Marathon as follows (*BNJ* 688 F 13.21–5):

Darius, crossing the bridge [over the Bosphorus, on his return from Scythia], set fire to the houses and temples of the Calchedonians since they intended to dismantle the bridge at their end and because they demolished the altar that Darius, when he went across, set up in the name of Zeus of the Crossing. (22) Datis, returning from the Black Sea and leading the Medes' expeditionary force, sacked islands and Greece. Miltiades faces him at Marathon and defeats the barbarians and Datis himself also falls, and his body was not given back to the Persians when they asked. (23) Darius, after returning to Persia and offering sacrifice and being ill for thirty days, dies. [...] (25) Xerxes leads an army against the Greeks, because the Calchedonians had tried to demolish the bridge, as mentioned above, and because they destroyed the altar erected by Darius, and because the Athenians killed Datis and did not give back his dead body.

As in Herodotus, the revolt of a subject Greek city ultimately led to the Persian landing at Marathon, and the defeat at Marathon in turn led to Xerxes' invasion of Greece. In Ctesias, however, the trigger was the revolt of Calchedon in 513 rather than Miletus 14 years later, and it was not so much Athens' victory at Marathon as the Athenians' refusal to grant proper burial to the Persian commander that caused Xerxes to seek revenge.

Scholars have usually dismissed Ctesias' story on chronological grounds. Darius' Scythian expedition probably took place in 513 and the battle of Marathon in 490, so it seems at first sight as if Ctesias skipped 23 years and failed to explain what Datis was doing in the Black Sea before he attacked Athens.⁶ If we set aside the historical dates for the moment, however, we can see that he told an internally coherent story: after Darius punished rebellious Cal-

⁶ So Bigwood 1978: 22 n. 13 ('We do not know what Datis was doing in the Black Sea'); Lenfant

chedon, Datis led the fleet that had formed the ship-bridges over the Bosphorus and the Danube back from the Black Sea through the Aegean, sacking islands and the coast of Greece *en route*, incidentally also landing at Marathon. Meanwhile Darius himself went home overland to Persia where he offered sacrifice—for his own safe return—and later died.

Ctesias' version of these events was not mere fantasy. A rebellion of Calchedon and other cities on the Hellespontine region in 513 was evidently also known to Herodotus, who alluded to it but did not integrate these events into his preferred narrative of the Ionian Revolt led by Miletus. In Herodotus, as in Ctesias, Darius crossed to Europe by a ship-bridge over the Bosphorus near Calchedon (4.85.1), but he surprisingly did not return via that bridge. Herodotus casually said, as if no explanation were needed, that Darius marched back through Thrace to Sestos and then crossed the Hellespont by ship, leaving behind in Europe 80,000 men under Megabazos to continue the war (4.143.1, 3; 5.11.1). This drastic change of route implies, as modern commentators have noted, that the Bosphorus bridge was no longer accessible, evidently because Byzantium and Calchedon were in revolt.⁷ Another hint of this rebellion in Herodotus' own narrative is that, after a detailed account of Megabazos' conquest of Thrace (4.144.3; 5.1–2, 10–23), we suddenly find his successor Otanes campaigning much further north against Byzantium and Calchedon. Otanes also waged war against Antandros and Lamponion, situated on the coast opposite Lesbos, which were already part of the Persian empire, and conquered Lemnos and Imbros (5.26). 'He enslaved and subjected all, accusing some of desertion from the expedition against the Scythians and others of harming the army of Darius when it was brought back from the Scythians' (5.27.2).⁸ Herodotus makes it sound as if these were spurious accusations, but these details too surely derived from a tradition that Otanes suppressed a widespread revolt in the wake of the Scythian expedition.

We may have indirect documentary evidence of this revolt of Hellespontine Greeks in a Persian tablet recording the presence of more than 1,100 Greeks including many children at Rakkan in Persia in 506. They were probably rebels defeated and deported by Otanes.⁹

2004: 263 n. 505 ('On ignore ce que Datis était censé faire en mer Noire'). That it was Ctesias, not just his summarizer Photius, skipping events was rightly noted by, e.g., Kuhrt 2007: 236, no. 58 n. 2, and Bigwood 1978: 21–22.

7 E.g., Vasilev 2015: 83–85; Asheri et al. 2004: ad 4.143.1; How and Wells 1928: ad 4.143.

8 In the text as it stands, 'he' at 5.27.2 and 5.28.1 seems to refer to Lykaretos, the governor of Lemnos, but commentators agree that there is a lacuna in the text and that 'he' refers back to Otanes: e.g., Hornblower 2013: ad 5.27.2; How and Wells 1928: ad 5.27.

9 *Persepolis Fortification Tablet* PF-NN 2486: 56–59; Hyland 2022: 10, who also discusses

Not only did Herodotus fail to acknowledge this major Greek revolt explicitly, but arguably his emphatic claim that the events of 500, centred on Miletus, marked a new ‘start of trouble’ (5.28.1, 30.1, 97.3)¹⁰ implicitly denied the significance of earlier unrest. Yet his narrative of the Ionian Revolt reveals further hints at the extent of renewed revolt in the Hellespontine region and the high priority that the Persians, still led by Otanes (5.116.1, 123), gave to its renewed suppression. Persian efforts focused first on regaining control of the Asian side of the Propontis and Hellespont, next on recovering Caria, and only in third place on Ionia (5.117.1, 122–123; 6.33.1). Then, after Miletus was captured, a Phoenician fleet attacked and burned Greek cities all along the Hellespont and Propontis again in 493. Although Herodotus stresses their targets on the European coasts, above all in the Thracian Chersonese, he implies that Calchedon, Cyzicus, Prokonnesos and Artake on the Asian side were also in revolt: the Calchedonians evacuated their city and resettled at Mesembria, the Cyzicenes came to terms before they could be attacked, and the others were reduced by force (6.33).¹¹

Herodotus’ own account thus implied that he simplified a great deal by dating the start of revolt to 500/499 and focusing heavily on Miletus and Ionia. Quite a few Hellespontine Greek cities within the Persian Empire had rebelled more than a decade earlier and played a key role again in the later revolt. Ctesias’ notion that the ultimate cause of Xerxes’ invasion was the initial challenge to Darius by Calchedon therefore arguably makes better sense than Herodotus’ claim that ‘trouble’ started only when Miletus and Athens got involved.

Ctesias’ take on these events was, moreover, probably based on Greek local traditions. An anecdote about Darius capturing Calchedon by means of a 2.7 km-long tunnel dug from outside the walls to right underneath the marketplace (Polyaenus, *Strat.* 7.11.5) was surely a patriotic story about the extreme lengths (literally) to which the Persians had had to go to overcome the city’s heroic resistance. Ctesias may well have told this tale.¹² Dionysius of Byzant-

evidence for Lycian deportees in 502/1, suggesting ‘frontier turmoil’ omitted by ‘Herodotus’ selective narrative’.

10 The text of 5.28.1 is problematic (see the comprehensive discussion in Hornblower 2013: 123–126) but on any reading it draws a firm line between Otanes and the Ionian Revolt.

11 The importance of the Hellespontine region to Persia is also reflected in the Greek fleet in Persian service in 513: of the 12 highest-ranking commanders (Hdt. 4.137–138), 7 were from this region (Abydos, Lampsakos, Parion, Prokonnesos, Cyzicus; on the European side Chersonesos and Byzantium), only four were Ionian (Chios, Samos, Phokaia, Miletus) and one was Aeolian (Kyme).

12 As suggested by, e.g., Tuplin 2010: 282; the passage is not included in editions of Ctesias, but no other author is known to have mentioned an attack on Calchedon by Darius.

tium's *Voyage Around the Bosphorus* noted that an empty headland outside Byzantium was called Heraia after a destroyed temple of Hera: 'those who were with Darius in the expedition of the Persians against the Scythians set fire to it, avenging the king for the things that he blamed on the city' (14). Here it was evidently not Darius' himself, but rather a Persian army or fleet left behind in Europe that punished Byzantium for rebellion in 513.

As for the problematic chronology, Ctesias was undoubtedly wrong to imply that the Scythian expedition took place not long before Marathon, but he did not simply blunder. This notion was probably derived from a Greek tradition that the Scythians had counterattacked a few years before Marathon. Herodotus, in a flashback, mentioned that Miltiades, 'who was tyrant of the cities of the Chersonese until then' (6.34.1) fled before the assault of the Persian fleet in 493 (6.41) and had previously also fled when 'the Scythian nomads, provoked by Darius, united their forces and rode as far as this peninsula' (6.40.1). When the Scythians left again, Miltiades had come back: 'these things happened two years before the events that befell him at that time', i.e. his expulsion in 493 (6.40.2). Despite a great deal of scholarly discussion generated by the obscurity of Herodotus' text, it seems clear that 'these things' refers to both the Scythian incursion and Miltiades' flight and return, all of which thus took place in 495.¹³ This incursion must have been notorious, and it is a sign of his selectivity that Herodotus did not mention it in its chronological place during the Ionian Revolt.¹⁴

Another allusion to the revenge of the Scythians suggests that many Greek cities supported their raid and as a result were punished as rebels by the Persians:

When the cities around the Propontis were burned down by Darius father of Xerxes, Abydos shared the same fate. He burned them down when he

13 The difficulties are discussed by, e.g., Gardiner-Garden 1987: 338–340; Scott 2005: 522–532; Hornblower and Pelling 2017: 133–135. I take 6.40.1 as the start of a new, brief digression (after the long digression, 6.34–39, about how Miltiades once came to rule over the Chersonese): 'This son of Kimon, Miltiades, had arrived in the Chersonese recently [i.e. had come back there not long before 493], and after he arrived other things happened to him [i.e. his expulsion by the Phoenician fleet] that were harder to bear than the events that had happened [i.e. before his recent return]. For two years from [i.e. before] these events [i.e. his expulsion by the Phoenician fleet in 493], he had escaped the Scythians' (and returned safely, but now he lost his position permanently).

14 Cf. Hdt. 6.84.2: the Scythians invited Kleomenes I to join them in a vast pincer-movement against Darius. This did not come to pass, but the Scythians' attack of 495 may have been imagined as their Plan B.

heard, after his return from the invasion of Scythia, that the nomads were preparing to cross over against him to exact revenge for what they had suffered, and he was afraid that these cities might provide ships to ferry the army across.

STRABO 13.1.22

Abydos was at the narrowest point of the Hellespont, and the story thus presupposes Scythians arriving in the Thracian Chersonese, as in Herodotus' reference to the attack of 495, and trying to cross here. This tradition, presumably local to Abydos, makes sense of the Phoenician fleet's destruction of cities and territories around the Propontis and Hellespont in 493, which Herodotus recorded in some detail but did not explain. Rather than mere Persian aggression, this campaign was likely a response to widespread revolts across the region triggered by the Scythian incursion two years earlier.

In other words, according to Greek traditions known to Herodotus, but played down by him, the Greeks of the Hellespontine region rebelled three times in quick succession: first after Darius' retreat from Scythia in 513, when they were subjected again five to ten years later by Otanes; a second time at the start of the Ionian Revolt in 499; and a third time after the Scythian raid of 495. It would have been easy to confuse the three sets of events, and the notion that the Scythian attack was in revenge for Darius' invasion actively encouraged a conflation of the episodes. Stories of revenge served cold suggest that an 18-year delay in retaliating would have seemed feasible to Greeks, but one can see the logic of eliding the long gap and assuming that the Scythians retaliated soon after they were invaded. Dating Darius' Scythian expedition shortly before 495 was a way of making the story seem more historically plausible, and this is what Ctesias appears to have done.

A further detail of Ctesias' account suggests a second, related departure from Herodotus: he reported that Darius in his panicked return broke down the bridges before his entire army was able to cross 'and the 80,000 left behind in Europe died at the hands of Skytharbes', king of the Scythians (F 13.21; cf. Justin 2.5.10–11). In Herodotus, two groups of soldiers were left behind by Darius: an unspecified number of the infirm, abandoned in a camp north of the Danube as part of a stratagem but seemingly spared by the Scythians as suppliants (4.134.4–136.1), and 80,000 picked troops who were stationed in Thrace and successfully continued the Persian conquest of Europe (4.143–144; 5.1–2, 12–17). The number 80,000 suggests that Ctesias had this latter group in mind.¹⁵

15 *Contra* the usual assumption that Ctesias was thinking of Herodotus' abandoned invalids instead: so, e.g., Lenfant 2004: lxxxiv n. 32 and already Macan 1895: ad 4.143.

In other words, Ctesias denied that Persian forces had occupied the northern Aegean coast and Thrace after 513, as Herodotus claimed. The troops left behind did not conquer but were immediately slaughtered. Such a deeply negative picture of Darius' campaign is consistent with the few details of the Scythian expedition noted in Photius' summary: it lasted only 15 days, rather than over 60 days as in Herodotus (4.98.1–2, 136.3), and whereas the Persians were defeated by scorched-earth tactics in Herodotus (4.120–132), in Ctesias they fled at the mere realization that Scythian bows were more powerful than Persian ones.¹⁶ According to the *Persian History*, then, both Darius' invasion of Scythia and his invasion of Europe were dismal failures.

Ctesias thus conflated the Persians' expedition of 513 with the Scythians' expedition to the Aegean and Hellespont in 495, and likewise the initial revolt of Calchedon in 513 with its renewed revolt in 495 or 494, but in doing so he drew on independent historical traditions. His story of Skytharbes' massacre of 80,000 Persians will have reflected the Scythian offensive of 495, which no doubt cost the lives of many Persian troops stationed as garrisons in Thrace and the Hellespontine region. Similarly, the story that Datis led a fleet from the Black Sea to Marathon can be dated in or shortly after 495, when on Ctesias' chronology the ships had first carried the Persian army into Europe and back. This fleet then stayed in the area for several years suppressing and punishing rebels, before sailing back into the Aegean to 'sack islands and Greece' and ultimately landing at Marathon in 490.

At least part of Ctesias' version of these events is supported by a Persian document which reports that a high-ranking official called Datiya, i.e. Datis, was on his way back from Sardis to the king in January or February 494.¹⁷ Apparently Datis had been sent west by the king in 495, probably in response to the worsening of the Ionian Revolt as a result of the Scythian attack and the ensuing further rebellions. This makes it quite likely that Datis was sent back again later in 494 to resume command of the fleet.

Moreover, Ctesias' premise, that a single Persian fleet continued operations in the region for several years and ended up at Marathon during a wide-ranging campaign of plunder and destruction, seems more plausible than Herodotus'

16 *BNJ* 688 F 13.21. One can see why Llewellyn-Jones and Robson (2010: 181) felt the need to make the Persians less pathetic by translating 'The two sides fired arrows at each other and the Scythians prevailed', but this is certainly not what the text says. See Tuplin 2010 for a comprehensive analysis of the evidence for the Scythian expedition.

17 *Persepolis Fortification Tablet* Q-1809/PF-NN 1809; Lewis 1980; Kuhrt 2007: 224. Hyland 2019 plausibly identifies further tablets likely to be connected to mobilisation of an army and fleet in 495 and 494.

claim that Darius raised three separate huge fleets in the span of five years, two of them with the primary objective of sacking Athens. The first fleet of 600 ships was according to Herodotus mustered against Miletus and its allies in 494, sailed on to Byzantium and Calchedon in 493, then turned back and vanished from the story.¹⁸ In spring 492, Darius dismissed his generals and assembled 'a very large infantry army and large fleet' in Cilicia under a new general, Mardonios, to attack Athens and Eretria (6.43). This fleet conquered Thasos and its goldmines (6.44, 46–47) while the army subjected Macedonia and the Thracian Brygi, yet the expedition was deemed a 'shameful' failure, because it suffered heavy losses (6.45, 94–95), and did not reach its alleged objectives. Finally, a third new fleet of 600 ships, led by Datis, mustered in Cilicia in 490 and crossed the Aegean under renewed orders to enslave the Athenians and Eretrians (6.94; cf. Pl., *Leg.* 698c). The idea that a second and third fleet were launched to target Athens flattered the Athenians' self-image as Persia's greatest enemy and may well be an Athenian fiction. In reality, the commander of the fleet of 494—unnamed by Herodotus—may well have been Datis already, who remained in command until 490, as Ctesias suggested, on a mission to pacify the rebellious regions and then extend Persian power westward. Mardonios' fleet of 492 will then have been a detachment sent out by Datis to initiate new conquests.

This last inference again has some support in a Greek tradition. The *Lindian Chronicle* reported that as many as nine authors had written that Datis, after besieging Lindos on Rhodes, concluded a treaty with the city and offered dedications at the temple of Athena (*BNJ* 532 F 4 D1). Most of these authors said that Rhodes was the first island attacked by the Persian fleet 'when Darius king of the Persians sent out great forces to enslave Greece' (D1.1–5), but one, Xenagoras (*BNJ* 240), claimed instead that the siege happened 'when Mardonios was sent out under orders from Datis' (*BNJ* 532 F4 D1.54–7). The mainstream Rhodian tradition thus probably imagined that Datis had been in command of a fleet sent 'to enslave Greece' before 492, i.e. in 494, and that Rhodes had been its first target,¹⁹ while Xenagoras argued that Rhodes had been attacked in 492 by Mardonios acting as Datis' subordinate, just as in the version of events that we have inferred from the summary of Ctesias.

In short, Ctesias was wrong to imply that Darius invaded Scythia in 495 and to say that Datis' fleet had accompanied the king on this invasion, but he did give a more plausible account of Persian naval activity in the years 495–490 than Herodotus, drawing on Greek traditions ignored or marginalised by his

18 Hdt. 6.6, 9, 14, 25, 28, 32–34, 41.

19 As suggested by Burn 1962: 210–211: 218; cf. Krentz 2010: 94–95; 209.

predecessor. On a couple of points, Ctesias is supported by Persian documentary evidence. This does not mean that he made use of Persian records—his hostile version of the Scythian campaign alone is enough to make that unlikely—but it does suggest that the Greek traditions which he did use had some basis in fact.

Ctesias departed most strikingly from Herodotus in his account of the end of Datis' campaign. In Herodotus, Datis' fleet included specially commissioned horse transports for the specific purpose of enslaving and deporting the people of Athens and Eretria (6.48, 94–95.1), and Datis did not die at Marathon but returned home with the enslaved Eretrians (6.118–119.1). Ctesias' Athens, by contrast, was just one of many victims of ravaging by the Persian fleet on its way home. Ctesias will have been one of those whom Plutarch dismissed as 'nit-pickers and grudge-bearers' who treated Marathon as 'a brief scuffle with the barbarians as they made a landing' (*de Herodoti Malignitate* 27 = *Mor.* 862d). Theopompus of Chios may have adopted Ctesias' line when he said that 'the battle at Marathon was not like everyone says in their songs of praise' (*BNJ* 115 F 153). The Athenian victory was a feat of unprecedented heroism in Herodotus (esp. 6.112.3), but in Ctesias it was badly compromised by the refusal to hand over Datis' body. Allowing the enemy to retrieve their dead was one of the few Greek 'laws of war' that was genuinely observed. By breaking it, the Athenians put themselves in the wrong and gratuitously provoked the Persians,²⁰ with dire consequences for all Greece. Ctesias' take was thus anti-Athenian²¹ while Herodotus' work showed the opposite bias.

Herodotus' Athenocentrism was one reason why he had to insist on a Persian conquest of parts of Europe after 513 rather than a complete retreat to Asia, and why he started his Revolt with Ionia in 499 rather than with earlier Greek uprisings. Since Herodotus conceived of both Datis' campaign and Xerxes' invasion of Greece as essentially aimed at Athens, he had to find a cause for these wars in an event in which Athenians played a key role, and his only viable option was their participation in the Ionian raid on Sardis in 499. If he had fully acknowledged the other rebellious actions by Greeks in and around Asia Minor since 513, the attack on Sardis would have been merely one incident among many, and Darius' and Xerxes' supposed obsession with Athens would have made no sense. As for the Persian conquest of Europe, in Herodotus' day

20 See Krentz 2002. Lenfant (2004: lxxxvi n. 329) is right that Datis' death *as such* would not reflect badly on Athens, but this misses the point.

21 Jacoby (1922: col. 2061) attributed Ctesias' version to 'Persian information that does not seem reliable' while also suggesting that the story 'elevated' the battle of Marathon. I cannot see the basis for these views.

Athens justified its imperial power with its leadership in fighting back against the Persians, and the first campaign led by Athens, as well as many since, targeted the northern Aegean, so it was vital to insist that the Persians had held these places.

Conversely, by the time Ctesias wrote, ca. 390–380, there was no longer a Persian presence in Europe nor an Athenian empire to justify. It will have been attractive to Greeks in general to think that despite Darius' and Xerxes' attempts, Persians had never managed to occupy any part of Europe. Indeed, since Persian kings from 412/411 onward laid claim only to Asia Minor and nothing beyond it (Thuc. 8.43.2–4, 52, 58.1–2), the notion may have been convenient for the Persians as well. Moreover, denying a Persian presence in Europe would retrospectively deprive many of Athens' earlier campaigns of legitimacy, as not truly directed against Persia but merely self-interested acts of Athenian expansion. Likewise, without a need to play up the importance of Athens as Persia's chief enemy any longer, widespread rebellion before and after 499 could be freely acknowledged, while the shift of focus from Ionia to the Hellespontine region actively served to minimize Athens' role in the conflict.

What we have in Herodotus' *Histories* and Ctesias' *Persian History*, then, is not a reliable historical account versus a fanciful patchwork of questionable alternative stories cobbled together simply for the sake of being different. We have two accounts that each made selective use of the range of local traditions to reflect the interests and political conditions of their own time and place. Of the two, Herodotus is no doubt more reliable on the chronology of Darius' Scythian expedition and conquest of part of Europe, for which he and other sources provide a substantial body of evidence.²² In other respects, however, Ctesias' account, insofar as we can reconstruct it, offers a useful supplement and corrective to Herodotus, plausibly suggesting that control of the Hellespontine region was a higher Persian priority than control of Ionia, and that Athens in 490 (as in 480–479) was a victim of general westward Persian expansion rather than the main target of Persian revenge.

It follows that we cannot simply take Herodotus on trust when he claims that Darius' forces devastated Ionia in 494–493 and cannot lightly dismiss Ctesias and other fourth-century authors when they say otherwise. Skepticism about Herodotus' accuracy on this point is even more justified because his account was self-contradictory. When Miletus was taken by siege, he said, 'the majority of the men' had been killed, those who were captured were deported to the Red Sea coast, those who escaped emigrated to Sicily, 'and the sanctuary

22 Tuplin 2010: 295–299; Vasilev 2015: 58–123.

at Didyma, both temple and oracle, was plundered and burnt down' (6.19.3, 20, 22.2). In short, 'Miletus was now emptied of Milesians' (6.22.1). Yet in 479 the Milesians were somehow back, serving in the Persian forces at Mycale (see below). Whether the deportations and deaths were more limited than he suggested or the deported were quickly repatriated, Herodotus evidently grossly exaggerated the extent of destruction.

Internal contradictions are even more blatant in his account of the fate of the other Ionian cities. The Persians recaptured Chios, Lesbos, Tenedos and 'the Ionian cities on the mainland', burning down towns and temples, enslaving the inhabitants (6.9.4), and in the case of the islands allegedly going so far as to form a human chain of soldiers from coast to coast to 'net' the entire population.²³ 'Thus the Ionians were enslaved for the third time' (6.31–2). Only Samos avoided destruction by changing sides just in time (6.25.2). Yet in the very same year the satrap of Sardis made the Ionian cities sign treaties swearing not to exact violent reprisals on one another (6.42.1). He also reassessed their tribute but kept it at about the same level as before, 'and these things brought them peace' (6.42.2). Next spring, the Persians deposed the rulers of these cities and replaced them with 'democracies' (6.43.3; Diod. 10.25.4). None of this makes sense if the Ionian cities were depopulated.²⁴ In 490, Ionians and Aeolians served in the Persian fleet (Hdt. 6.98.1). In 480, the Ionians again contributed a large contingent, 100 ships (7.94), and they still served in 479 (8.130). The Aeolians, presumably including the 'netted' islands Lesbos and Tenedos, contributed another 60 (7.95). The burning down of many cities in the Hellespontine region in 493 (Hdt. 6.33) also seems to have left little trace. No pacifying measures or tribute reforms are mentioned for this area—the changes made by the satrap of Sardis did not apply in the Hellespontine region, which fell under the satrap of Daskyleion instead—and yet the supposedly devastated Hellespontine cities, like the Ionians, provided 100 ships for the Persian fleet in 480 (7.95).

23 Gorman 2001: 144, 146, takes Herodotus to say that outside Miletus 'the adult inhabitants were left unmolested'. However, Herodotus' statement that 'they captured the Ionian cities on the mainland *in the same way* (κατὰ τὰ ἴσα), except that they did not net people because that was not possible' (6.31.2), surely means that people were enslaved without use of the (legendary?) 'netting' *technique*, on which see below. Cf. 6.9.4 ('if they are defeated they will be enslaved'); 6.32 (Persians treated the Ionians precisely as they had threatened to do).

24 It is odd how casually modern scholars have glossed over the inconsistency in Herodotus' account of Ionia: e.g., Murray 1988: 489 ('the revolt was suppressed with severity ... but already in 493 BC a new policy was in the making'); Hammond 1988: 493; Burn 1962: 216 ('savage reprisals were selective and soon over').

What Ctesias said about the fate of Ionia at this point is hard to guess from the very brief summary but the itinerary of Datis' fleet, starting in the Black Sea and then 'sacking islands and Greece', does not suggest any operations in mainland Ionia. Crucially, as we have noted and will discuss in detail below, he explicitly dated the destruction of Didyma/Branchidai to 479 rather than 494. The internal inconsistency of Herodotus' version of events, combined with the existence of an alternative account in Ctesias, raises serious doubts about the accuracy of his narrative. We need not doubt that Miletus had been sacked after its siege, and Herodotus had no doubt heard stories about other towns and temples destroyed by Persian forces and indeed had seen buildings still lying in ruins. We may wonder, however, whether he had good evidence for dating all this destruction to 494–493.

Alternatively, we can easily identify extraneous, narrative reasons that could have led Herodotus to adopt an early date for the devastation of Ionia. His story of the Ionian Revolt almost demanded that it should end in the destruction of towns and temples. The accidental burning down of 'the local temple of Kybebe' at Sardis in 499 led directly to the sack of Athens in 480: 'based on this the Persians later in turn burned down the temples in Greece' (5.102.1; cf. 6.101.3). On this view, Darius could hardly have failed to punish the Ionians, too, by burning down their towns and temples. Moreover, such a disastrous outcome was in line with Herodotus' opinion that the Ionian Revolt was no heroic struggle for freedom but had been fought for the wrong reasons and was doomed to failure by Ionian 'slavishness' and disunity, while Athens' brief involvement was a blunder blamed on democracy and the gullibility of the mob.²⁵ Yet another incentive to date the destructions early was an oracle that Herodotus interpreted as predicting that the Ionian Revolt would result in the sack of the oracle at Didyma (6.19.2). Finally, Herodotus also had powerful reasons to reject a date in or after 479, as we shall see. On a whole series of grounds, therefore, Herodotus' dating of these events is open to question, and we should be open to the possibility that Ctesias and others may have been right to attribute the devastation of Ionia to Xerxes, fifteen years later.

25 Wrong reasons: Aristagoras and Histiaios of Miletus attempt to save their own skins (5.28–38). Ionians prefer to be slaves to Persians rather than obey a fellow-Ionian: 6.12. Athens becomes embroiled because '30,000 men' are more easily deceived than one: 5.97.2 (it is hard to accept the suggestion of Hornblower 2013 ad loc. that the passage was not a criticism of democracy but meant that 'it is easier to do wrong to 30,000 than to one').

3 Ctesias versus Herodotus and Ephorus on Xerxes' Campaign of 479

After Xerxes' fleet lost the battle of Salamis in 480, the king returned to Asia and took up residence at Sardis, while an army of 300,000 men under Mardonios remained in Greece and most of the Persian fleet rallied at Samos, according to Herodotus. The year 479 saw the defeat of Mardonios' forces at Plataea and further losses at Mycale, with the result that the Greeks of the mainland were safe, and the Greeks of Asia were free. 'So Ionia revolted from the Persians a second time' (9.104) and Xerxes left for Susa (9.108.2).

The *Persian History* told a very different tale:

Xerxes, after crossing over to Asia and marching away to Sardis, sent Megabyzos to plunder the temple at Delphi. Since the latter refused, he sends Matakas the eunuch, committing acts of *hybris* against Apollo and plundering everything. And after he did this, he went back to Xerxes. (32) Xerxes comes from Babylon to Persia.

CTESIAS *BNJ* 688 F 13.31–2

This summary initially seems baffling. In his account of 480, Ctesias had said that Mardonios, after being wounded at Plataea, 'was sent by Xerxes to plunder the temple of Apollo, and there—he says—he died when caught in a heavy hailstorm' (*BNJ* 688 F 13.29). This temple was evidently the oracular shrine at Delphi; in the parallel episode in Herodotus the storm was sent by the god to protect his sanctuary (8.37.3). Since Xerxes failed to plunder Delphi with an army during his invasion of Greece, it is hard to see how he could mount another attack while he was in Sardis, let alone succeed without meeting any resistance from either the Greeks or the gods. As Friedrich Reuss saw long ago, 'Delphi' must be a mistake in Photius' summary, and Ctesias surely wrote about another famous oracular temple of Apollo, the sanctuary at Branchidai/Didyma near Miletus, not far from Sardis.²⁶

Ctesias' reference to *hybris* indicates unprovoked violence, and Megabyzos' refusal to take on this mission also implies that the attack was without justification, especially since Megabyzos was a prominent and sympathetically portrayed character in Ctesias' account of both Xerxes' and Artaxerxes' reigns.²⁷ The eunuch Matakas who plundered the shrine was surely the person earlier called Natakas, 'who had the greatest power of the eunuchs' and who was,

²⁶ Reuss 1905: 146–147. Studies of Ctesias generally accept this interpretation: e.g., Jacoby 1922: col. 2069; Bigwood 1978: 37–39; Lenfant 2004: xcix; Nichols 2008: 176.

²⁷ *BNJ* 688 FF 13.26; 14.34, 37, 39–43.

alongside ‘Mardonios the Old’, Xerxes’ chief adviser (F 13.24). Since in Ctesias, unlike in Herodotus, it was Mardonios who was sent to plunder Delphi in the previous year, the *Persian History* thus contrived to have both the king and his two closest advisers commit sacrilege against Greek sanctuaries—apparently not in revenge for Greek temple-burning but from mere greed for temple treasure.

The final detail that M/Natakas returned to Xerxes seems otiose in such a laconic summary, especially if Xerxes was still at Sardis and the expedition simply returned to base. However, the abrupt change of scene to Babylon, and then Persia, in the next sentence helps make sense of the passage: Xerxes sent the eunuch to plunder Branchidai while he himself with the rest of his forces left Sardis and marched to Babylon; after completing their mission in Ionia the eunuch’s forces also made their way to Babylon to rejoin the king.²⁸ Ctesias thus dated the assault on Branchidai to the end of Xerxes’ stay at Sardis, presumably late in 479.

This is all Ctesias had to say about the events of that year, without a hint at the battles of Plataea and Mycale. These huge omissions are analogous to those in Ctesias’ take on Darius’ Scythian expedition. In Herodotus, the expeditions led by the kings were defeated but large Persian forces were left behind in Europe (80,000 under Megabazos in Thrace, 300,000 under Mardonios in Thesaly) to consolidate and extend conquered territory. In Ctesias, by contrast, the royal expeditions ended in complete withdrawals to Asia, without any follow-up campaigns. Ctesias went so far as to move the battle of Plataea back a year, inserting a small-scale version of it between the battles of Thermopylae and Salamis (*BNJ* 688 F 13.28). This notorious displacement is usually regarded as a blunder but is more likely a deliberate narrative strategy, adding another defeat to Xerxes’ personal humiliations while contracting all the action into a one-year campaign.²⁹ Ctesias’ chronology of Plataea is again obviously wrong, and

28 Photius’ summary skipped what Ctesias said about Xerxes’ visit to Babylon, but it may have been that here, too, he plundered and destroyed temples, as alleged by several later authors: Arr., *Anab.* 7.17.2; cf. 3.16.4; Diod. Sic. 2.9.9; 17.112.3; Strabo 16.1.5.

29 ‘Blunder’: Bigwood 1978: 29; Lenfant 2004: xciii; Llewellyn-Jones and Robson 2010: 183 n. 89; Nichols 2008: 32; Stronk 2010: 42; Garland 2017: 122. I would suggest that Ctesias also used his version of Plataea to counter Herodotus’ claim that Spartans and Peloponnesians in effect abandoned the war effort after Thermopylae by falling back all the way to the Peloponnese (7.202, 219–222), where they started building a wall without sending out new forces (8.40.2; cf. Plut. *Them.* 9.3); they remained here for ten months (8.71–75; 9.3.2; 9.6–8 and 10) and the Athenians barely managed to persuade the fleet to stay at Salamis (8.49, 56–63, 74, 78–83). Ctesias by contrast had the Spartans send another picked force at once while the other Peloponnesians sent double their previous numbers, encamping in Boeo-

he had few, if any, followers.³⁰ Yet this idiosyncrasy does not necessarily invalidate his story about the sole event that he did attribute to 479, the plunder and destruction of Branchidai, which was also alluded to by other fourth-century authors.

Isocrates' *Panegyricus*, ca. 380, appealed to Spartans and Athenians to make no treaties with the Persians because 'in the previous war' these had plundered and burned the statues and temples of the gods (4.155):

For that very reason, the Ionians deserve praise because they invoked a curse upon anyone who cleared away the burnt temples or planned to reestablish their old form—not because they lacked the resources to arrange this but so that there might be a memorial for future generations of the impiety of the barbarians.

4.156

The context is clearly Xerxes' invasion, and the implication is that more than one Ionian city had at this time suffered the destruction of temples and had pointedly left them in ruins.³¹ Isocrates is not clear when exactly Xerxes inflicted this damage on Ionia, but he could have in mind the same story as Ctesias. The brevity of Photius' summary of Ctesias makes it entirely possible that he, too, mentioned the attacking and burning of other Ionian temples, even if focused his narrative on the plundering of Branchidai as the richest and most famous target.

Callisthenes, writing in the early 320s, shows that the Milesians regarded the burning of Branchidai as a major event in their local history and attributed it to Xerxes. Speaking of a visit by Alexander III 'the Great' to the oracle of Ammon in Egypt, Strabo (17.1.43) wrote:

tia as the Athenians demanded; in his version, Plataea was not burned down by the main Persian force under Xerxes *en route* to Athens, but it became the objective of a separate operation by a smaller force, and the Spartans saved the town from destruction.

- 30 Dio Chrysostom (*Discourses* 11.145) cited him as an example of uncertainty about historical events: 'some say that the naval battle at Salamis occurred after the battle of Plataea, others that the one at Plataea was the final action'. The allusion to Ctesias—which shows that the placing of Plataea was not a mistake in Photius' summary, but a genuine feature of the narrative—was noted by, e.g., Reuss 1905: 144–145; Jacoby 1922: col. 2060; Lenfant 2004: xciii n. 359. However, the passage is not included in editions of Ctesias' fragments.
- 31 This story is separate from the much-discussed Oath of Plataea (*pace*, e.g., Herda 2019a: 252–253), which in late fourth-century literary versions (but not in the epigraphic version: see van Wees 2006) involved mainland Greeks also swearing to leave their burnt temples in ruins.

Callisthenes adds in dramatic fashion that, after Apollo had abandoned the oracle at Branchidai from the time the sanctuary had been plundered by the Branchidai who took the Persian side under Xerxes, and the sacred spring had also run dry, at *that* moment [in 331] the spring started to flow again and Milesian envoys brought many oracles to Memphis about Alexander's begetting by Zeus and his future victory at Arbela, the death of Darius (III), and the Spartan revolt.

BNJ 124 F 14a

Claiming that Apollo's oracles correctly predicted all the main events of 331 and 330 may have been 'dramatic', but there is nothing unlikely in the idea that Miletus tried to ingratiate itself with Alexander in 331—having tried to resist him and sought Persian aid in 334—by sending envoys with favourable prophecies. These envoys may well have explained and enhanced their mission by claiming that the oracle had suddenly become active again, a century-and-a-half since its destruction by Xerxes. The flattering implication was that Apollo felt duly avenged by Alexander and was now willing again to prophesy final victory.³²

Elsewhere, Strabo (14.1.5), probably again drawing on Callisthenes,³³ added that

the oracle of Apollo Didymeus at Branchidai ... was burnt down by Xerxes, just like the other sanctuaries, apart from the one at Ephesos. The Branchidai, after handing over the treasures of the god to the Persian as he was fleeing, departed together with him so that they would not suffer the punishment for their temple-robbing and treason.

One notes the emphasis on plundering the treasures, shared with Ctesias, and the allusion to widespread burning of Ionian temples, shared with Isocrates. The precise timing—'as he was fleeing', i.e. when Xerxes departed from Sardis in late 479 (not from mainland Greece in 480, since the Branchidai fled with him)—also agrees with Ctesias. In this story, then, Xerxes was not so shaken by defeat at Mycale that he withdrew at once, but he first sent out an army to plunder temples across Ionia, then took the spoils and the people of Branchidai with him.

³² On the story of Branchidai's 'treason', see below.

³³ As suggested by the overlap between this passage and 17.1.34 quoted above; note also Strabo's citation of Callisthenes on the sack of Miletus by Darius (14.1.7: *BNJ 124 F 30*).

There was also a different version of the story: Xerxes 'seized the bronze Apollo at Branchidai,³⁴ because he accused the Milesians of having fought deliberately fighting badly (*ethelokakēsai*) in a naval battle against the Athenians in Greece', i.e. the battle of Salamis in 480 (Paus. 8.46.3); he took it to Ecbatana (1.16.3; cf. 2.10.5). This variant of the tale almost certainly derived from the fourth-century historian Ephorus. 'Deliberate cowardice' by Milesians and other Ionians at Salamis featured only in Ephorus, who said that the Ionians offered to defect and that their withdrawal proved decisive.³⁵ There is no hint of this in the summary of Ctesias, while Herodotus insisted to the contrary that, despite Themistocles' pleas to the Ionians (8.22), only 'a few of them deliberately fought badly, but the majority did not'; indeed, two Samians were rewarded for their outstanding services to Persia (8.85).³⁶ Moreover, only in Ephorus did Xerxes march to Ecbatana, rather than to Babylon, as in Ctesias, or to Susa, as in Herodotus. Ephorus thus followed Ctesias in having Xerxes plunder Branchidai, and perhaps other Ionian temples, but dated this earlier, soon after Salamis, in late 480 or early 479, rather than after Mycale in late 479 when Ionians were in open revolt and would hardly be punished any longer for mere underperformance in a year-old battle.³⁷

This slight chronological difference from Ctesias' and Callisthenes' stories was dictated by Ephorus' overall interpretation of the events of 479, which played up the role of the Ionians at Mycale and the extent of their revolt after the battle. Both sides expected a general revolt of 'the Ionians', indeed of 'the Greeks' (Diod. Sic. 11.34.3, 5) and all Greeks in the Persian camp were accordingly disarmed from the start (35.4). However, Samos and Miletus had 'decided in advance to bring aid with their general levy' (36.2), forming a third army that

34 Pace Tuchelt 1988: 431, it seems unlikely that the punishment of Miletus was merely to have one of its dedications removed from the temple; the reference is surely to the removal of the main cult statue, as part of the plundering and destruction of the sanctuary.

35 Offer to defect: Diod. 11.17.3; decisive: Just., *Epit.* 2.12.1–7, 25. It is widely accepted that Diodorus' and Justin's account ultimately derive from Ephorus, although neither was a straight copy. For the relation between Diodorus and Ephorus, and the contrast with Herodotus, see de Bakker in this volume, pp. 79–89.

36 Cf. 7.51.2–52.1 on the injustice and slavishness of Ionians serving Xerxes against Athens; 8.10 on the keenness of some Ionians at Artemision to capture Athenian ships; 8.11.3 and 8.82: only two Greek ships deserted from the Persians (one at Artemision, one at Salamis).

37 Curt. Ruf. 7.5.28 suggests an equally early date and may thus have drawn on Ephorus: the plundering of Branchidai occurred 'when Xerxes returned from Greece'; attributions to Xerxes without further indication of date: Diod. Sic. 17, table of contents of lost part between 17.82 and 83; Strabo 11.11.4; Plut. *de Sera* 12; Aelian fr. 54 Hercher (= Suda β514 [*Branchidai*] and δ1127 [*Dindymois*]).

decisively tipped the balance of battle (36.3–4).³⁸ At this point, Aeolians and ‘the majority of cities in Asia’ also changed sides and joined in the pursuit (36.5). Afterwards, ‘the Ionians and the Aeolians’ joined the Greek alliance (Diod. Sic. 11.37.1–2), and ‘the Ionians and the islanders’ joined Athens’ expedition to the Chersonese (37.4). In 478, Sparta led an expedition ‘to liberate such Greek cities as continued still to be occupied by barbarian garrisons’ (11.44.1), a turn of phrase suggesting that most Greeks had already been liberated and only pockets of Persian resistance remained, in Cyprus and at Byzantium (44.2–3). The phrase is repeated for the next mission, led by Athens under Kimon (11.60.1), which liberated Eion in Thrace, the Dorian Greek cities of coastal Caria, and the rest of Caria and Lycia (60.2–5; Ephorus *BNJ* 70 F 191.6–13). The chronology here notoriously compressed ten years’ worth of military action into a single long campaign to create the impression of an instant concentrated effort to liberate even remote corners of the Greek and semi-Greek world that had not already been set free from Persia by the victory at Mycale.

This picture of a near-universal uprising was incompatible with the chronology of the story in Ctesias, Isocrates and Callisthenes. In Ephorus’ narrative, a Persian campaign against Branchidai after Mycale and around the time of Xerxes’ departure from Sardis would not fit, since it would imply that the Persians had been able to execute harsh reprisals against Ionian rebels yet had made no attempt to suppress the revolt. Conversely, the Ionians would have been strong enough to assert their independence, yet somehow let the Persians destroy their temples without any attempt to retaliate. Ephorus’ elegant solution was to date the plundering of the sanctuaries earlier and interpret it as punishment for Salamis, suggesting that even in 480 the Ionians had already been freedom-loving enough to rebel and suffer punishment, while also explaining how Xerxes was able to wreak such destruction, and giving the Ionians an additional and powerful religious cause to revolt soon afterwards.

Conversely, the story as told by Ctesias and others implied that Xerxes was far from defeated,³⁹ and the Ionians far from liberated, since the king remained powerful enough to send an army to plunder the temples of Ionia while he marched off to Babylon. A good deal of evidence does support this picture of

38 By contrast, in Herodotus the Ionian crews of beached Persian triremes (8.130.2) played only a marginal role at Mycale: the Athenians dominated the action (9.102, 105) while the Samians had been disarmed but ‘did what they could’, ‘other Ionians’ followed their example (103.2), and finally the Milesians, stationed in the mountains as a rearguard, turned on the Persians once these were on the run (104).

39 Strabo 14.1.5 says that Xerxes ‘fled’, but this verb may be his own rather than Callisthenes’, and there is no hint of Persian flight in Ctesias or the other texts cited above.

largely intact Persian control over the Greek cities on the Anatolian mainland after 479, including information provided by Herodotus and Ephorus although it goes against the grain of their narratives. Herodotus said that, after Mycale, the Greeks had 'no hope at all that the Ionians would get off without punishment by the Persians' (106.2). They proposed that all Ionians should migrate to mainland Greece for safety, but Athens blocked that proposal, and the Ionians stayed where they were (106.3), while the Greek fleet sailed off to the Hellespont where Athens recaptured the Chersonese (114–120). While 'Samians and Chians and Lesbians and the *other islanders* who fought on the Greek side' were taken into the alliance (106.4), not even this limited form of protection was extended to Miletus or the other Greek cities on the Anatolian coast. As Herodotus put it, in the battle of Mycale 'the prizes laid out before them were both *the islands* and the Hellespont' (101.3): there was no question of liberating or protecting Ionians or Aeolians on the mainland.

Ephorus claimed that the Ionians and Aeolians of the mainland did gain their freedom—mainly by their own efforts rather than with Athenian help—but he acknowledged that the Persians did not just surrender control without a fight. Although 40,000 of the 100,000 imperial troops at Mycale were killed, the majority escaped, and contrary to Herodotus' account neither the Persian camp nor the beached ships were captured by the Greeks (Diod. Sic. 11.34.3, 36.5–6). Moreover, a still larger army remained with Xerxes at Sardis, unharmed (35.4, 36.2–3), and although they were 'disturbed' by the battle and left for the east, this was not a complete withdrawal: the king 'left a part of his force at Sardis to continue the war against the Greeks' (11.36.7). In 478, Xerxes was in secret negotiations with the Spartan general Pausanias (11.44–7; Justin 2.15.13–16), but as soon as Pausanias was recalled, 'Xerxes ... started the war again' (Justin 2.15.17). Further details are not preserved, but clearly Ephorus accepted that the Persians after Mycale resorted to military action against the rebels.

All this makes sense. A heavy loss of warships, in battle at Salamis and perhaps on the beach at Mycale, followed by the defection of the islanders of Samos, Chios and Lesbos who provided most crews for Persian ships in the Aegean, would have caused the Persians to lose control of the sea, but did little to undermine their control of the mainland. We may add that one of the major provincial centres of Persian government, Kelainai on the western border of Phrygia, was fortified and equipped with a royal residence by Xerxes in 479, according to Xenophon.⁴⁰ It is in any case a matter of historical record

40 Xen. *An.* 1.2.9; see Tuplin 2009: esp. 86–87; van Rookhuijzen 2018: 43.

that even at the peak of the Athenian Empire Persia lost control of no more than a narrow coastal strip of Anatolia. Xerxes and Artaxerxes in the 470s and 460s made grants of territory, including coastal towns, in Ionia, Aeolis and the Hellespontine region, and Persian control was stable enough for these territories to be still held by the descendants of the original recipients two generations later.⁴¹

Ctesias, Isocrates and Callisthenes, and in his own way Ephorus, thus represent a strong and plausible fourth-century belief that Persian forces had assaulted Branchidai and on other temples in Ionia in 479. So, when Philip II in 337 announced his intention to invade Persia in revenge for the burning of Greek temples (Diod. Sic. 16.89.2), he was surely thinking not only or even mainly of Athens and Phocis, but also and especially of Miletus and other Ionian cities that had sworn to seek revenge for the burning of their temples. It was, after all, the support of these cities that Philip needed most for a successful invasion of the Persian Empire.

Herodotus was the odd one out in dating the destruction of Branchidai to 494 and the rest of Ionia to 493, and, in addition to his positive reasons for preferring these earlier dates, outlined above, we can identify a strong objection that he will have had against a date in 479. In his time, Athenians claimed the right to a position of hegemony because they had liberated the Greeks from Persian rule (e.g., Thuc. 1.73.2–75.2), yet by his own account the Athenians had left coastal Ionia and Aeolis in the lurch in 479, and ‘liberated’ only the islands. This was compatible with Athens’ claims only if, despite initial fears of Persian reprisals, the Greek victories had been so overwhelming that Xerxes was incapable of responding to the second revolt of Ionia.⁴² That was indeed the

41 Most strikingly in Aeolis, where Xenophon met several of these descendants, who were surely the source of his claim that Pergamon, Teuthrania and Halisarna were given to Demaratus ‘as a reward for the expedition against Greece’, i.e. by Xerxes in 479 (Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.6; cf. *An.* 2.1.3; 7.8.17) against Herodotus’ claim that Demaratus had received ‘land and cities’ from Darius (Hdt. 6.70.2; 7.104.2). Demaratus’ neighbour Gongylos of Eretria, given Myrina, Gryneion, Gambriion and Palaigambriion (Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.6; *An.* 7.8.8–17), must have received these from Xerxes after his expulsion from Byzantium in or after 478 (Thuc. 1.128.6; Diod. Sic. 11.44.3). Plut. *Them.* 26.1 implies that Aigai in Aeolis remained under Persian control ca. 465; Thuc. 5.1 has Adramyttion in Persian hands in 422; several Aeolian towns never joined the Delian League. Themistocles received grants in Ionia and Hellespont from Artaxerxes: Thuc. 1.138.5; Diod. Sic. 11.57.7; Plut. *Them.* 29.7; with, e.g., Braun 2000.

42 Herodotus emphasizes Xerxes’ panic after Salamis (8.97, 103, 107–108), devastating losses by the Persian army in retreat Greece (8.115–120; 9.89; cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 480–514), and the annihilation of what remained of the Persian forces at Plataea (9.70). All 60,000 Persian infantry who remained in Ionia were engaged in the battle of Mycale (9.96.2) and ‘not

Athenian view, projected already by Aeschylus' *Persians* in 472, which suggested that after Salamis and Plataea the whole Persian Empire would collapse (esp. ll. 584–597).⁴³ On this view, the Athenians could safely, with a clear conscience, have left Miletus and other coastal Ionian cities undefended and yet free. But by the same token, Xerxes could not have destroyed the towns and temples of Ionia after Mycale. They had to have been burnt already by Darius. Herodotus concluded his account of 479 with a bathetic 'in this year nothing further happened' (9.121). This phrase marked the end of the *Histories*—apart from a final anecdote—but I would suggest that it also tacitly denied the truth of Ionian stories about Xerxes destroying Branchidai and other sanctuaries at this time.

Herodotus' Athenocentrism thus led him to place the destruction of Ionia in the reign of Darius and to imply a total collapse of the western Persian Empire under Xerxes, thereby absolving the Athenians from any blame for leaving their kinsmen and future subjects exposed to Persian retaliation. Ephorus' East Greek and Panhellenic perspective led him to place the destruction to just before the second Ionian Revolt, to glorify and enhance the scope, success and justification of this revolt when it subsequently broke out. Both historians plausibly presented the devastation as punishment for resisting Persian authority, but in other respects their accounts exaggerated the magnitude of Greek victory and its consequences for the Persian Empire. Ctesias, Isocrates and Callisthenes, on the other hand, plausibly presented the Persian Empire as still powerful and wreaking havoc in Ionia after the battles of Plataea and Mycale but were excessively anti-Persian in claiming that Xerxes had acted without provocation and simply carted off temple treasures as he left the region. Since the leading Greek states from 412/411 onward conceded the king of Persia's right to rule the Asiatic mainland, Ctesias had little incentive to discuss the battle of Mycale or the second Ionian Revolt, and by omitting them from his account, he reinforced the impression that Xerxes was merely a temple-robbing tyrant who continued doing in Asia Minor what he had tried to do at Delphi and had succeeded in doing at Athens the year before.

Again, we conclude that the various narratives each had their biases and agendas, their strengths and weaknesses, and that Herodotus' version of events is not automatically to be preferred because it was the earliest and most detailed, nor Ctesias' version to be dismissed because it was written a generation

many' survived (9.107); all of Xerxes' remaining ships except the Phoenician contingent (8.130.2; 9.96.1) were destroyed, as was the Persian camp (9.106.1).

43 Thucydides, too, has the Persian troops and ships that 'escaped' to Mycale 'destroyed' there, and notes no Persian intervention in Ionia until 440 (1.115.4–5, 116.3).

later and highly selective. In order to understand what happened in Ionia, we need to account for all the information our sources provide, taking fully into account why each author told his preferred story.

4 The Destruction(s) of Ionia

A first step towards extracting history from our historians is to note that the destruction of Miletus could well have been a separate matter from the destruction of Branchidai and the other Ionian towns and temples. Unlike the other rebel cities, Miletus withstood a major siege in 494 (Hdt. 6.18.1). In the ancient world, a city that resisted a long and costly siege was always liable to suffer destruction and the enslavement of its population, so this is a plausible fate for Miletus. Moreover, Herodotus offered a detailed account of specific measures taken at Miletus, rather than the generic horror story he told about ‘netting’ people in Ionia, castrating boys and seizing girls for the king. He evidently exaggerated the degree of depopulation at Miletus, but the outlines of his account may be correct. Phrynichus’ tragedy *The Capture of Miletus by Darius* (Hdt. 6.21.2; Callisthenes *BNJ* 124 F 30), performed in the 480s or 470s, was probably the main source of both Herodotus’ information and his overstatements.⁴⁴ Archaeologists have found the material record at Miletus consistent with extensive destruction around 500, and even if they have tended to take the accuracy of Herodotus’ account too much for granted, there is no real reason to doubt this conclusion.⁴⁵ The sack of Miletus did not, however, necessarily entail the destruction of Branchidai, since this sanctuary was situated far outside the city, at an unfortified site about 16 km distant, near the other end of the peninsula. Persian forces besieging Miletus can have met little or no resistance at the sanctuary and must have taken control of it long before they captured the city. Branchidai could at that point have been plundered and burned down or it could have been respected as a sacred place, but there was no reason why it should have suffered the same fate as the city.

If the Milesians had believed that Branchidai was destroyed under Darius, their envoys to Alexander in 331—or at any rate Callisthenes reporting the story—would have been delighted to say so, since it made the silence of the oracle even longer and its lifting even more dramatic. The fact that they, like

44 Herda (2019b: 93–94) goes so far as to suggest that Herodotus’ phrase ‘Miletus was now empty of Milesians’ quotes Phrynichus. For the *topos*, see Bachvarova and Dutsch 2016; for the play, see Rosenbloom 1993.

45 See, e.g., Lohmann 2021; Herda 2019b: 93–96.

Ephorus, and like Ctesias fifty years earlier, nevertheless attributed the fall of Branchidai to Xerxes strongly suggests that in local tradition Darius had spared the sanctuary. The same local sentiment was evident at a hearing in the Roman Senate in 22 CE where Greek cities were invited to make a case why their sanctuaries should keep the right of asylum that the Romans sought to curtail. The fourteen recorded claims typically cited either grants from Roman generals and governors or the authority of myths, legends and oracles, but the Milesians relied on the argument that their Apollo received the right of asylum from Darius (Tac., *Ann.* 3.60–3). This unusual choice suggests that the claim had a historical basis but even if one wanted to reject it as a much later invention, it remains striking that the Milesians in defiance of Herodotus' *Histories* insisted that Darius had not merely spared but honoured the sanctuary at Branchidai.⁴⁶

A reason for this considerate treatment is suggested by yet another tradition that did not feature in Herodotus' history but was attached to the proverbial phrase 'Once upon a time Milesians were warriors'. Several authors said that the Carians were at war with Darius and asked the oracle at Branchidai whether to make peace with Persia or form an alliance with Miletus, to which the oracle responded with that proverb, implying that Milesians were no longer warriors and that the Carians, instead of relying on such feeble allies, should submit to the Persians.⁴⁷ The fourth-century author Demon added that the Milesians accused the oracle of taking bribes from Persia-sympathizers, sent a general levy to fight beside the Carians as allies, 'and almost all died' (*BNJ* 327 F 16). A battle in which Milesians 'and their allies' joined the Carian rebels and suffered many casualties is reported by Herodotus (5.120) early in the Ionian Revolt, perhaps 498. We do not have to believe that the proverb genuinely originated in this manner⁴⁸ to see significance in the view of fourth-century writers that Miletus and Branchidai were not on the same side during the Ionian Revolt.

46 See, e.g., Tuchelt 1988: 429 (also noting the ostentatious piety towards Apollo on Delos attributed to Datis by Herodotus 6.97, 118). Tacitus does not spell out which temple of Apollo, but it is unlikely that he meant the much less famous temple of Apollo Delphinios in Miletus itself (which had presumably been destroyed along with the city in 494). The 'Gadatas Letter' makes a similar claim to privileges granted by Darius for a sacred precinct of Apollo at nearby Magnesia: *IMagn.* 115; McCabe, *Magnesia* 109; ML 12; see Tuplin 2009.

47 Explicit identification of Branchidai only in Zenobius 5.80 (= Anacreon fr. 426) and of Darius as the enemy here and in schol. *ad* Aristoph. *Plut.* 1002 (c), but the other texts are compatible: Demon *BNJ* 327 F 16; Ephorus 70 F 183 and Diod. 10.25.2; Aristotle F 557 Rose.

48 The line 'Once upon a time Milesians were warriors' featured in a poem by Anacreon (fr. 426) which raises doubts about its status as an oracle. The poet's association with Polycrates of Samos suggested an alternative explanation (scholia on Aristoph. *Plut.* 1002 [a]) in which it was Polycrates rather than the Carians who considered an alliance with Miletus.

A reflection of the same split may be seen in an unsolicited Delphic oracle that criticized Miletus for its role in the Ionian Revolt as a 'deviser of harmful deeds' and predicted that the city's wealth would be seized and its women enslaved, while 'our temple at Didyma will be looked after by others' (Hdt. 6.19.2). Herodotus thought this came true when the sanctuary 'was plundered and burned' (19.3), yet the oracle at Delphi clearly assumed that its counterpart at Branchidai would continue to exist after Miletus was (deservedly) destroyed, but now controlled by 'others', who might be either the local priests or the Persian landowners who according to Herodotus now took over the territory (6.20). The temple would not have found it difficult to work with Persia(ns) since this had been Miletus' default position since the conquest of Ionia by Cyrus in 545, when this city alone did not resist but made an alliance with him (Hdt. 1.141.4, 143) and the oracle discouraged other Ionians from opposing the Persians (Hdt. 1.157.3–159.4).⁴⁹ By rebelling in 499, the city parted company not only with Persian imperial authority but also with its own oracle.

If Branchidai continued to operate under direct Persian occupation, we can see why the Milesians later portrayed the personnel of the temple as guilty of 'temple-robbing and treason' (Strabo 14.1.5). These accusations would be strange if the priests merely yielded to Xerxes' army when it came to plunder but make sense if the story claimed that the priests had collaborated with Persia for fifteen years after Miletus was destroyed and had embezzled sacred funds at that time. When their Persian friends were about to abandon the territory in 479, the priests in fear of punishment by the Greeks allegedly offered Xerxes the wealth of the temple in exchange for a new home far away. That the story makes sense in this way need not mean that it was true, but on the other hand it is hard to see why else Xerxes would have taken with him the cult statue, treasures and personnel of a cult that had loyally served him and his father. And if the story was indeed true, we can begin to understand why Alexander III felt that it would be a great Panhellenic propaganda coup to massacre the descendants of the deportees when his conquests reached New Branchidai in remote Sogdiana.⁵⁰

49 See Greaves et al. 2018 on the Persian empire's benefits for Miletus and its elite.

50 Since Parke 1985, most scholars accept that the massacre of the Branchidai did occur but regard their 'treason' as a fiction (mainly because Herodotus said that Branchidai was destroyed by Darius: e.g., Parke 1985: 64; Bosworth 1988: 108–109; Hammond 1998; Flower 2000: 117–118; Mendoza, forthcoming; these discussions make no reference to Ctesias). Parke's convoluted explanation (1985: 67–68), however, relied on the highly unlikely assumption that Alexander saw a propaganda opportunity in massacring a Greek community in Asia on the strength of a story that no one in the Greek world had previously heard of. On the minority view that the massacre was itself a fiction (Tarn 1922), the

Archaeological evidence shows much less activity at Branchidai in the fifth and fourth centuries than in the sixth, and some scattered signs of destruction in the early fifth century. Large-scale building work undertaken from the late fourth century onward disturbed most deposits to such an extent that the history of the site has become very hard to reconstruct, and most archaeologists have felt unable to choose between 494 and 479 as the date at which the pottery evidence breaks off or at least drops off very sharply.⁵¹ If the material record cannot decide between 494 and 479, I would argue that the literary evidence discussed above tips the balance towards the latter date. But it seems to me that the material record actually does include enough material from 500–475 to support the later date and that it is only the weight of Herodotus' authority that has inhibited archaeologists from drawing that conclusion.⁵² The recently published material from 500–475 but no later in a rare well-preserved destruction layer on the nearby Taxiarchos Hill seems decisive support for the date of 479 given by all our textual sources apart from Herodotus.⁵³

An inscription known as the Molpoi Statutes implies that a procession from Miletus to Didyma took place in 476/5.⁵⁴ The provisions made at that time to deal with a potential failure of the responsible participants, the Onitadai, to provide the necessary sacrificial equipment and the possibility that the Onitadai might claim rewards that had not been provided for, suggest that this may have been the moment when an annual procession was first organized after the plundering and abandonment of the oracle. The Milesians thus seem to be back, if they had ever been away, and reasserted territorial control over the

story about their treason under Xerxes must already have been well-known; to invent a massacre of Greeks as revenge for a previously unknown offence would make no sense.

- 51 E.g., Lohmann 2021; Slawisch 2009; 2013; Tuchelt 1988: 435 with n. 65.
- 52 Among the pottery finds from along the 'sacred road' at Didyma published by Schattner 2007, the most telling is deposit Q, with 28 datable sherds spanning 750–475, including two from the late sixth or early fifth century (Att. 16–17 = Asch. 14–15) and one from 500–475 (Att./Asch.19) (2007: 33, 355–356, 474). Two single sherds in deposits (C = Att. 5/Asch. 1; and L = Att. 13/Asch. 2) are dated in summary to 475–450 (2007: 474), but one parallel cited in the catalogue dates back to 490 and several to 480 (2007: 353–354). A single sherd found in isolation in a different stratum from the rest of Deposit G2 dates to the late fifth century (Att. 8), while Deposits P and H are broadly dated to fifth/fourth century and 375–300, respectively, and may thus reflect a resumption of activity after 331 (2007: 474). Slawisch 2009: 32, reports pottery from the Apollo temple itself dated to 500–475, followed by a gap, then pottery from 350–300.
- 53 The excavators date both the destruction layer and the previous stratum to 500–475 (e.g., Bumke [ed.] 2023: 7), implying a destruction date towards the end of that range.
- 54 *Milet* 1.3 no. 133, esp. lines 40–42. The text was inscribed ca. 200 but represents regulations enacted 447/6. See Herda 2006 and 2011.

sanctuary. However, despite stipulating a series of rituals to be performed along the route, the Statutes mention no sacrifice to be made at Branchidai itself, only a sacred object to be set up ‘in Didyma at the gate’ (lines 25–27), so the sanctuary itself may have been left abandoned, in line with the oath sworn by the Ionians not to rebuild temples that had been sacked by the Persians.⁵⁵

If we reject Herodotus’ claims about the fate of Branchidai in 494, as we have good reasons to do, all the other evidence thus falls into place and points to Ctesias and his successors being right to say that the sanctuary was plundered and its personnel deported by Xerxes in 479. Accordingly, we also have a *prima facie* case for accepting the claims of Isocrates and Callisthenes, and presumably Ctesias before them, that the devastation of the rest of Ionia, too, was the work of Xerxes. If they were right, Herodotus must have reported the stories and scenes of destruction that he encountered on the Ionian mainland but ignored their association with Xerxes and dated them further back, in line with his own historical agenda. Herodotus’ further claim that Darius had punished the rebel islands Chios, Lesbos and Tenedos by ‘dragnetting’ their populations (6.31.1), however, was not a retrojection of events of 479, because Xerxes’ loss of control of the Aegean Sea meant that he could not take action against islanders. Since the supposed technique of ‘dragnetting’ an island by forming a human chain of soldiers holding hands across the territory from north to south (6.31.2) was physically impossible, it was surely—as Plato suggested (*Leg.* 698d)—a typical Persian threat against rebels rather than a genuine method. Herodotus in this instance may thus merely have assumed that the Persians in 494 put their familiar rhetoric into practice.⁵⁶

Although the motivations for Xerxes’ campaign in Ionia suggested by Ctesias and others fail to convince,⁵⁷ it is not difficult to find an alternative explanation. Faced with rebellions in coastal towns, Xerxes may well have sent an army to destroy towns and cult-centres and deport many of the inhabitants, not only to

55 This explanation seems to me to remove the seeming discrepancies between literary, epigraphic and archaeological evidence that led, e.g., Slawisch (2009) and Slawisch and Wilkinson (2021: 108–112) to suggest that much or all of the inscription was a pseudo-historical fiction.

56 Herodotus also claimed that the Persians ‘dragnetted’ Samos in 522 as punishment yet restored the population soon afterwards (3.149), which may be another instance of his taking a threat too literally. Plato, as cited, cast doubt on the dragnetting of Eretria in 490 (cf. Strabo 10.1.10): Datis ‘sent a fearsome account to our city ... This account, whether it was true or arose in some other way, terrified the Greeks and especially the Athenians’.

57 Nor does Cicero’s view that Xerxes destroyed temples on principle, because gods should not be hemmed in by walls (*Leg.* 2.10.26); cf. Hecataeus of Abdera *BNJ* 264 F 3 (Magi allow destruction of cult statues).

punish rebellion but also as the only means to secure long-term control of the Anatolian west coast now that Persia had lost control of the sea and the islands. The appearance in the 470s of Greeks in exile as rulers of sizeable territories, like Demaratus of Sparta and Gongylos of Eretria in Aeolis,⁵⁸ can be understood as part of this strategy. Instead of either appointing a 'tyrant' to govern each city or installing 'democratic' regimes, Xerxes assigned groups of towns, now perhaps only thinly populated, to men who had proved loyal supporters of Persia in the war, with responsibility for collecting tribute (Hdt. 6.42.2; Thuc. 8.5.5) and keeping at bay any further Greek inroads.

Notoriously, there is no textual evidence for Greeks on the Asiatic mainland joining Athens' Delian League, before the Tribute Lists starting in 454. Narratives of the League's early campaigns feature only island members and no expeditions to liberate or defend Greek allies on the Anatolian coast. An early casualty list, perhaps of 464, provides the sole exception, with fighting at Sigeion—not coincidentally an Athenian colony—and probable allied support from Byzantium and Madytos, both on the European side of the Bosphorus and Hellespont.⁵⁹ Thucydides gave the impression of widespread support for Athenian leadership when he said that during the campaign of 478 'the Ionians and all those who had recently been liberated from the king' rejected Spartan leadership and went over to Athens (1.95.1), but strictly speaking this means only that the Ionians and other rebels who took part in this expedition decided to support Athens, and we have no way of telling how many or few they were at this point.⁶⁰ Elsewhere, only Samos, Chios and Lesbos are mentioned (Plut., *Arist.* 23.4–5), and although Ephorus in the late fourth century did imagine near-universal rebellion we have already seen that this notion reflected Panhellenic ideals rather than historical fact. It is therefore possible that for the first decade or more of its existence the Delian League consisted of Athens and Aegean islands, with a growing number of allies on the European coast up to Byzantium, but without Anatolian allies except perhaps Sigeion and the mainland territories of Samos, Chios and Lesbos.⁶¹ The rest of Ionia may have remained in ruins.

Archaeology supports the scenario offered above. A recent survey of the region has concluded that the period 475–450 is marked by a 'dramatically-

58 See n. 41, above.

59 *IG* 1³ 1144.32, 119 (Sigeion), 34 ([Mad]ytioi) and 118 ([Byza]ntio[i]).

60 Similarly non-specific is Thucydides' statement that the expedition to the Chersonese in 479 included 'the allies from Ionia and the Hellespont who had already revolted from the king' (1.89.2).

61 So Robertson 1980: 69–73; cf. Balcer 1997; Miller 1997: 9–13; Ehrhardt 2003.

reduced archaeological visibility of Ionian cities', in terms of locally manufactured fine pottery, stonework and coin emissions, in exported trade amphorae, and in imported Athenian pottery.⁶² The notable absence of city walls across Ionia may also go back to Persian policy of this period.⁶³ The interpretation of the growing body of material evidence remains debated and is often vitiated by the assumption that we have firm dates from the literary evidence for widespread destruction in 493 and Delian League membership from 478.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the analysis of the literary evidence set out above makes it likely that the limited material record of Ionia for the second quarter of the fifth century is not an illusion created by faulty methods of dating but a genuine sign of material poverty, and that this poverty was not a result of Athenian imperialism but of destructive Persian campaigns in and after 479.

If this seems too bold a conclusion, then I hope to have shown at least that the study of Ionia in 500–450 should not be guided exclusively by Herodotus, with his Athenocentric distortions and omissions, but take note also of Ctesias' *Persian History*, which suggests that different parts of the region followed different paths in the early fifth century: the fate of Miletus in 494 was not shared by the sanctuary at Branchidai or by other cities in the region, and the 'liberation' of the islands in 479 was not shared by coastal Ionia or Aeolis.

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62 Slawisch 2022: 498–500, further noting that the trend excludes Samos (monumental building) and Chios (export amphorae), which also fits our scenario.

63 Thuc. 3.33.2 (in 427); cf. his comments on a lack of fortifications at Klazomenai (8.31.3), Knidos (35.3), Kos (41.2), Kamiros (44.2), and Lampsakos (62.2) in 412.

64 The case studies explored by Anja Slawisch in the present volume (Ch. 12) illustrate the weak foundations of current chronologies for Phokaian coinage and Klazomenian sarcophagi, for example.

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Herodotus on 480 BCE and Late Archaic Chronology

Angelika Kellner

1 Introduction¹

Herodotus offers invaluable insights into the political and geographical landscape of Archaic Greece;² in addition, he has also created the fundamental framework for the traditional chronology of ancient Greece. By placing Homer and Hesiod roughly 400 years before his own time (2.53.2), Herodotus' perception of the ('historical') beginning of early Greece coincides with the modern conception of the Greek Archaic period starting around 800.³ The events leading to the Persian Wars and the ensuing military conflict form the main topic for Herodotus, who accordingly presents the war as a decisive caesura in Greek history.⁴ Modern scholars have used Herodotus' account, among others, to define the year 480 as the end of the Archaic era.⁵ Herodotus thus implicitly provides

1 I would like to sincerely thank the organizers for giving me the opportunity to participate in this wonderful conference where I could present my paper. Likewise, I gladly express my thanks to the many participants for insightful conversations, the editors for their invaluable feedback and Dr. Sam Ellis for proofreading my English text. All years expressed are in BCE unless indicated otherwise. The translations from Herodotus' *Histories* stem from the Landmark Herodotus (Purvis 2007).

2 Bichler 2000.

3 The unhistorical date for the first Olympic Games, 776, has been employed as the traditional watershed for the beginning of Archaic Greece, although some scholars have chosen to set it at the course of the eighth century or 700. Recent contributions have somehow negated the beginning of this epoch by reaching back into the Bronze Age to discuss the beginnings of early Greece. For a short overview of the discussion about the starting date of Archaic Greece, see Kellner 2022: 1–2, 11–12.

4 Suzanne Marchand analyzes the reception history of Herodotus' *Histories* in this volume. According to her insights, the interests of readers varied considerably, with Herodotus' chronology of the Ancient Near East and Egypt attracting particular attention among early scholars such as Joseph Justus Scaliger. It was only in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that Herodotus' depiction of the Persian Wars—especially the date 480—began to emerge as a watershed in modern perception.

5 Heinrich Brunn, Friedrich Nietzsche and Jacob Burckhardt are considered the three founding fathers of the term 'Archaic' in the year 1872. Walter 2013: 99–100. However, only in the 1930s

a vague blueprint for the modern definition of Archaic Greece with the time between a far distant (heroic) and a more recent past (i.e. the Persian Wars).⁶

The crucial question of this volume is whether the events of 480 are indeed a watershed, to the extent of marking the boundary between Archaic and Classical Greek history. My chapter aims to contribute to this overall agenda by discussing and highlighting the unique way in which Herodotus presents this caesura from a chronological perspective. The significance of this date (and event) is underlined by Herodotus (8.51.1) singularly using the Athenian archon's name—Kalliades—when Xerxes captured Athens for the first time. Because a contextualization of Herodotus' chronological methods is crucial to fully appreciate this exception, I will discuss and scrutinize several significant passages of his *Histories*. The date of the Persian Wars under Darius and Xerxes is also transmitted by later authors who applied different dating methods, which warrant an in-depth analysis. While Herodotus and later authors significantly identify the linchpin to be around the year 480, I will present several crucial case studies on the late Archaic Period for which Herodotus implies a lower chronology of roughly thirty to fifty years. This phenomenon has hitherto hardly received the attention it deserves. It is worth investigating further for late Archaic Greek history in general and specifically for the chronology of pottery. By approaching the issue of the watershed year 480 on an interdisciplinary basis, the chapter intends to show the necessity of closely reading Herodotus' text in terms of his chronology.

2 Chronologies in Ancient Greece: An Overview of the Dating Methods

2.1 *Herodotus*

For modern scholars of Antiquity, at least those in the West, it is self-evident to identify a year with the corresponding BCE or CE date. Ancient authors, however, did not have this dating method at their disposal. One quick glance through Herodotus' *Histories* shows that at the time Herodotus was writing, sometime in the last third of the fifth century, a panhellenic chronological system did not exist.⁷ Hence, Herodotus ingeniously used the Persian kings from

and 1940s has the concept of Archaic Greece as an epoch been further developed; see: Berve 1931: 110–212; Heuß 1946.

6 Bichler 2012: 87–88, 99–104.

7 An overview of the manifold calendar systems of the Greek *poleis* can be found in Samuel 1972.

Cyrus to Xerxes as the main chronological guideline for events in the world known to the Greeks. In addition, he relied upon chronological contexts, which he constructed with seemingly simple tools such as synchronisms and intervals. These can be summarized as follows:

- Persian kings: In many instances, Herodotus provides the name and reign length of individual kings or entire dynasties (for example, from Cyrus onwards for the Persians) with their corresponding chronological significance. In addition, Herodotus offers concise reign lengths for the Egyptian, Median and Lydian rulers.⁸
- Synchronisms: By placing two events or people within the same time horizon, Herodotus creates a chronology for the whole Mediterranean, including the Egyptian, Levantine and Mesopotamian regions. When Herodotus (1.29–33) describes Solon and Croesus conversing about happiness, he presents them as contemporaries.
- Interval dating: Dates can also be expressed with precise years or generations between a reference point (such as the author's present or the Trojan War) and the event at hand. In the example referred to above, Herodotus (2.53.2) places Homer and Hesiod roughly 400 years before his own time.

Herodotus thus creates a highly complex chronological web that is challenging to fully comprehend and survey, particularly as modern readers are accustomed to other dating conventions. Therefore, modern translations frequently include a common BCE date. Leaving the radiocarbon dating debate aside,⁹ the chronology of Archaic Greece and its traditional methodology have been neglected in modern scholarship. This has resulted in the problematic situation in which year dates tend to be treated as independent facts without considering their basis: the ancient texts and their interpretation. Reinhold Bichler has written the most extensive and up-to-date analysis of Herodotus' chronology,¹⁰ in which he also presents an essential guide to the associated research history. The following sections, supplemented by bibliographic references, will emphasize that apart from Bichler's seminal paper, recent contributions have barely touched upon chronological issues.

8 While Herodotus' information on the Saite dynasty (with the notable exception of Apries) has been confirmed by Egyptian sources, his depiction of the Median and Lydian kings might be (partially) considered his own creation: Bichler 2004: 212–214.

9 The work of Doumet-Serhal, Gimatzidis, Weninger, von Räden and Kopetzky 2023 is one of the latest contributions in this extensive and ongoing discussion.

10 Bichler 2004.

To underline Herodotus' general dating methods, I would like to highlight how Herodotus chronologically describes Xerxes' plans for a military campaign against Greece:

Thus Xerxes was finally persuaded to march against Hellas, but first, in the year following the death of Darius, he sent an army against those who had revolted in Egypt. [...] During four full years¹¹ following the conquest of Egypt, Xerxes prepared his army and gathered provisions for it. Then, in the course of the fifth year, he set out on his campaign with an enormous body of troops.¹²

In this instance, the implied chronology is quite clear: Herodotus employs the Persian kings Darius and Xerxes, or rather their reigns, for chronological guidance. In addition, Herodotus provides an interval date for the moment when Xerxes began to prepare his military forces, namely the year after Darius' death. It took Xerxes until his sixth regnal year before he finally marched with his army against the Greek cities. Despite Herodotus' tightly woven chronological net, there are instances in which the precise date remains unclear—to us and to ancient readers—due to Herodotus' vague wording. Such chronological uncertainties or tolerances only become apparent in a thorough analysis and have been vividly described as cracks in Herodotus' chronological structure by Reinhold Bichler.¹³ Besides the loose end of the Mermnad dynasty, with no precise date given for Cyrus' conquest of Sardis (1.86.1),¹⁴ another telling example of such an imprecision in Herodotus' *Histories* involves the unspecified year of Cambyses' campaign against Egypt. Archaeologists use this passage to date the Siphnian treasury in Delphi, which forms the cornerstone of the Studniczka-Langlotz chronology for placing the beginning of red-figure vase painting at around 530–520.¹⁵ In this context, it is crucial that Herodotus does not specify when, exactly, Cambyses conquered Egypt. Herodotus mentions Cambyses' expedition twice—once at the beginning of book 2 and then again at the beginning of book 3.

11 The Loeb edition as well as the Landmark Herodotus conveniently inform the modern reader that this translates (most likely) to 484–481.

12 Hdt. 7.7; 7.201.

13 Bichler 2004: 212.

14 Only later chronographers put Croesus' reign in absolute dates that can be translated with ca. 561–547. Rollinger and Kellner 2019.

15 Studniczka 1887: 159–167; Langlotz 1920.

When Cyrus died, the kingship was inherited by Cambyses. He was the son of Cyrus by Kassandane daughter of Pharnaspes. [...] As the son of this woman and Cyrus, Cambyses considered the Ionians and Aeolians as his slaves whom he had inherited from his father, and when he made his expedition to Egypt, he took with him these Hellenes who were under his rule, along with the rest of his subjects.¹⁶

It was against this Amasis that Cambyses son of Cyrus was preparing to wage war, with an army of his other subjects, including Ionian and Aeolian Hellenes. [...] Psammenitos son of Amasis positioned his army at the mouth of the Nile that is called Pelusian and there he awaited Cambyses. For Cambyses did not manage to find Amasis alive when he marched to Egypt, as Amasis had already died after having reigned forty-four years, in all of which time nothing very unusual had happened.¹⁷

As Herodotus proceeds in book 3 to recount other events occurring during Cambyses' reign (530–522),¹⁸ Herodotus seems to place Cambyses' Egyptian campaign at the beginning of his rule without stating a precise year.¹⁹ In contrast, modern scholarship can date the battle of Pelusium to early summer 525 based on Egyptian documents and statements of later authors who reference Psammenitus' (111) reign of six months (526–525).²⁰ This difference points to a problematic approach that substitutes the lack of information in Herodotus with later and/or Egyptian/cuneiform evidence. This working hypothesis assumes that there was only ever one 'correct' chronology for ancient (Greek and Roman) authors to report about the early Greek past,²¹ which the later test cases can clearly refute. In addition, Herodotus' designation of the Mermaid dynasty from Gyges to Croesus as lasting 170 years conflicts with the cuneiform evidence about Gyges and Cyrus' conquest of Babylon in 530.²² Instead of assuming that Herodotus must have had the same chronological knowledge, his chronological statements must be considered in their own right. This cru-

16 Hdt. 2.1.

17 Hdt. 3.1.1; 3.10.1–2.

18 Wiesehöfer 2004.

19 Lloyd 1975: 190–191; Bichler 2004: 212. Herodotus could have followed the tradition of the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions that displayed the kings' military successes particularly at the beginning of their reign. For the legitimizing aspect, see: Tadmor 1981; Tadmor 1997.

20 Kienitz 1953: 154–157.

21 Ancient authors have notoriously used significantly diverging dates for some figures of early Greece, such as for Pheidon of Argos: Kōiv 2001.

22 Hdt. 1.15.1 (Gyges); 1.16.1 (Ardys, Sadyattes); 1.25.1 (Alyattes); 1.86.1 (Croesus). Kellner 2022: 271–272.

cial point will become clearer when one compares Herodotus' diverging dating methods with those of later ancient authors.

Contrary to Herodotus' dating habits outlined above, he singularly names an eponymous Athenian official to clarify the exact year in which Xerxes' army sacked Athens before the battle of Salamis:

From the passage of the Hellespont, where the barbarians began their journey, they spent one month crossing over to Europe, and another three months on their march to Attica, arriving during the archonship of Kalliades.²³

Fully contextualizing this atypical eponymous date in Herodotus' *Histories* requires the inclusion of further chronological information scattered in the previous book, namely, that it took Xerxes until his sixth year on the throne to prepare for his military campaign against Greece. Thus, Herodotus equates Xerxes' sixth regnal year with Kalliades' archonship. The reference to an eponymous officeholder is absolutely singular in Herodotus' *Histories* and thus worthy of discussion. Recent research does not touch upon this matter, which fits the general trend of neglecting chronological questions for the Archaic period and merely using the conventional chronology.²⁴ Hermann Strasburger has seen Herodotus' eponymous date as the most crucial chronological passage in the *Histories*, which, according to Strasburger, underlines how important Herodotus considers the events of this year.²⁵ Even if one prefers to adopt a more critical view assuming that the contemporary panhellenic audience was not necessarily able or required to transfer this eponymous date into absolute terms (i.e. 480),²⁶ Herodotus' unique reference to the Athenian archon still holds some importance. Significantly, it could have served to signify an overlap of the Persian time horizon with the Attic one, as Denis Feeney suggests.²⁷ This assumption might point to an Athenian source that could have clearly

23 Hdt. 8.51.1 Purvis' (2007: 621) translation mistakenly expresses the archon's name as Kallias for reasons unknown despite the text manuscripts clearly listing the name as Kalliades: Καλλιᾶδεω ἄρχοντος Ἀθηναίοισι (Wilson 2015: 725). Significantly, the name Kalliades appears three times in the list of fifth century Athenian archons. The issue of homonymous office holders in the context of eponymous dating will be addressed below.

24 Norbert Ehrhardt (1992: 15–16) similarly points out that, e.g., Herodotus' (lower) chronology for Solon is commonly ignored and preference given to later ancient authors with the conventional date 594/3.

25 Strasburger 1956: 135–136.

26 Mosshammer 1979: 88; Den Boer 1967; Shaw 2003: 32.

27 Feeney 2007: 221–222 n. 35.

associated the destruction of the Acropolis with Kalliades' archonship without necessarily conveying the intention of providing an absolute date.²⁸ Herodotus' creative modelling of information from various sources is known from other instances.²⁹ Should the theory about an Athenian source withstand scrutiny, Herodotus constructed the year of the battle at Salamis (i.e., 480) and tellingly not the battle at Marathon as the anchor point of his chronology leading up to the Persian Wars. Considering the more eminent prominence of Marathon in Athenian memorization,³⁰ Herodotus' chronological approach indicates diverging prioritization.

Ultimately, Herodotus forms our main source for Xerxes' invasion, and his seminal designation for the year 480 offers an ancient blueprint for the end of the Archaic period.³¹ Regardless of how one chooses to understand Herodotus' motives for uniquely including an Athenian archon date, the year of Kalliades' archonship serves in the *Histories* as a critical anchor for dating events of the Greek world until the Ionian Revolt in 499 in absolute terms (6.18). Hence, the Ionian Revolt, as an immediate cause of the Persian Wars, is the earliest absolute date for the Greek world on the evidence of Herodotus' *Histories* alone.³² Later authors have followed Herodotus' chronological layout to express this crucial epoch marker in the archonship of Kalliades,³³ but have additionally relied upon other dating methods which shall be highlighted in the following section.

2.2 *Eponymous Dating*

The habit of naming a year according to the eponymous archon in Athens appears verifiably for the first time in the so-called Hekatompedon decrees, in which one of the two fragmentary eponymous references can be restored as: ἐπὶ Φ[ίλοχρ]ᾶ[τ]ος ἄρχ[οντ]ος.³⁴ Thus, the archon's name is most commonly

28 E.g., Den Boer 1967: 32.

29 Herodotus has most likely created (with vague forerunners in cuneiform sources) the succession of world empires in Mesopotamia with the Assyrians, Medes and Persians: Oellig 2023: 276–351.

30 On the (Athenian) memory of the battle of Marathon: Gehrke 2003. Thucydides (6.59.4) has used the battle of Marathon as a reference point to provide the twenty-year interval that elapsed between Hippias' expulsion (511/10) and his arrival with Darius' troops.

31 The degree to which modern scholars rely upon Herodotus' account for the reconstruction of the events can be seen in Busolt 1893: 631–745.

32 Lendle 1992: 48–51 (with an overview of the relative dating chain based on the year of Kalliades' archonship); Bichler 2004: 210, 215.

33 On issues with the archon's name in Eusebius' chronicle, see below.

34 *IG* I³ 4 A 14–15; B26–27. There is considerable debate as to whether to date this inscription earlier or later. This debate has been summarized by Stroud 2004.

reconstructed as Philokrates, who held the archonship in 485/4.³⁵ The next epigraphic evidence for eponymous dating in Athens stems from 454/3.³⁶ In the last quarter of the fifth century, a list of Athenian archons was placed at the Athenian Agora,³⁷ which aligns with the regular appearance of archon dates in decrees from this time onwards.³⁸ Therefore, while there is epigraphic evidence from the early fifth century onwards that archons were used to specify years, there is no direct evidence from the Archaic period, and I am skeptical of the notion that Athenian archon dating was already a widespread habit at this early time.³⁹

Eponymous dating in Greek historiography starts slightly later in the second half of the fifth century. When Thucydides (2.2.1) tries to precisely date the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (431), he uses, amongst other methods, the eponymous dates from three Greek cities. He refers to the 48th year of the priestess Chrysis in Argos, the Spartan ephor Ainesias and tellingly the Athenian archon Pythodoros, who was in office for a further three months. However, when Thucydides refers to other events of the Peloponnesian War or of Greece's past in general, he does not rely on any further eponymous dates. He even goes on to criticize his predecessor Hellanicus as having covered the time immediately preceding the Peloponnesian War (the *pentēkontaetia*) insufficiently from a chronological perspective (1.97.2).⁴⁰ The absence of potentially more clarifying archon dates is striking, as appears from Megara Hyblaea's foundation date: Thucydides (6.4.1–2) mentions that the Syracusan tyrant Gelon attacked Megara Hyblaea, which marks its foundation 245 years prior to this early fifth-century event. Thucydides, however, does not even attempt to provide an absolute date, and there remains considerable chronological uncertainty (translatable to Gelon's tyranny in Syracuse from 485 to 478, as attested by Diodorus).⁴¹ In my opinion, the textual evidence indicates either

35 As we assign Philokrates' archonship the year 485/4, we rely on the *Marmor Parium*: Samuel 1972: 205.

36 For an overview and discussion of the earliest epigraphic evidence, which documents the Athenian archons for eponymous dating, see Pritchett 1996: 1–3.

37 *IG I³* 1031.

38 Ehrhardt 1992: 15; Christesen 2007: 102.

39 As there is no direct evidence for eponymous dating in Archaic times (as is the case for the existence of archives), one's judgement of the later historiographic/epigraphic sources as well as the socio-political structures and the degree of literacy significantly shape answers to such a complex research question.

40 This statement has generated considerable debate: e.g., Pownall 2016: commentary to *BNJ* 323a T 8.

41 On Thucydides' chronological layout for the Sicilian foundation dates (including Megara Hyblaea): Kellner 2022: 161–175.

that Thucydides does not deem it necessary to provide a higher chronological precision, or that he consciously chooses to display the limits of his research.⁴²

Herodotus similarly does not rely upon archon dates in his *Histories*, with the notable exception of Kalliades' year of office, in which Xerxes' troops destroyed the Athenian Acropolis for the first time. For the modern reader, the Athenian archons would have offered the option for a clear chronological presentation of Athenian history, such as the Kylonian affair, Solon and the Peisistratid rule.⁴³ The question of why only later authors (particularly in Greek chronography) chose to include Athenian archon dates on a regular basis has been answered in different ways. It is my opinion that Herodotus would have used archon dates more frequently if he had this dating tool readily available. Thus, it seems unlikely that Herodotus had a complete archon list accessible for writing about Archaic Athens.⁴⁴ Ancient chronographers had the admittedly difficult task of creating a concise chronology of early Greece *post festum*, even though precise dates were not always feasible in earlier sources such as Herodotus.⁴⁵ This crucial, albeit debatable, point forms the basis of my understanding when comparing Herodotus' chronology of late Archaic Greece with the chronological outlay of later authors.

Lists of eponymous officials were published in various Greek cities in the second half of the fifth century, which, together with the appearance of eponymous dating, is understood to mark the beginning of ancient Greek chronography.⁴⁶ Another important chronographic list, in addition to the one enumerating Athenian archons, contains the victors at the Olympic Games, which Hippias of Elis compiled at around 400.⁴⁷ In general, works of ancient Greek chronography are preserved only in highly fragmentary states, thus rendering them a difficult subject. All fifth-century chronographic texts owe their survival to quotations by later authors and thus present further methodological chal-

42 Bichler (2004: 224) has argued similarly: 'Angesichts der Akribie, mit der sich Thukydides um eine präzise chronologische Festlegung des Beginns und der Dauer des Archidamischen Kriegs bemühte, und der Entschiedenheit, mit der er dieses Bemühen gegen Hellenikos' System verteidigte, spricht vieles dafür, in dieser Vagheit ein bewusst gesetztes Zeichen des begrenzten Wissens zu sehen.'

43 On Herodotus' chronology of the Peisistratid rule: Hind 1974 (excellent overview of older scholarship); Rhodes 1981: 191–199; Chambers 1990: 200–205.

44 Similarly: Jacoby 1949: 350 n. 36; Mosshammer 1979: 88–89; Bichler 2004: 209–210 n. 8.

45 Kellner 2022: 31–156.

46 Alden Mosshammer's seminal book (1979) about ancient Greek chronography is still the most comprehensive study to date.

47 For the evidence of the Olympic victors lists and their chronological function in Antiquity, see: Christesen 2007.

lenges for modern scholars.⁴⁸ For example, only later authors partially transmit the Athenian archon list for the Archaic and Classical periods, above all Castor of Rhodes and Diodorus (in books 11 to 13).⁴⁹ As to the exceptional case of Athens, we possess valuable epigraphic evidence from the late fifth century, but even here has the fragmentary state of the stele led to a dispute about the correct reconstruction.⁵⁰

Leaving aside the fragmentary evidence for the local histories of Athens (*Atthides*) in the fifth century and the question of whether all of them were indeed structured annalistically,⁵¹ the list of Athenian archons not only provided a chronological backbone for the local histories of Athens, but for the Hellenic past in general. The *Marmor Parium*, a third-century inscription from the island of Paros, draws on the Athenian archons as a chronological tool.⁵² In addition, the author identifies the interval of time elapsed between the given events and a fixed reference point. This reference point is identified with the year (usually translated as 264), in which Diognetos held the Athenian archonship.⁵³ The inscription also refers to the office holder in Paros, whose name is, however, broken off. As the Persian Wars form the linchpin under discussion, I cite the entry regarding the battle of Salamis:

From the time Xerxes erected the bridge in the Hellespont and crossed (Mount) Athos, and the battle in Thermo[py]lae occurred, and the naval battle of the Hellenes against the Persians near Salamis, which the Hellenes won, 217 years [= 480/79 BCE], when Calliades was archon in Athens.⁵⁴

The dating convention used in the *Marmor Parium* involves important issues of eponymous dating regarding absolute chronology. Obviously, naming the

48 E.g., Brunt 1980.

49 Castor's Athenian king and archon list: *BNJ / FGrHist* 250 F4 (apud Euseb. *Chron.*: Karst 1911: 85–89). Modern editions provide a reconstruction of the Athenian archon list: Samuel 1972: 195–237; Strothmann and Welwei 2004.

50 *IG* 1³ 1031. See, for instance, the discussion if the archon's name ([. . .]λεισθέν[εϛ]) for the year 525 should indeed be reconstructed as Kleisthenes: Dillon 2006.

51 Felix Jacoby has established the *opinio communis* that Hellanicus and later Atthidographers all relied upon a consequent annalistic structure for their histories of Athens; e.g., Harding 2008: 6. For a critical analysis of this concept, see Kellner 2021: 7–14.

52 For the *Marmor Parium* in general: *BNJ / FGrHist* 239; Jacoby 1904a; Jacoby 1904b; Burgess and Kulikowski 2013: 84–85, 301–309; Rotstein 2016.

53 Cadoux 1948: 83–86.

54 *Marm. Par.* A 51. Transl. Rotstein 2016: 44.

year according to an official's name deviates from modern BCE dating conventions. Eponymous dates come with difficulties that modern readers need to be aware of. Ancient authors could, for example, name the same eponymous official for a given year, but nevertheless adduce differing time intervals between corresponding dates. This seeming paradox is probably best known from the diverging chronologies of Varro (first century BCE) and Livy (first century BCE/CE) for the Roman past.⁵⁵ Another telling case is the Roman consul list, as provided by Diodorus in books 11 to 13, which deviates from the version provided by the *Fasti Capitolini*.⁵⁶ Diodorus seems to displace the names of the Roman officeholders by a couple of years and, in some cases, even gives different or diverging names,⁵⁷ as can be seen in his chronological description of Xerxes' invasion of Greece:

Calliades was archon in Athens, and the Romans made Spurius Cassius and Proculus Verginius Tricostus consuls, and the Eleians celebrated the seventy-fifth Olympiad, that in which Astylus of Syracuse won the 'stadium'. It was in this year that king Xerxes made his campaign against Greece [...].⁵⁸

While Diodorus names Kalliades as Athenian archon, just like Herodotus, he additionally provides the name of the stadion race winner of the seventy-fifth Olympic Games which refers to the year 480. However, Spurius Cassius and Proculus Verginius held the office already in 486 according to the *Fasti Capitolini*, which give the names Marcus Fabius and Gnaeus Manlius for 480.⁵⁹ Diodorus thus correctly conveys the epoch marker as 480 by naming the Athenian archon and the corresponding Olympic year; however, the names of the consul pair clearly show the potential pitfalls of eponymous dating and the transmission of chronographic lists. I think that some diverging dates for early Greece (and Rome) can be accounted for in this way, thus underlining the challenges ancient authors faced when constructing a concise chronology of their distant past.

55 Cornell 1995: 401–402.

56 For the *Fasti Capitolini*, which were originally part of an arch built by Augustus, see: Degraasi 1954; Feeney 2007: 172–183; Burgess and Kulikowski 2013: 160–165.

57 Perl 1957; Will 1998: 4.

58 Diod. Sic. 11.1.2. Transl. Oldfather 1946: 121.

59 Samuel 1972: 256.

2.3 *The Olympiad Dating System*

The Olympic victors of the stadion race were used for eponymous dating from the early fourth century onwards, as Diodorus' passage above has demonstrated.⁶⁰ Numbered Olympiads were introduced slightly later, sometime in the third century, as a chronological tool.⁶¹ Due to the fragmentary preservation of ancient Greek chronography, various authors have been credited with this innovation including Aristotle (fourth century), Timaeus (early third century) and Eratosthenes (later third century). I have argued elsewhere that ancient authors began to use the Olympiad dating system in the third century but mostly parallel to other chronological systems.⁶² The first Greek author to verifiably employ the Olympiad dating system in his work on a grand scale was Polybius in the second century. Significantly, the Olympiad dating system has always remained restricted to the literary sphere and never entered everyday use.⁶³

The assumption of the first Olympic Games being held in 776 is first found in a fragment from Eratosthenes in combination with Ptolemy's *Royal Canon*.⁶⁴ Further data from Roman times can testify to 776 as the starting point of the Olympiad dating system.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, a handful of ancient sources show a dispute about the precise date of the first Olympic Games.⁶⁶ For this reason, there might have been different starting points for the Olympiad dating system in Antiquity. This conclusion has profound consequences. In her study on the chronology of the Archaic Peloponnese, Pamela-Jane Shaw has used a similar

60 E.g., Philistos *BNJ* 556 F 2 (apud Steph. Byz. s.v. Δύμη).

61 For example, the so-called Olympiad chronicle (*IG* II² 2326)—an inscription from Athens—numbers the Olympic contests and provides the names of the victors alongside information about which Olympic Games certain contests were introduced. Ebert 1982; Christesen 2007: 202–215, 385.

62 Kellner 2022: 61–70.

63 E.g., Feeney 2007: 18.

64 *BNJ* 241 F 1a (apud Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.138.1–3). In his *Royal Canon*, the ancient astronomer Claudius Ptolemaeus (second century CE) compiled a list of Babylonian, Persian, Hellenistic and Roman kings with Nabonassar's reign (747 BCE) as a starting point. For Ptolemy's *Royal Canon* see: Bickerman 1968: 109–111; Depuydt 1995; Folkerts 2001.

65 Christesen 2007: 18. Eusebius (*Praep. evang.* 10.9), for example, places the fifteenth year of the Roman emperor Tiberius in the Olympiad year 201,4 (28 CE). When establishing the Christian era Dionysius Exiguus also relied upon the standard equation of the Olympiad year 1,1 with 776. Samuel 1972: 190; Bickerman 1963: 53.

66 Callimachus (third century), Aristodemus of Elis (ca. second century), T.C. Polybius (ca. first century), Phlegon of Tralleis (second century CE) and Sextus Julius Africanus (third century CE) present divergent information about the date of Korobois' victory in the stadion race, which is normally placed at the first Olympic Games. For further details, see Kellner 2022: 70–75.

approach, arguing that less attention should be paid to the Olympiad dates and more attention be given to the dating contexts of events or people.⁶⁷ Likewise, Philip Thibodeau has recently argued that sources before the Olympiad dating convention be predominantly relied upon for reconstructing the timeline of the two Milesian philosophers Anaximenes and Anaximander.⁶⁸ Significantly, this viewpoint results in lower dates by roughly fifty years.

3 General Observations and Eusebius' Chronicle in the Early Fourth Century CE

In later times, Greek chronographic traditions continued in use. In the Augustan period, Diodorus proceeded to use the Attic eponymous officials in addition to the Olympiads, the stadion race winner and the Roman consuls for his chronology.⁶⁹ Later Christian chroniclers relied upon Greek chronographic works and their dating conventions, which they adapted for their own depiction of (Christian) world history.⁷⁰ In the *Chronikoi Kanōnes* of the Christian author Eusebius (early fourth century CE), one encounters many otherwise lost earlier chronographic writings; therefore, Eusebius is a valuable source for ancient Greek chronography. Characteristically for the fragmentary state of the genre, even Eusebius' chronicle has not survived in its original Greek form. Modern scholars, therefore, depend on two important manuscript traditions: the Latin copy of Jerome (second half of the fourth century CE) and the Armenian manuscript tradition (fifth century CE).⁷¹ Eusebius' chronicle originally comprised two books. The first part, also called *Chronographia*, displays consecutive lists of officials and kings of various geographical areas, such as Egypt and Mesopotamia, as well as Greece and Rome.⁷² In the second book, Eusebius then synchronizes the various king lists (*fila regnorum*) in table form

67 Shaw 2003.

68 Thibodeau 2019: particularly 227–261.

69 E.g., Rathmann 2016: 138.

70 Sextus Julius Africanus is seen as the first Christian chronicler after the publication of his work titled *Chronographiai* in the 220s CE. For further details on Sextus Julius Africanus and his work and context, see: Wallraff 2006; Wallraff 2007.

71 Standard edition for Jerome's transcript: Helm 1956. English translation: Pearse et al. 2005. Standard translation and edition for the Armenian manuscript tradition (despite some flaws to be preferred over Heinrich Petermann's edition in Schoene 1866): Karst 1911. As Josef Karst, amongst others, only provides a German translation, his publication is far from ideal. Recent findings have brought to light a new Armenian manuscript that is currently being prepared for publication: Drost-Abgarjan 2006.

72 In recent years, codex pages in ancient Greek from the first book, hitherto only preserved

and provides notes about events and people in the assigned space (*spatium historicum*).

Even a quick look at Helm's standard edition of Jerome's manuscript reveals Eusebius' dependence on the dating conventions of ancient Greek chronography, most notably the Olympiad dating system. Additionally, Eusebius establishes a new chronological structure by counting the years since Abraham (*Anno Abrahami*). The chronicle thus comprises a chronological timeframe from Abraham's birth until the year convertible to 325 CE. There are several minor deviations in date between the two copies of Eusebius' chronicle; for example, for the establishment of the first Olympic Games, which Jerome places 1241 years after Abraham (*Anno Abrahami* 1241) and the Armenian manuscript 1240 years later (*Anno Abrahami* 1240).⁷³ Such minor deviations are probably due to the copying process, as jumping one line means shifting the entry's date for an entire year. Some instances, such as the highly divergent foundation dates for Selinous on Sicily, however, show more crucial differences and must have other causes.⁷⁴

The aforementioned characteristics can also be observed for the epoch marker in Eusebius' chronicle. Thus, Jerome places Athens' destruction by Xerxes' troops and the battle of Salamis in two consecutive years, which the Armenian manuscripts even place apart by three years.⁷⁵ Both transcripts, however, record the name of an Athenian archon, albeit in garbled form. Instead of the correct name Kalliades, they show 'Callias' and 'Kliad'. In this specific instance, the different name of the Athenian eponymous office holder did not lead to another absolute date. The faulty transmission of the archon's name in Eusebius' chronicle touches upon the phenomenon of similar or even identical archon names, which could cause chronological difficulties when no other dating methods are provided. The reconstructed archon list tellingly gives the name Kalliades as archon for the year 523/2 and 480/79, but the name Kallias can be found three times in the fifth century (456/5, 412/1: 406/5).⁷⁶ Ancient Greek chronographers did not develop an overall accepted method to

in the Armenian text tradition, have been revealed. An edition of these new pages is in preparation: Grusková 2013.

- 73 Mosshammer 1979: 80. As it would seem highly impractical to not equate the Olympiad year 1,1 with 776, this one-year difference has been ignored in the conversion into BCE dates below for admittedly practical reasons. For the sake of clarity, the year count from Abraham is additionally provided to prevent any confusion.
- 74 For the various foundation dates of Selinous in the Armenian and Latin manuscript tradition of Eusebius' chronicle, see Kellner 2022: 199–205.
- 75 Helm 1956: 109^c, 109^d; Karst 1911: 191–192.
- 76 Samuel 1972: 204: 206–208.

TABLE 5.1 Dates for the first destruction of Athens and the battle of Salamis in Eusebius' chronicle

Jerome	Athens' destruction: Fifth regnal year of Xerxes, archonship of Callias (<i>sic</i>), Ol. 74,4 (480 BCE) Battle of Salamis: Sixth regnal year of Xerxes, Ol. 75,1 (479 BCE)
Armenian Eusebius	Athens' destruction: Third regnal year of Xerxes, archonship of Kliad, Ol. 74,3 (AA 1534 / 482 BCE) Battle of Salamis: Sixth regnal year of Xerxes, Ol. 75,2 (AA 1537 / 479 BCE)

differentiate between homonymous office holders. The only exception is the *Marmor Parium*, which provides traces of a system to distinguish between two archons with the same name: the Elder (ὁ πρότερος) and the Younger (ὁ δεύτερος).⁷⁷

All these chronological deviations in Eusebius' chronicle are comparatively minor and can be solved with earlier ancient texts; thus, for the events connected to Xerxes' invasion, the year 480 serves as a solid watershed founded by Herodotus. Significantly, Herodotus' dating methods differ greatly from those of later authors, such as Diodorus or Eusebius. Hellenistic chronographers had the admittedly difficult task of calculating precise years for events and figures of a distant time (what we would now call Archaic Greece) in retrospect, for which earlier sources (such as Herodotus) did not always provide year dates. By typically supplying the results only in Olympiads, the exact phrasing of the chronographers' sources and their method for each case is not always comprehensible in full detail. A great deal of information is lost in this step, which thus constitutes a break in the ancient transmission of the chronology for the late Archaic and early Classical periods. Modern scholarship, starting with the science of ancient chronology in the Renaissance, significantly did not rely on Herodotus, but rather on the late Christian chronicles for the chronology of Antiquity.⁷⁸ Despite the fact that the watershed year of 480 is corrected in Eusebius' chronicle by Herodotus, the latter's chronology is at times not considered properly, as preference is given to the seemingly more convenient but much

⁷⁷ Kellner in print.

⁷⁸ Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540–1609) is commonly referred to as one of the earliest and most influential scholars in this area. He wrote two books on ancient chronology (in Latin): Scaliger 1583; Scaliger 1658. For details on Scaliger's contributions, see: Grafton 1983; Grafton 1993.

later established Olympiad dates. This approach considerably affects our modern chronological understanding of the Greek world immediately before the Persian Wars.

4 Case Studies—Herodotus' Lower Chronology in Comparison to Later Authors

While the year 480 based upon Herodotus is not under any serious doubt, the events and history of the sixth century are significantly modified if one closely compares Herodotus' chronology with that of ancient Greek chronographers. The latter have the tendency to provide a higher chronology (i.e. an older age) by thirty to fifty years for some selected events of Archaic Greece when compared with Herodotus. Although Karl Julius Beloch, Dmitri Panchenko and Reinhold Bichler have remarked upon this fact in passing,⁷⁹ it has thus far not received the attention it deserves and is commonly ignored in more recent studies. There exists a problematic tendency to explain the apparent singular deviations in Herodotus exclusively as errors and even to commonly remove the issue by amending Herodotus' text.⁸⁰ In the following section, three case studies shall document this 'ageing' phenomenon of selected events and people of Archaic Greece. This presentation of the evidence will, in a nutshell, contrast the chronological information provided by Herodotus with later authors.⁸¹

4.1 *Sappho*

By connecting the courtesan Rhodopis to Sappho's brother Charaxos, Herodotus (2.134–135) clearly places Sappho in the reign of pharaoh Amasis (570–526).⁸² Eusebius connects the famous poets Sappho and Alcaeus to the Olympiad year 45,1 (600/599 BCE) in Jerome's Latin manuscript and to the Olympiad year 46,2 (*Anno Abrahami* 1421: 594/3 BCE) in the Armenian version.⁸³

79 Beloch 1913: 275; Panchenko 2000; Bichler, 2014: 42–44.

80 For the problematic approach of unnecessarily interfering with a uniform manuscript tradition of Herodotus, see Gilula 2003.

81 As the main goal is to highlight the differences between Herodotus' and later chronographers' chronologies, I have focused only on the clearest evidence. For the most comprehensive discussion of the chronographers' dates for Sappho, Alcaeus, Pittacus and the Kypselides see Mosshammer 1979: 234–254.

82 Von Beckerath 1997: 192.

83 Helm 1956: 99b^d; Karst 1911: 187.

TABLE 5.2 Dates for Sappho

Herodotus	Reign of pharaoh Amasis (570–526)
Jerome	Ol. 45,1 (600/599 BCE)
Armenian Eusebius	Ol. 46,2 (AA 1421: 595/4 BCE)

4.2 *Pittacus*

According to Herodotus (1.27), Pittacus was a contemporary of the Lydian king Croesus, whose reign lasted fourteen years. However, Herodotus does not provide absolute dates for Croesus' reign.⁸⁴ For my argument, a translation of Herodotus' chronological information with roughly the middle of the sixth century suffices. Eusebius, on the other hand, presents Pittacus as one of the Seven Sages who killed the Olympic winner Phryno in the Olympiad year 43,2 (607/6 BCE) or 43,2 (*Anno Abrahami* 1409, 607/6 BCE) respectively.⁸⁵

TABLE 5.3 Dates for Pittacus

Herodotus	Contemporary of Lydian king Croesus (ca. middle of sixth century)
Jerome	Ol. 43,2 (607/6 BCE)
Armenian Eusebius	Ol. 43,2 (AA 1409, 607/6 BCE)

4.3 *Alcaeus*

Herodotus (5.94–95) places Alcaeus and the conflict between the Lesbians and Athenians about Sigeion in the time of Peisistratos' son Hegesistratos, for which an interpretation of the year being placed in the middle or the second half of the sixth century seems adequate. Herodotus' statement clearly conflicts with Diogenes Laertius' information (1.62) of Alcaeus' acme roughly in the 42nd Olympiad (612/1–608/7 BCE). Eusebius similarly places Alcaeus' (and Sappho's) importance earlier than Herodotus in the Olympiad year 45,1 (600/599 BCE) / 46,2 (*Anno Abrahami* 1421, 595/4 BCE).⁸⁶ While in the previous examples, cal-

84 Later chronographic tradition assigns to Croesus' reign absolute dates that can be translated as ca. 561–547. Even though Herodotus provides the reign length for the Lydian kings from Gyges to Croesus, he does not specify the year, in which Cyrus conquered Sardes and thus ended Croesus' reign. For further details, see Rollinger and Kellner 2019. Early Lydian coinage has been used to solve the chronological issues of the Mermnad dynasty: Wallace 2016.

85 Helm 1956: 99b⁸; Karst 1911: 186.

86 Helm 1956: 99b^d; Karst 1911: 187.

culations using a person's lifespan might link Herodotus' diverging date with the later chronographers' depiction, this cannot be the case here. In line with modern scholars' tendency of explaining Herodotus' chronological deviations as mistakes, the Loeb Classical Library translation by Godley informs the reader of Herodotus' seemingly inaccurate sixth-century chronology, as the war could not have taken place later than 600.⁸⁷

TABLE 5.4 Dates for Alcaeus

Herodotus	Time of Peisistratos' son Hegesistratos (middle/second half sixth century)
Jerome	Ol. 45,1 (600/599 BCE)
Armenian Eusebius	Ol. 46,2 (AA 1421, 595/4 BCE)

4.4 *Periander*

Herodotus (3.39; 3.48; 5.94–95) places Periander a generation before Cambyses' (530–522) campaign against Egypt and designates him as the arbitrator in the conflict between the Lesbians and Athenians at the time of Peisistratos' son Hegesistratos. These two points of information are the clearest chronological indicators in Herodotus' *Histories*. Translating this information in absolute terms results in a date around the middle of the sixth century or sometime later. Eusebius divergently dates Periander's tyranny over Corinth far earlier from the Olympiad year 38,1 (628/7 BCE) to 48,1 (588/7 BCE) in Jerome's manuscript and from the Olympiad year 37,4 (*Anno Abrahami* 1387, 629/8 BCE) to 48,2 (*Anno Abrahami* 1429, 587/6 BCE) in the Armenian version.⁸⁸

TABLE 5.5 Dates for Periander

Herodotus	A generation before Cambyses' campaign against Egypt and at the time of Peisistratos' son Hegesistratos (middle or second half of sixth century)
Jerome	Periander's tyranny Ol. 38,1 (628/7 BCE) to Ol. 48,1 (588/7 BCE)
Armenian Eusebius	Periander's tyranny Ol. 37,4 (AA 1387, 629/8 BCE) to Ol. 48,2 (AA 1429, 587/6 BCE)

87 Godley 1998: 115. Also repeated in Purvis 2007: 410.

88 Helm 1956: 96bⁿ; 100b^e; Karst 1911: 185.

4.5 *Solon*

Herodotus (1.29–33; 2.177.2) presents Solon, the Egyptian pharaoh Amasis (570–526) and the Lydian king Croesus as contemporaries. The famous dialogue between Solon and Croesus about happiness is understood as an implicit critique of fifth-century contemporary Athenian values and thus as a fifth-century creation.⁸⁹ While Herodotus does not mention Solon's archonship at all,⁹⁰ later authors place Solon's office distinctly earlier than Herodotus' chronological context.⁹¹ Diogenes Laertius (1.62) refers to the Hellenistic author Sosikrates, who states that Solon's archonship and acme falls roughly in the Olympiad year 46,3 (594/3 BCE). In Eusebius' chronicle, Solon's laws appear connected to the same time horizon, as Jerome names the Olympiad 46,3 (594/3 BCE) and the Armenian version gives the Olympiad year 47,2 (*Anno Abrahami* 1425, 591/0 BCE).⁹²

TABLE 5.6 Dates for Solon

Herodotus	Solon as a contemporary of Egyptian pharaoh Amasis (570–526 BC) and Lydian king Croesus (ca. middle of 6th century BC)
Diogenes Laertius (Sosikrates)	Solon's archonship and acme roughly in Ol. 46, 3 (594/3 BC)
Jerome	Solon's laws in Ol. 46,3 (Ol. 594/3 BC)
Armenian Eusebius	Solon's laws in Ol. 47,2 (AA 1425, 591/0 BC)

I have thus far presented the chronological evidence in a brief survey to show the different time horizons applied by Herodotus and later authors. While there obviously remains some debate as to how to deal with these differences, they cannot be ignored. Diverging chronological information could, in principle, refer to different moments of a person's life; however, this approach does not satisfactorily explain the pattern at hand: Herodotus presents some selected events and persons at a later timeframe than the chronographers. As the modern chronological perception of Antiquity was significantly coined

89 Irwin 2013.

90 Retrospective sources covering Archaic Athens feature widely known complex methodological challenges; see most recently: Rönning 2021: 23–82.

91 For a detailed discussion of Solon's (changing) date in Antiquity, see Fehling 1985: 91–92, 110–119.

92 Helm 1956: 99b⁸; Karst 1911: 187.

by later authors such as Eusebius (even though Herodotus' Greek manuscript was known by Western scholars from at least the fifteenth century CE)⁹³ this issue did not cause much trouble for the technical chronology. When facing this chronological difficulty in recent scholarship, Herodotus has been commonly declared mistaken or wrong.⁹⁴ An intriguing explanation has been proposed by Kurt Raaflaub⁹⁵ who explains the—in his opinion chronologically impossible—meeting of Croesus and Solon through the tendency of oral tradition to connect famous people and events. This telescoping effect is indeed well documented for oral tradition, but does not explain how later authors were able to miraculously correct these chronological flaws.⁹⁶ It ultimately comes down to one's own judgment and interpretation of ancient historiography, the underlying sources and their transmission. Hans-Joachim Gehrke has rightly pointed out in his research on Herodotus and the tyrant chronology that each case needs to be analyzed individually.⁹⁷ The 'ageing' phenomenon is, however, not limited to Herodotus, but can also be observed in other contexts, such as the transmission of the Greek foundation dates.⁹⁸ Hence, it appears evident that an explanation should be sought at the chronographers' end.

The preservation of ancient Greek chronography is at times frustratingly fragmentary. Ancient chronographers, unfortunately, do not inform us in detail about their calculating methods or the reasons for their results. Nevertheless, I think that three main working methods of ancient chronographers have contributed to the 'ageing' phenomenon:

- 1) The acme (ἀκμή) principle: Ancient Greek chronography relied upon abstract dating mechanisms to calculate the dates of people and events of the Archaic period, which have not been specified by earlier authors. One of them, the *acme principle*, was used to designate the heyday of a person as aligning with their most important achievements or important historical events. Apollodorus, who wrote a chronicle in iambic trimeter in the second century, 'provides the only concrete illustration of how Greek chronographic methods were in fact applied', as Alden Mosshammer puts it.⁹⁹ The fragments show that Apollodorus set a person's acme

93 Rollinger 2014: 123–126.

94 Notable exceptions to this standard approach: Beloch 1913: 274–284; Fehling 1985: particularly 109–111; Parker 1993; Shaw 2003.

95 Raaflaub 1988: 211, 222.

96 While reductions or omissions are also attested in oral tradition, an artificial lengthening of various regnal lists occur far more frequently: Henige 1974: 5–6.

97 Gehrke 1990.

98 For the Greek foundation dates see Kellner 2022: 157–211.

99 Mosshammer 1979: 116. For Apollodorus' chronicle see: *BNJ* / *FGrHist* 244; Jacoby 1902;

in the fortieth year of their life.¹⁰⁰ When a historical event was known to have happened in a person's lifetime, Apollodorus could have combined it with the person's acme. This abstract approach allowed the estimation of a person's birth year, even when it was previously unknown. The high figure for a person's acme could contribute to the higher age of selected events or people of Archaic Greece.¹⁰¹ The *diadochē schēma* is connected to the *acme principle*. Fixing the acme of a teacher with the birth of the future pupil allows chronographers to artificially 'determine' the birth and death dates of various important figures.¹⁰²

- 2) Generational calculations: If precise chronological information was not available, ancient chronographers could have used generational calculations. Karl Julius Beloch, for example, argues that the author of the *Athēnaiōn Politeia* provided the relative dates for Solon's archonship and the Peisistratid reign based on a thirty-three-year generation.¹⁰³ Perhaps most notoriously, René Van Compernelle explains the Sicilian foundation dates exclusively on the basis of thirty-five-year generations,¹⁰⁴ which has, in part due to the lack of clear and irrefutable textual evidence, not gained favour.¹⁰⁵ Despite Van Compernelle's oversimplification, generational calculation and genealogies did play a major part in the *post festum* construction of a chronology for early Greece.¹⁰⁶ Problematically, no standardized length existed for a generation among ancient authors.¹⁰⁷ Some estimates were so high—for instance forty years—that they inevitably implied a higher chronology.
- 3) The Trojan War: The third reason for the ageing phenomenon is, in my view, connected to the fact that between the Trojan War, as the most crucial as well as oldest reference point, and the recent past of fifth century authors lay an enormous time distance. The many diverging dates

Pfeiffer 1968: 253–257; Dorandi 1982; Feeney 2007: 19–20. Burgess and Kulikowski 2013: 87–88; Fleischer 2020.

100 For further details: Diels 1876; Jacoby 1902: 41–51. Felix Jacoby (1902: 48) summarized a couple of telling fragments which show different numbers than in his later *FGrHist* (244) edition.

101 E.g., Parker 1993: 406 n. 120.

102 For the *diadochē principle*, see Mosshammer 1979: 113–127.

103 *Ath. Pol.* 14.1; 17.1; 19.6; Beloch 1913: 161, 291.

104 Van Compernelle 1960.

105 E.g., Pearson 1962.

106 An overview with references can be found in: Kellner 2022: 75–100.

107 For a compilation of the ancient author's calculation for a generation length (which contains outdated methodological analyses), see Prakken 1943.

that ancient authors provide add further chronological difficulties, as Eratosthenes' date convertible to 1184/3 was by far not the only calculation.¹⁰⁸ The lack of known events between the far-distant Trojan War and the recent past before the Persian Wars could have led chronographers to artificially raise the chronology for late Archaic Greece. Thus, Jeremy Taylor has concluded that the king lists of Athens, Sparta and even Rome were artificially elongated for this very reason.¹⁰⁹

5 Herodotus on 480, His Absolute Chronology of Late Archaic Greece and Pottery Chronology

Herodotus' *Histories* have undeniably shaped our modern understanding of dividing Archaic and Classical Greece with the Persian Wars (480), which has thus an ancient (even though slightly vaguer) forerunner. This significance might be further underlined by Herodotus (8.51.1) only naming an Athenian archon once; when Xerxes captured Athens for the first time during Kalliades' archonship. At least from the perspective of ancient historiography, the epoch marker 480/79 can thus be considered justified and trustworthy. Furthermore, the cultural contacts as well as military conflicts due to the expansion of the Persian Empire might very well have contributed to the emergence of Greek historiography itself, which forms another argument in favor of the canonized timeframe. While it is indeed difficult to overestimate Herodotus' role in modern scholarship, his deviating chronological statements about select individuals such as Sappho, Alcaeus, Pittacus, Periander, and Solon have largely been ignored. I hope to have demonstrated in this chapter the existence of a different overall chronological picture in Herodotus' *Histories* for some exceptional cases and offered a tentative explanation of why later ancient chronographers ascribed a higher chronology. Particularly regarding the immediate time before the Persian Wars, Herodotus' chronology thus presents the middle of the sixth century as more crowded than the later chronographers.

This volume brings together specialists from various fields to discuss the epoch marker 480 for ancient sources—both written and archaeological alike. The interdisciplinary debate allows for the insightful observation that the watershed does not seem to work equally well for all areas, which André Lardinois

108 *BNJ* 241 F 1a (apud Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1: 138: 1–3). For the various ancient dates for the Trojan War see: Burkert 1995; Bichler 2003; Kokkinos 2009.

109 Taylor 2000: especially 184. Similarly, Beloch 1913: 275.

has brilliantly shown in Greek literary history.¹¹⁰ To do justice to this overall agenda, I would like to briefly outline how Herodotus is used to assign absolute dates to Late Archaic pottery in the last section of my chapter. By examining the interwoven chronological net of written sources and archaeological remains, the question of whether 480 serves as a linchpin for Greek pottery will be addressed. When archaeologists look to assign absolute dates to the relative sequences of the material remains, they rely on establishing connections with the text-based chronology of ancient authors.¹¹¹ For the Archaic Period, these so-called fixed points (i.e. the identification of absolute years by combining written and archaeological sources) mostly consist of cities' foundations and destructions, but from the Late Archaic Period onwards include the identification and dating of monuments in relationship to vase painting.

Herodotus' divergent chronology has, as far as I can judge, no immediate repercussions for the absolute chronology of black-figured vases, whose fixed points in the sixth century are primarily based on Massalia's foundation date and the establishment of the first Panathenaic Games with the Panathenaic prize amphorae.¹¹² The centerpiece of the Studniczka-Langlotz chronology is based on Herodotus equating Cambyses' campaign in Egypt with a Samian attack on Siphnos, which in turn is connected to construction of the Siphnian treasury in Delphi.¹¹³ While modern scholarship can date the battle of Pelusium to 525, Herodotus himself does not detail the year in which Cambyses conquered Egypt, but he seems to have had the beginning of Cambyses' reign in mind. Crucially, there remains some chronological room for interpretation based solely on a close reading of Herodotus' text passages. The Siphnian treasury has been identified among the material remains in Delphi based upon Pausanias' description (10.11.2).¹¹⁴ Ernst Langlotz then establishes the close temporary correlation of these friezes with the Andokides Painter,¹¹⁵ thus fixing the beginning of red-figure vase painting around 530/525.¹¹⁶ Herodotus therefore forms the starting point for the most important fixed point of red

110 See André Lardinois' contribution in this volume.

111 On the fixed points of Late Archaic and Early Classical Greek pottery, see Schmidt 2022.

112 Kellner 2022: 323–347.

113 Studniczka 1887: 159–167; Langlotz 1920. The key passages are: Hdt. 3.39; 3.57.

114 Pausanias only described a selection of buildings; it remains unclear which classification criterion he applied in the case of the treasuries in Delphi. Hence, (as always) there remains some doubt if the identification is indeed correct. Brinkmann 1994: 73–74.

115 Langlotz 1920: especially 17–31.

116 Boardman 1975: 14–17; Mannack 2002: 136–137; Rotroff 2009: 250.

figure vase painting.¹¹⁷ While Langlotz' methodology is generally accepted,¹¹⁸ criticism has been voiced mainly based on the ambiguities of Herodotus and regarding the (correct) combination with the archaeological record.¹¹⁹ Ulf Kenzler has similarly argued that the Siphnian treasury is worthless as a fixed point due to having too many uncertainties and places early red-figure vase painting only in the first decade of the fifth century.¹²⁰ Recent studies have refuted these suggestions on archaeological grounds;¹²¹ however, strikingly, the Persian Wars have been suggested as a watershed for Greek pottery (i.e. the change from Athenian black to red-figure vase painting).

The text-based chronology of ancient authors such as Herodotus not only lays the foundation for our modern chronological perception of historical events, but also of the material record, which makes a careful reading of their information all the more necessary. Considering the lack of an overall panhellenic chronological system, Herodotus' conceptual work constitutes an impressive achievement that should be appreciated accordingly. Modern readers thus need to pay attention to how Herodotus expresses the dates that clearly deviate from our modern BCE convention. Herodotus' singular eponymous date of Kalliades' archonship, when Xerxes' troops raided the Athenian Acropolis for the first time, thus requires appropriate attention. Fully recognizing Herodotus' pioneering work also involves acknowledging the instances in which Herodotus allows for more chronological leeway or provides different chronological contexts than other authors. This chapter has conducted a thorough analysis of the ancient authors' dating methods, particularly regarding the year 480, thereby underlining the peculiarities of the ancient dating systems and highlighting the validity of this caesura in Greek historiography.

117 Ernst Langlotz (1920: 6) additionally elaborated the *columnae celatae* of king Croesus at the Artemision in Ephesus, the second tyrannicide group (477) and the dating of Leagros between 510 and 505 as further fixed points.

118 On Langlotz's chronological method see now: von den Hoff 2022.

119 E.g., Löwy 1938 (particularly 16–31 for the Siphnian treasury). A good summary is provided by Steskal 1998. More recently, and probably most notably, Francis and Vickers 1983 offered a critique. In course of their proposition to systematically lower the absolute chronology of Archaic and early Classical Greece by roughly fifty/sixty years, they suggested a date range of 480–470 for the Siphnian treasury. For criticism on their approach, see, e.g., Boardman 1984.

120 Kenzler 2007.

121 E.g., Rotroff 2020.

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480 BCE: The Making of a World-Historical Date

Suzanne Marchand

1 Introduction¹

Historians are often accused of fetishizing dates, and with good reason; they really are the skeleton on which most of us, who are not pure devotés of the Annales School, hang our interpretations, and they do, of course, matter. But dates can also become what the German historian Helmut Walser Smith once termed ‘vanishing points’: the date to and from which interpretations tend.² Smith had 1933 and 1941 CE in mind; but in this essay 480/479 BCE, the period of the major battles which concluded the Persian Wars, is the ‘vanishing point’ we are pursuing. Unquestionably, some have figured 480/479 as such an epoch-making moment, including, of course, the ancient Athenian dramatists, philosophers, and orators who have so structured our conceptions of ancient Greece. Their claims were certainly echoed by nineteenth-century liberal historians such as E.S. Creasy, who argued in his enormously popular *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World* (1851) that the Greek victory in 480/479 ‘secured for mankind the intellectual treasures of Athens, the growth of free institutions, the liberal enlightenment of the Western world, and the gradual ascendancy for many ages of the great principles of European civilisation.’³ More recently, in the wake of the attacks of 11 September 2001 and challenges to the relevance of classical civilization, some popular historians have raised the stakes further, marking the period of the battles of Thermopylae, Salamis, Plataea, and Mycale as the years that ‘saved Greece and western civilization.’⁴ The enormous popularity of the movie *300* (2006) simply confirms that 480 has, for us, become one of Smith’s ‘vanishing points.’

1 This essay began as a mere thought piece, offered at the inspiring 480 BCE conference in Ravenstein, attended by so many of the contributors to this volume. It has been enormously improved by additional reading and responses to revised versions I have presented at Princeton, UC Berkeley, and the Harvard Center for Classical Studies, and by comments from many readers, most especially Josine Blok and Janric van Rookhuijzen.

2 Smith 2005: 267–295.

3 Creasy 1853: 48.

4 This is the subtitle of Barry Strauss’s 2005 book, *Salamis*.

We know that ancient Greeks and nineteenth-century liberals cared about the Persian Wars; but few have asked what happened to 480 *between* the ancient Athenian partisans of the fifth and especially fourth centuries, and their nineteenth-century Athenophile advocates.⁵ The question is a big and difficult one, and the conclusions of one scholar can be but tentative, but not to ask the question leaves us with the false impression that there has been a 2,500-year western consensus about the meaning and significance of the Persian Wars. What I would like to suggest in this essay is that this is certainly not the case, and in fact, for centuries, our ‘vanishing point’ itself almost completely vanished. The ancient Greek and especially Athenian focus on the Wars had to be revived by the moderns and took place in specific and noteworthy contexts. While I can hardly claim to be an expert in all the periods and genres covered here, it seems to me worthwhile to try to map the periods in which 480 has, and has not, mattered very much to Europeans and Americans, and to say something in the process about the way classical traditions do, and do not, work.

This inquiry also takes the form, in part, of a reception history of Herodotus’ *Histories*, the first known detailed prose narration of the battles of the Persian Wars. As Angelika Kellner in the present volume shows, 480 is the date most securely attested in Herodotus’ text (at 8.51), and much material culture dating has been inferred from this passage. Recent scholarship on the *Histories* generally agrees that the events of this year are the culminating point of the narrative, which explains why Herodotus scrupulously tried to keep references (if not allusions) to events after that time out of his account. It has perhaps always been admitted that his accounts of the major battles of the Persian Wars were the most extensive. Of one of those signature battles, Paul Cartledge has written, ‘we either write a history of Thermopylae with [Herodotus], or not at all.’⁶ We might then expect that readers of Herodotus have always cherished the last books of the *Histories*, and preferred his detailed accounts to those of other, later writers. Surprisingly, however, these are in fact quite modern presumptions, in part the result of the vast changes which conventions of history-writing have undergone over time.

For millennia, readers did not prioritize Herodotus’ accounts for their superior antiquity, or for factors that have recently underscored his relative impar-

5 Gehrke 2009 is typical in skipping immediately from the fourth century BCE to the nineteenth century CE.

6 Cartledge 2007: 222. Similarly, J.A.S. Evans noted that Herodotus’ account of the battle of Marathon ‘is our only coherent one.’ Evans 1993: 279.

tiality.⁷ Only a very few, before the nineteenth century, wanted to write the sort of history Cartledge had in mind. Herodotus was unquestionably the starting point for treatments of the Wars across a range of genres stretching from Athenian funeral orations to early modern collections of military speeches. But careful readers, it seems to me, were rare; most preferred to read paraphrases, or to get their information or models at second or third hand, from other sources,⁸ even if those were later, shorter, more partisan, or more obviously didactic. Many of the Athenian accounts also lacked the ambiguities of Herodotus' narrative, such as his hints that the Athenians' expatiations on freedom might be ruses to assert their dominance over others (cf. 6.109). Earlier readers did not, in short, read the *Histories* as a unified narrative with 480/479 as its culmination, perhaps in part because for those who wanted to emphasize a 'clash,' it was easier to consult something pithier, or because what they found interesting in Herodotus was not the Wars at all, but something else.

I have now been tracking Herodotus reception for some time, and it seems clear to me that most who did read him closely—at least after the fall of Rome, and probably earlier—focused not on books 7 to 9, but on the books of the so-called 'oriental prelude' (Books 1–4), and did so for other purposes than learning about the battles: to marvel at the customs of the Scythians, to crunch the dates of Assyrian and Egyptian kings, to revel in salacious tales or to beat them into moral lessons, to find in the early books details that could be correlated with the Hebrew Bible. This pattern of reading was long standing, stretching at least from the Renaissance through the eighteenth century's end. As this essay will suggest, 480 remained of minor interest until the ancient Athenian narrative was revived by Whig thinkers and popularized by nineteenth-century liberals such as Creasy, who really did articulate the 'clash' thesis. But even then, Herodotus' account was often not the favored one. Indeed, and, ironically, champions of the 'clash of civilizations' thesis have more often been critics than fans of Herodotus. The re-emergence of 480 as a 'vanishing point' required not only the upgrading of opinions on Greek culture and Athenian democracy, but the arrival of the age of citizen armies, and liberal imperial hubris, in the nineteenth century. As it turns out, the 480 story is not one westerners have been telling themselves for 2,500 years, but one that has a much more punc-

7 As a Simonides poem about the battle of Plataea, discovered only in the 1990s, shows, Herodotus seems to have worked with many poleis' heroic traditions of their own contributions to the wars, but he goes far beyond poetry, and in juxtaposing local accounts, he manages to have something offensive to say about pretty much everybody, which may just be his greatest claim to impartiality. Boedeker 1996: 223–242.

8 A helpful list of the ancient sources on 480 can be found in van Rookhuijzen 2018: 310–315.

tuated, and attenuated, trajectory, and one that has usually not been based on firsthand or careful readings of the most crucial ancient source.

2 Herodotus' Readers before the Seventeenth Century

Herodotus was not, of course, the first to tell the story of the Wars, though most of what we have before his time is poetic or fragmentary. There were many celebrations and commemorations of the victory in the fifth century, literary and monumental. Games and rituals were established in honor of the victors and the fallen, and Athenians, at least, perpetually returned to the subject in official funeral orations.⁹ In what remains, as well as in Herodotus' account, the Greeks were associated with freedom, and the Persians (and others) with the lack thereof. Even so, the varying regional alliances and concerns of the ever-squabbling poleis must have made agreement on commemorations contentious, as the Athenians, for example, wished to claim special responsibility for the victory (as ratified—but as an unpopular view—by Herodotus at 7.139). The Athenians also commemorated 490, the date of the battle of Marathon, at least as much as 480/479. In 404, when the Athenians defeated a junta backed by the Spartans, commemorations of Marathon were linked to the goddess Athena and the city, and even that battle's concrete context was obscured.¹⁰

One might, rather heretically, ask how long even the Greeks, distracted by so many other attentions and by no means only interested in history-writing, clung to 480 as *the* critical moment in their collective memory. Deaths of heroes, Olympiads, the passing or exile of leaders, and real or projected cosmic cataclysms such as floods or plagues also served the Greeks as loosely articulated epochal markers;¹¹ time did not have to be marked by wars, which in any case were complexly related to states' 'golden' ages or periods of decline. And even then, which war was most important? The fall of Troy was always a poetic point of reference. In emphasizing the superior greatness of the Peloponnesian Wars, Thucydides (1.1) preferred a different vanishing point to that of 480. In an often-cited passage (1.10), he forecasts new generations of men so divided from the past that they could never fathom Sparta's greatness, nor Athens' limitations. Within a century of Xenophon (according to Arnaldo Momigliano, the last ancient Greek historian to rely on original inquiry¹²), Greek writers

9 Loraux 2006: 94–101.

10 Gehrke 2009: 92–93.

11 Hay 2023: 63; 43–69.

12 Momigliano 1958: 4.

had the military exploits of Philip and Alexander to grapple with, and as we shall see, Demosthenes' revival of the Persian Wars story exerted a long-lasting effect on the tradition—though of course he lost his suit. But if Alexander's wars were complexly annexed to and legitimized by analogies with the Persian campaigns,¹³ this did not necessarily mean orators or coin designers knew their Persian Wars history in detail. Or that the Romans who revived this tradition at second hand did so, either.

Enthused by Greek oratory or descent, and by the Parthian threat to the East, some later Greeks and Romans in the period between Caesar and Diocletian did care about the events of 480/479, as Ruprecht Ziegler has shown. Diodorus Siculus had much to say about the Wars (he was more expansive than most about the western Greeks) and certainly drew on a wide range of sources, including Herodotus. Plutarch was also extremely well informed, and he cared enough about the memory of the Wars to produce, some 500 years after the *Histories'* completion, an intense refutation of Herodotus' account. Pausanias, writing a little later, perhaps read Herodotus even more closely, though virtually no one read his work until the fifteenth century CE.¹⁴ Cicero, heir to the rhetorical tradition, certainly did invoke the Wars and their heroes on numerous occasions. Augustus, and after him, Nero, staged reenactments of the battle of Salamis; and Herodes Atticus, teacher of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, proudly showed off his native Marathon. Herodes Atticus even had the inscriptions of the dead moved from the battlefield to his private residence in the Peloponnesus. Valerius Maximus, writing around 30 CE, knew the portent of the mare birthing a hare (Hdt. 7.57) as Xerxes' army passed Mount Athos (*Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 1.6). He included a few other passages from the later books of the *Histories*, but his *Memorable Deeds* contains many more references to the earlier ones, and consistently treats the Wars in the context of Athenian ingratitude toward its heroic leaders (e.g., 5.3e), a very long-standing critique of the city by intellectuals from Plato onwards.¹⁵ But the deeds of Alexander seem to have been most resonant in anti-Parthian rhetoric.¹⁶ By focusing only on Greek-loving writers of the Second Sophistic we can also forget that the Romans—like all subsequent peoples—cared more about their

13 Ziegler 2007: 160–163.

14 Habicht 1985: 2.

15 Zabel 2016: 30–34, 110. If Herodotus can be read as at least moderately sympathetic to some sort of democracy, as Jennifer Roberts showed long ago, the main line of classical political theorizing was deeply anti-democratic, and '... it was not this alternative strand that Europeans thinkers picked up and developed, but rather the hostile tradition.' Roberts 1994: 7.

16 Ziegler 2007: 158.

own victories and challenges than those of the Greeks. Sulla, whom Paul Hay believes crucial in articulating Roman ideas of historical periodization, seems to have embraced a tradition of Etruscan divining (and recording) of omens and portents, and not to have cared about Greek historical events at all.¹⁷

It would, in fact, be interesting to map how, precisely, Hellenistic and Roman writers read their Herodotus. In the Hellenistic period, as Oswyn Murray showed some time ago, geographers and historians were most interested in the so-called ‘oriental’ prelude;¹⁸ it was this material that was disputed by Ctesias, Josephus, and Manetho.¹⁹ Surviving papyri from the Roman period are mostly texts from Book 1 and some from Book 2, though our sample may be skewed because these texts hail from Egypt.²⁰ Polybius was interested the Persian Wars, but did not mention Herodotus.²¹ Lack of interest on the part of the Church fathers is even more obvious; they valued Herodotus chiefly for his information in the first books, where Herodotus mentions Biblical figures such as Sennacherib and Cyrus, and describes in detail the decadence of Babylon. After the fall of Rome, Herodotus’ stories survived in the West only as ‘flower petals pressed into the pages of a book,’ in the lovely words of Scott Bruce,²² in scattered bits of Valerius Maximus and Seneca, and other Roman texts which survived through the period, and in remnants of information conveyed in Jerome, Eusebius, and Josephus relevant to Christian history,²³ which seem not to have included the events of 480. Orosius did tell the story of the Wars in some detail in *Histories against the Pagans* (2.8–11)—but did so with the express intention of showing their senseless brutality.

There follows a 1000-year hiatus, during which stories from the *Histories* surely did circulate in the West, but Herodotus’ text did not. It seems likely that the Wars scarcely featured. Most of the stories that did are found in late medieval illuminations—Mandane’s dream, or Tomyris’s decapitation of Cyrus—come from the early books, though Petrarch did mention Marathon and Xerxes’ ‘reckless daring’ in one of his poems.²⁴ The full text of the *Histories* survived, of course, in the Byzantine world, but mostly, it seems, passages were used for language lessons. Many years ago, Cyril Mango claimed that Byzantine

17 Hay 2023: 18–39.

18 Murray 1972: 200–213.

19 See Angelika Kellner in this volume.

20 Bruce 2019: 58.

21 Millar 2011: 97.

22 Bruce 2019: 49.

23 Bruce 2019: 56. This view is seconded by Racine 2016: 208, 20.

24 Edith Hall claims that the theme of Cambyses’ judgment was known since at least 1275. Hall 2020: 288. On Petrarch see Bisaha 2004: 51.

writers were not at all interested in classical Greece; ‘If you open a Byzantine compendium of universal history,’ he insisted, ‘you will be surprised to note that Pericles, Themistocles, Leonidas are not even mentioned; that Xerxes and the Persian Wars are dismissed in one sentence, and this in connection with Daniel’s prophecy of the Four Beasts.’²⁵ A great deal of new work in Byzantine studies has been completed since Mango’s essay appeared, but I do not believe this view has been substantially altered.²⁶

There is no denying that, especially after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Italian humanists revived classical discourses contrasting civilization and barbarism, and that these discussions linked philhellenism to anti-Turkish or even anti-‘oriental’ perspectives. The fall of the great eastern center of learning softened Italian animosity to Greek church-splitters, and invited a barrage of terrified rhetoric about the eastern threat to an entity variously conceived as Christendom and Europe. The recovery of so many ancient Greek and Latin texts allowed fifteenth-century Italian humanists to layer classical critiques of ‘barbarism’ on top of medieval assaults on ‘the infidel.’ As Nancy Bisaha showed some time ago, the Persian Wars were occasionally invoked in this context.²⁷ But mentions seem to have been brief and vague, and my supposition is that these authors drew more heavily on Plutarch, Demosthenes, and Cicero than on Herodotus’ account of the Wars. Much more prominent and extensive were invocations of Rome’s fall to the Germanic barbarians. In any event, Herodotus seems to have been less a stoker of anti-Turkish sentiment than a danger to it. Bisaha also notes that the humanist Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (whose papacy, as Pius II, fell in the crucial years 1458–1464) not only failed to cite Herodotus in his diatribe against the ‘Scythian’ Turks, but probably even avoided engaging the *Histories*, ‘because of the Greek’s more open-minded view.’²⁸ When the Greek scholar Laonikos Chalkokondyles—flourishing in the 1450s and 60s—deployed the *Histories* as a model for describing the recent Ottoman-Byzantine struggles in the period just after 1453, his view of this clash was remarkably appreciative of Islamic and non-Greek ‘others.’²⁹

Unlike mid-fifteenth century Italian writers, Chalkokondyles did have access to a full manuscript of the *Histories* (Laurentianus 70.6), which had been copied in 1318, and had arrived in Mystras by 1436, and in Rome by 1480. It is unclear, but dubious, if this was the manuscript Lorenzo Valla (c. 1407–1457) used for his

25 Mango 1965: 32.

26 See for e.g., Bértola 2022 and Ellis 2024.

27 Bisaha 2004: 84.

28 Bisaha 2004: 133, 43–93; quotation, 76.

29 Kaldellis 2014: 68–71.

Latin translation, finished around 1454 and published in 1474.³⁰ Valla's translation was a watershed, and loose vernacular translations into Italian, German, and French based on it at first or second hand dribbled out over the course of the sixteenth century. But by no means did this ensure Herodotus' immediate popularity or wide circulation. As Freyja Cox-Jensen's data on the popularity of ancient historians between 1450 and 1600 suggests, the Greek historians lagged far behind the Romans, and in this era, Herodotus ranked far below his critics Plutarch and Josephus.³¹ Naturally, Roman, Christian, and local histories were altogether more important to lives lived under the Old Regime than were pagan Greek events. Those who did read Herodotus largely did so in the traditions either of Cicero or Josephus, seeing the *Histories* as an archive of rhetorical flourishes or proofs of scriptural truth. The more careful readers were the antiquarians and text critics, beginning, it seems, with the great philologist Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609) who found Herodotus to be a goldmine of crunchable chronological data about eastern kingdoms, almost all of which lay, again, in books 1–4.³²

It is perhaps helpful to offer a brief survey of what early modern readers did find of interest in Herodotus, full and excerpted texts of which were available in Greek, Latin, and many vernacular languages from the sixteenth century on (though the first full English translation dates only to 1709). In brief, as I will make this case in full elsewhere, the Wars were of minor interest as compared to the material in the 'oriental' prelude relating to chronology and biblical matters.³³ In general, this was not a world much interested in Greek history, and convinced, as was Machiavelli, that the story of the Athenian polis was one to be told as a warning, not to provide a model.³⁴ This was a world of only a very few republics, all of them oligarchies, in the Italian and Swiss city states, and, after 1567, the Dutch Republic. Most Europeans, instead, were subjects of increasingly powerful absolute monarchs whose armies were manned by mercenary or conscripted soldiers and led by high-ranking nobles, not by citizen soldiers. In the era of hugely influential defenders of monarchical sovereignty such as Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes, we can hardly expect great enthusiasm for stories about the humbling defeat of a Great King—or the glories of the Greek polis.

30 Kaldellis 2014: 45–47, 259–262. There had been translations of some parts of the *Histories* circulating in the Italian states since the early fifteenth century.

31 Jensen 2018: 561–595.

32 See Marchand 2021: 269–293.

33 See the foundations for this study in Marchand 2021 and 2023.

34 Roberts 1994: 121–131.

In general, this was not a world much interested in Greek history. Early modern political theorists were so thoroughly wed to Roman models that Quentin Skinner long ago dubbed the period's discussions of liberty 'neo Roman.'³⁵ While we find the championing of ancient Greek freedom by a few fans of Dutch independence from the Spanish and or of parliamentary sovereignty in England, in both cases, the most conventional example invoked seems to have been the Greeks' defense of their culture against the *Romans*, rather than the Greek war against the Persians.³⁶ We might well find seeds of a later liberal tradition of pro-Athenian rhetoric in the praise Dutch legal scholar Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) devoted to the ancient city's linking of culture, freedom, and commercial power. But his was very much a minority opinion.³⁷

In fact, from the sixteenth century, the more mainstream readings of Herodotus were related to biblical matters, to theatrical romances, or to courtly education, in which the text was read together or against Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, the foundational text for the elite pedagogical treatises known as 'Mirrors of Princes.' The writers of these treatises shared with Herodotus the view that not all Persian kings were equally despotic, and, as Jane Grogan notes, Cyrus in particular figured as a positive model for emulation by European princes and statesmen.³⁸ From Cyrus leaders were to learn clemency, honesty, temperance, and courage. We have perhaps also forgotten just how regularly these educational manuals hoped to instruct princes in the avoidance of war and arbitrary governance, and of course, the behavior of ancient Persian rulers—especially Cambyses' madness, and Xerxes' furious whipping of the Hellespont—proved useful as admonitions. This was not a world in which the Persians were uniformly effeminate and despotic and the Athenians, often derided for ingratitude and decadence, uniformly manly and civilized.

The desire to instruct princes in moderation and justice yielded early modern ways of reading the *Histories* that seem miles away from later ones. As early as the 1540s, for example, Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) offered an anti-war reading of the *Histories* that would have shocked the nineteenth century, dispensing lessons such as: 'that God does not wish unnecessary wars to be fought; that those who live by the sword die by the sword; that those who commit injustice will be punished.'³⁹ Similarly, law professor Georg Schwartzkopff, in

35 See, e.g., Skinner 1998.

36 See, e.g., the examples in Zabel 2016: 49–63, 99–115.

37 Zabel 2016: 50–53.

38 Grogan (2014: 2) writes: 'a shift in historiographical and cultural tastes has obscured the early modern privileging of the earlier days of the Persian Empire.'

39 Ellis 2020: 120, 127.

dedicating his 1593 German translation of the *Histories* to Heinrich Julius, the Duke of Braunschweig und Lüneberg, argued that histories such as this one were useful in warning leaders not to exert the sort of ‘unjust force against underlings’ that would make them hated and condemned by their subjects. Turning Machiavelli’s formula on its head, in the dedication Schwartzkopff lectured the Duke, notorious for sudden legal innovations and for persecuting Jews and witches, that it was better to be gentle and rational, ‘while anger and rage will be hated and judged.’ The scholarly jurist also insisted that it was good to follow the example of Solon, who studied the laws of others for ten years before he made the laws of Athens, and to ask for the wise counsel of scholars and other experienced persons.⁴⁰

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, discussion of the Greek heroes of the wars seems rare, and images of them even more so. I have so far found no depictions of Thermopylae, Salamis, or Marathon from this period, and even the few depictions of Themistocles focus on his exile, underlining Persian clemency (and Greek ingratitude). Anuschka Albertz describes the story of Thermopylae between the Roman imperial period and the eighteenth century as a ‘lost history.’⁴¹ No depictions of the battles or their heroes are listed in Andor Pigler’s old but comprehensive *Barokthemen*, unless one counts images of Artemisia—but these confuse the brave Carian commander of the Wars with her later namesake, Artemisia II, who, in her dramatic grief, drank her husband-brother’s ashes.⁴² When Greek figures are introduced in this early modern context, one might call their deployment counter-cultural, or perhaps sly attempts to speak truth to power. Leonidas, for example, was lauded by Protestant anti-absolutists such as George Buchanan, tutor to James VI of Scotland, as an example of the right sort of virtuous king. To Montaigne, Leonidas’s noble death paralleled those of the Native Americans conquered by Europeans; ‘he was killed, but not vanquished.’⁴³ Montaigne’s words may mark the revival of the ancient tradition of turning military defeat into moral victory, here applied in an irenic way to Europe’s victims.

If the Greek heroes and their battles are largely missing in early modern art, literature, and political discourse, this is not true of Herodotus’ ‘oriental’ figures. The lessons they are meant to teach are not what we might expect and certainly not what Creasy gleaned from the *Histories*. In the many depictions

40 Schwartzkopff 1593: np.

41 Albertz 2006: 110.

42 Pigler 1956. For Artemisia images, see 356–357. There are also two images of Themistocles committing suicide, after his departure from Greece (*ibid.*, 417).

43 Christien and Tallec 2013: 173–175, quotation 175.

of Croesus in seventeenth-century paintings, kings are warned against hubristic confidence in worldly pleasures. In the theater, the many sixteenth- and seventeenth century plays about Tomyris, Cyrus, and Cambyses convey complicated messages to royal patrons, about clemency, succession, moderation, or justice. But the Wars with the Greeks are not at issue. Edith Hall attributes lack of interest in the Wars until the later eighteenth century to the inaccessibility of Aeschylus' plays, most especially *Persians*, which she identifies as one of the great ancient sources of Greek othering of barbarians.⁴⁴ Even after this time, some portrayals of Xerxes are more tragic (or, in the case of Handel's *Serse*, tragi-comic) than simply 'orientalizing,' befitting a world in which the prince's behavior continued to matter greatly. The thrust of their lessons, too was that good leadership, in all times, makes the polity prosper, *not* that non-Europeans are despotic and our eternal enemies.

It is perhaps worth emphasizing that even as the study of Greek language and poetry expanded, Greek *history* itself was of little interest for its own sake until sometime after 1750, at least. According to Paschalis Kitromilides, even the major seventeenth-century modern Greek histories do not discuss Greek pagan events before the Hellenistic era, or beyond the moments at which they intersect with Hebraic history.⁴⁵ In Britain, France, and even the Germanies, Greek history remained part of 'universal history' into the eighteenth century, and even then, it is probably fair to say that the age of Cyrus on the one hand, and that of Alexander on the other, were of greater interest than the period of the Wars.⁴⁶ This again left books 7–9 largely out in the cold, although some antiquaries had done their due diligence, particularly those interested in military customs, weaponry, and leadership, such as François de Belleforest, collector of notable military speeches—though even many of those turned out to be speeches made not by Greeks, but by their Persians antagonists.⁴⁷ John Potter's extremely widely read *Archaeologia Graeca, or the Antiquities of Greece* (1697) featured a section on military customs, in which details of the Persian Wars

44 'It was only with the first modern-language translations of Aeschylus in the eighteenth century,' she writes, 'that the battles of Marathon, Thermopylae, and Salamis came to dominate Western cultural responses to Herodotus.' Hall 2020: 282. On the *Persians*, see Hall 1989.

45 Kitromilides 2013: 67–68.

46 Charles Rollin's hugely popular *Histoire Ancienne*, published originally in the 1730s, lavishes much time on Cyrus. On the ubiquitous discussions of Alexander in the age of Enlightenment, see Briant 2017.

47 Belleforest's *Harangues militaires* (Paris 1573) includes sixty-four speeches by Herodotus, among them the exchanges between Xerxes and Artabanus and the declarations of Artemisia.

were mixed with those of other Greek conflicts, and Herodotus' reports mashed up with those of Polybius, Suidas, Diodorus, Thucydides, Curtius, and others.⁴⁸ Event history, including the battles of 480/479, was submerged beneath a barrage of ship designs, treatments of prisoners and spoils, and (of course) loving descriptions of shields, helmets, and arms.

To glance at a few universal histories is to see that 480 offered no meaningful break for early modern readers; much more significant were dates related to Cyrus or to Alexander, or of course to Moses and Jesus.⁴⁹ The heavy hand of Bossuet's 1681 *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* is still visible in a 1754 *Histoire universelle*, commissioned by Madame de Pompadour. Here the sixth epoch began with Cyrus, swept quickly past 480, and ended with the death of Alexander.⁵⁰ In his year-by-year coverage of the period between 685 and 336 BCE, Carl Christoph Reiche, writing in 1777, dedicated the same amount of space to 480/479 as he gave to 667/666 BCE (traditional date for the founding of Byzantium), and less than he gave to the year 509/508 (date of the overthrow of the Roman monarchy).⁵¹ Roman history, naturally, was covered in much greater detail; no one had time for blow by blows of events at Salamis or Plataea. Again, if we look only for mentions of the Wars and fail to appreciate their obscurity as compared to other events we end up with a misleading picture of their continuous importance, and the indispensability of Herodotus' account to what writers did know about them.

Early modern writers on the education of statesmen certainly read their Plutarch and knew something about the lives of Miltiades, Themistocles, and Leonidas. But coverage of the Wars remained terse, and emphasis continued to be on the actions of the kings—Persian or Spartan—rather than on the valor of the soldiery. For example, in his 1708 *Bibliothèque universelle*, Louis Ellis Du Pin, a Gallican cleric with Jansenist leanings, says of Leonidas only that he and his

48 Potter (1751: 3) says of the Wars simply: 'The Persians frequently experienced the sad Effects of [Greek courage despite small numbers] in the Loss of numerous Armies, and at length of the greatest Empire in the World.' The Spartans are praised particularly for their valor. Potter was a classical scholar, a Whig, and in 1737 became Archbishop of Canterbury.

49 Bossuet's enormously influential universal history of 1681 mentions (1681: 45; 47): 'Leonidas, King of Sparta, who had only 300 men, but killed 20,000 at the pass at Thermopylae and perished with his men,' and the famous battle of Plataea, in which 'The Ionian Greeks threw off the yoke of the Persians,' though he was equally enthusiastic about the magnanimity of Artaxerxes, in accepting Themistocles as a refugee, and much more effusive about Cyrus, Alexander, and Scipio. 480 is flagged in Bossuet's margins, but so are hundreds of other dates, and it does not mark the beginning or end of one of his epochs.

50 *Histoire Universelle sacrée et profane, composée par ordre de mesdames de France* (1754).

51 Reiche 1777: 396–405.

300 'firmly stood their ground against the army of the enemy and killed a great number, repelled them many times, and at last all perished, born down by the multitude. The Thebans who Leonidas already sent away returned to Xerxes.' The summary simply ends: 'This was the consequence of the battle of Thermopylae, with which Herodotus' seventh book ends.'⁵² The themes of the war of liberation, of the forging of Panhellenic unity, of the West's eternal difference from the East, and even of epic consequences seem to be missing, even in the early eighteenth century.

3 The Whiggish Origins of the 'Clash' Narrative

So where does the rise of 480 begin? My findings so far suggest that one might find fragments of a tradition in editions and translations of Demosthenes such as Thomas Wilson's 1570 English translation, intended to stiffen Tudor resolve in the face of the threats of another evil 'Philip,' Philip II, in the Spanish campaigns in the Netherlands.⁵³ Jacques de Turreil's French translation, too, published at the outbreak of the War of Spanish Succession (1701), celebrated the Athenian resolve of yesteryear by way of Demosthenes' frustrated calls for resistance, obliquely making the case for Louis XIV's subjects to unite in the face of Holy Roman usurpation.⁵⁴ More concrete foundations were laid by seventeenth-century Dutch republican thinkers, who broke with humanist tradition in defending the greatness of Periclean Athens, and French crusaders for moral or poetic reform in the era of the Quarrel of Ancients and Moderns who made the case for the simplicity and transparency of early Greek manners and institutions. The greater availability of Herodotus' full text in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century translations undoubtedly helped, but it remains unclear how much new access mattered to a tradition still mostly shaped by Demosthenes, Plutarch, and Cicero.

Dutch and French appraisals of ancient Greek culture helped to upgrade the exemplarity and importance of the ancient Hellenes. But the true origins of the 'clash' thesis as we know it, I am convinced, lie in early Whig historiography.⁵⁵ I refer here to works that come out of the post-1689 battle to establish

52 Dupin 1707: 132.

53 Blanshard and Sowerby 2005: 46–80.

54 See the introduction to Turreil 1701.

55 I owe much to Christine Zabel's excellent coverage of related topics, though she does not discuss history writers or the place of Herodotus or the Persian Wars in these discourses. Zabel 2016: 48–51, 204–217, 257–265.

Protestant hegemony and extend the rights of parliament, commerce, and the secular arts and sciences, campaigns that ended in bloody war in Ireland and repeated attempts to suppress Jacobitism in Scotland. These men were critics of the French ‘Great King’ Louis XIV and sometimes veterans of the bloody wars against his expansionist politics. As Georgios Varouxakis has shown, these writers were eager to deploy the phrase ‘defender of the liberties of Europe’ to exalt William III over and against his French and Jacobite rivals who claimed to be ‘defenders of Christendom.’⁵⁶ Many of them also frequented the so-called Grecian Coffeehouse in London (so named, originally, because its founder was a Greek immigrant), and occasionally discussed the horrors of Turkish oppression of the modern Greeks.⁵⁷ In the period around the century’s turn, interestingly, in which new periodicals, too, promoted Greek greatness, this community produced not only the first full English translation of Herodotus’ *Histories*, but also the first stand-alone Greek histories. These were all written by and dedicated to English Whigs, and deploy the rhetoric of the defense of liberties and the English mixed constitution in a powerful new way, one that took up the history of the Persian Wars with a still powerfully Plutarchian character.⁵⁸

The situational analogies of a small and disunited power (Britain) at war with a gigantic, tyrannical empire (France) were not lost on the author of the most important of these two Grecian histories, Temple Stanyan.⁵⁹ Stanyan’s original *Grecian History* of 1707 took the story down only to the end of the Peloponnesian Wars, expending about 35 of 350 pages on the Persian Wars. Stanyan listed his sources—including Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Diodorus Siculus, Cornelius Nepos, and especially Tourreil’s introduction to his edition of Demosthenes—but attempted to synthesize rather than criticize them. Although he explicitly denounced Herodotus for fabulation,⁶⁰ he seems to have meant this to refer chiefly to the early books, as he followed the author

56 Varouxakis 2020: 568–569.

57 Zabel 2016: 264.

58 Both of the Greek histories were published in 1707, not incidentally the year of the Treaty of Union with Scotland, and of a number of setbacks in the Duke of Malborough’s campaigns against France in the War of the Spanish Succession. Temple Stanyan’s *Grecian History* was dedicated to John Lord Sommers, Baron of Evesham, a leading exclusionist, Whig, one of main framers of Bill of Rights and later of the Treaty of Union. Thomas Hind’s *History of Greece* was dedicated to the Lord Keeper of the Seal, William Cowper.

59 Stanyan’s work is discussed in a brilliant article by Giovanna Ceserani, who glosses the message of Stanyan’s history as ‘how the Greeks united to defend [liberty] from the Persian invaders, but lost it later, torn apart by their own internal wars ...’ Ceserani 2005: 418–419.

60 ‘[Herodotus’] chief Care was to please rather than instruct ... The heaviest Charge against him is his Fabulousness, and Credulity.’ Stanyan 1707: ‘Preface.’

rather closely in his discussion of the Ionian Revolt and later events. Here, Stanyan acknowledged much medizing, and paused the narrative to offer a thorough denunciation of Athenian ingratitude towards Miltiades.⁶¹ In its focus on great, under-appreciated men battling for liberty against all odds, Stanyan's narrative still owes most to Plutarch and Demosthenes. But there is a new antipathy to the Persians as a national entity; Stanyan calls them, collectively, 'the first Disturbers of Mankind,' and praises the Greeks, collectively, as the people who 'so gloriously exerted themselves in securing the Liberties of *Europe*.'⁶² Unlike previous and contemporary critics who underscored the evils specifically of Xerxes or Mardonios, Stanyan argues that the Greeks' enemies were 'just their Reverse, a slavish confus'd Multitude, and wrap'd in a slothful Security,' and makes many aversions to 'the Persian yoke,' as well as to Persian effeminacy.⁶³ This for him was a story of universal importance, 'not the History of one People, but of Mankind,'⁶⁴ because it was a story of the Greeks' fight for liberty. Still missing is real affection for the Athenians—Stanyan believed them ingrates who quickly lost the liberty they fought for—but we find here the blueprint for accounts of the Wars which make 480 the key moment in Europe's history of the struggle for Greek *national* freedom.

If perhaps a signal of new interest in the Persian Wars, Stanyan's first volume seems to have been little read. Only after the publication of a second volume and the appearance of a second edition in 1739 did *The Grecian History* receive more attention. This was also true of Isaac Littlebury's translation of the *Histories*, which Joseph Wells in 1923 deemed 'too Augustan for our modern taste.'⁶⁵ This characterization is apt; Littlebury's preface teems with platitudes about the importance of history for the teaching the principles of good governments, 'founded on common Equity and Prudence,' and with Whiggish warnings against tyranny.⁶⁶ In the 1730s, these themes were again lively, as reform-minded Whig 'patriots' undertook a relentless campaign against the corruptions and conflict-avoidance of the regime of Robert Walpole.⁶⁷ In this context,

61 On Miltiades and Aristiades, see Stanyan 1707: 198–199; 211–212.

62 Stanyan 1707: 'Dedication.'

63 Stanyan 1707: 227.

64 Stanyan 1707: 'Preface.'

65 Wells 1923: 207.

66 Littlebury, tr. 1709: ii.

67 Before the publication of Glover's play, Lyttleton's *Letters from a Persian* (1735; French translation the same year) had compared parliament to Persia's harem, riven by faction and jealousies. Henry St. John (Viscount Bolingbroke), too, had mentioned Persia as a place where 'oriental' subjects were slaves to their monarchs. Thus was the critique of contemporary Persia's despotism and corruption already strongly related to the Whig

ancient and especially Greek history proved useful in conflicts with an establishment the Patriots conceived to be all too smug, power-mad, and unprincipled, perhaps playing Cicero to Walpole's Caesar.

It was at this time that another member of the circle around Alexander Pope, Richard Glover, reenergized some of Stanyan's themes in a verse composition entitled *Leonidas*. The long play was dedicated to Sir Richard Temple (1st Viscount Cobham), the Whig soldier who had fought the Irish and French and become a mentor to William Pitt the elder. Glover's poem, based much more on Plutarch's portrayal of the Spartan king than Herodotus' rather less heroic one, repeatedly lauded Leonidas-Temple's love of freedom and country, declaring that he who dies for his country is most virtuous and therefore most happy.⁶⁸ 'Asia' here is the enemy of the Greeks, who are fighting collectively and valourously for a form of liberty that lies rather exclusively in obedience to the law. *Leonidas* proved to be an immensely popular poem at home and abroad; according to one commentator, it was, for a time, 'the most popular poem in the English language,' and it was translated into French already in 1739, then into Danish, and into German a total of four times.⁶⁹ I do not doubt that it contributed materially to the ideal of citizens united in war to defend not a king but the law and a way of life.

'It was in Ireland,' writes Oswyn Murray, 'that, even before the French Revolution, the search for a radical history of Greece began.'⁷⁰ In 1753, the Irish schoolmaster John Gast funded with 427 private subscriptions the publication of a dialogic catechism, *Rudiments of the Grecian History, from the First Establishment of the States of Greece to the Overthrow of their Liberties in the Days of Philip the Macedonian*. In the *Rudiments*, Gast did cover the Wars, and praised the Greeks' love of liberty, their cultivation of commerce, the institution of democracy, and the consequential flourishing of the Athenian arts and sciences. But the Irish Huguenot did not treat the Persians as particularly despotic—their downfall was rather overweening pride, indulgence in luxuries, and rash action.⁷¹ Nor did he treat the Wars as a great watershed. Indeed, when the publisher John Murray convinced him to write a more straightforward *History of Greece* (1782), the book covered only the period between Alexander

campaigns against Walpole. Masroori 2021: 162, 155. Lyttleton also uses Persia as a foil for his advocacy of women's education, freedom of the press, and religious toleration (against the Anglican church).

68 E.g., Glover 1737: 272.

69 Morris, 2007: 211–213.

70 Murray 2024: 63.

71 Gast 1753: 442.

and the Romans. Here, as in *Rudiments*, he dated the great period of Greece's flourishing as beginning with the ejection of the Peisistratids and ending with the death of Kimon. Afterwards, decline set in. 'The power and opulence which Greece had purchased by her victories,' he wrote, 'introduced ostentation, luxury, and insolence.' Art, drama, and philosophy continued to flourish. 'Her real strength, however, was decayed.'⁷² 480, here, is merely a passing moment, and again the emphasis is on the loss of liberty, rather than its attainment, and its legacies.⁷³

For reasons of space, we must here omit here the contributions of the Jansenist historian Charles Rollin, of the French Académie des Inscriptions, of the British Society of Dilettanti, and of J.J. Winckelmann, to the making of the liberal narrative.⁷⁴ It is noteworthy that it was none other than the young Denis Diderot who translated Temple Stanyan's *Grecian History* into French, producing a three-volume *Histoire de Grèce* in 1743–1744. As Jonathan Israel has noted, Diderot eagerly imbibed Stanyan's theme of liberty—though again it was the story of how Greek liberty was *lost*, to Alexander and the Romans, that Diderot took most to heart.⁷⁵ History writing at mid-century remained chiefly moralizing, but provoked by new respect for antiquarian research and by the fundamental challenges posed by historical pyrrhonism, authors had begun to move in the direction of deeper forms of historicization and source criticism.⁷⁶ The work of Montesquieu convinced many that geographically-defined national histories needed to supersede universal forms. National histories, like David Hume's *History of England* (1754–1761) began to appear at the same time that authors began to delve more deeply into Greek and Athenian history. But neither Winckelmann, nor Montesquieu, nor the Athenophile architects James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, said much about the epoch-making defeat of despotism; it was instead left to the French philosophe Voltaire—standing on Whig historiography—to open a new chapter of the 480 story.

72 Gast 1797: vii. See also Murray 2024: 63–93.

73 This was evident to contemporary reviewers; see Murray 2024: 71.

74 See Marchand 2024: 115–116.

75 Israel 2006: 785. Charles Dedeyan notes that the translation of Stanyan gave Diderot a strong background in ancient and especially Greek history, from an English-liberal perspective. Dedeyan 1987: 19–26.

76 Momigliano 1958; Matytsin 2016.

4 The Persian Wars in the Revolutionary Age

I will have to be brief in my introduction of Voltaire, whose key role in the history of Herodotus reception I have discussed elsewhere.⁷⁷ What is important, for our purposes, is that in the 1760s, Voltaire, deeply engaged in his campaign to *écraser l'infâme*, wrote a number of works which dismissed the credibility and utility of ancient 'oriental' history for modern Europeans. Deeply suspicious of popular rumors, Voltaire also sought to outlaw oral information, especially when gleaned from primitive or uneducated persons, as well as wonders and miracles. His application of this set of historiographical criteria resulted in the cleaving of the *Histories* right down the middle, declaring the once treasured 'oriental' books untrustworthy and useless, and emphasizing now the heroic, European, story of Greek national victory told in Books 7–9.

The truth and utility of Herodotus' narrative, he argued, began only with Xerxes' crossing of the Hellespont. 'One does not find before these great events anything but some vague reports, enveloped in puerile tales,' he wrote.⁷⁸ Undoubtedly informed by Diderot's translation of Stanyan, Voltaire claimed that the *Histories*' great lesson was that of Greece's preservation of its liberty in the face of a threat from the despotic East. 'The superiority of a small but generous people, free while all of Asia was enslaved, is one of the most glorious [stories] among men,' he wrote. Salamis, he argued, could not but remind one of the victory at Lepanto. 'There, perhaps is the only fruit one can glean from the knowledge of these distant times,' he concluded.⁷⁹ Voltaire had not articulated directly the 'clash of civilizations' thesis, but his claims, made in very widely-circulated texts, mark him as one of the eighteenth-century forerunners who pioneered this line of thought.

Voltaire, crucially, wanted out of Herodotus a universally relevant story of the defeat of oriental despotism by a state committed to tolerance and the arts. Just as he was formulating this view of ancient Greece's lessons for the present, a little-known and profoundly unheroic series of events unfolded which gave new relevance to this tale. In 1770, Voltaire's admired correspondent and patroness Catherine the Great, enmeshed in a new series of Russo-Turkish Wars, sent a warship to the Aegean, probably meant to lure the Turkish fleet out of the Black Sea. But she promised the Greeks (and Voltaire) that Greek freedom was at hand.⁸⁰ Catherine's gesture turned out to be perfunctory, bringing

77 See, e.g., Marchand 2023.

78 Voltaire 2007: 369, 371.

79 Voltaire 2007: 372.

80 Augustinos 1994: 146.

down savage Turkish reprisals on the Maniots who did try to stage an uprising, and causing western Europeans to despair of the 'degenerate' Greeks for not rising *en masse*. But the incident stirred up philhellenic hopes, and invocations of Greek heroes afterwards seem to have gained currency, though still in ways that would have seemed strange to Creasy.⁸¹ Even in writing an entire *History of Athens* (1777), William Young said of Marathon that its particulars were 'too inconsequential to recite.'⁸² Young also offered the unusual argument that Themistocles' ostracism was warranted because states which trusted more in great men than in their constitutions inured citizens to subservience.⁸³ Hardly a democrat, Young later became colonial governor of Tobago (1807–1815), and a strong advocate of slavery.

Enticed by Robert Wood's paeans to reading ancient works on site, more travelers made their way to Thermopylae, Mycale, and Sparta, although they often found battlegrounds hard to pinpoint and landscapes disappointingly unheroic. Visiting the desolate site of Sparta (where Pausanias placed the heroic king's tomb) in 1806, Chateaubriand was saddened to hear no reply to his shouts 'Leonidas! Leonidas!' Byron's *Childe Harold* of 1811–1812 of course widely popularized the experience of looking on Marathon, spurring the young Elizabeth Barrett to write a long poem about the battle, in the manner of Pope's *Iliad*. Even more tellingly, in 1819, Ali Pasha himself rebuked his Greek subjects: 'You have something big in your head; you do not give to your children names like Yannis, Petros, Kostas any more, but Leonidas, Themistocles, Aristides! You are planning something for sure!'⁸⁴

We shall return in a moment to the Greek scene and the importance of the philhellenic cause and the Greek wars of independence. But I would first like to make the case that the final piece of the making of 480 as an isolated moment of world-historical change was the advent in the course of the French revolutionary wars of a kind of cultural nationalism which let readers of the *Histories* overlook all the squabbles between Greek polities and focus on the (rare) moments of national unity. This sort of thinking was already gathering steam by the later eighteenth century, as we have seen, in the rise of references to Thermopylae, perhaps best known of the battles given the very deep pro-Spartan sentiments of so many eighteenth-century writers, especially in France. More fuel was added to this fire by the advent of national citizen armies—and the

81 In 1782, one Bavarian writer celebrated a fellow countryman 'who with a few thousand of the same could turn away the army of a Xerxes.' Smith 2020: 117.

82 Young 1804: 85.

83 Young 1804: 142.

84 Hamilakis 2007: 77–78.



FIGURE 6.1 Jacques-Louis David, *Leonidas at Thermopylae*, 1814. Oil on canvas. Paris, Musée du Louvre
PUBLIC DOMAIN

need to motivate them to overcome their own internal squabbles and complaints and to fight for their *nations* (not their kings).⁸⁵ A significant moment here lies in 1792, when foreign armies threatened to march on Paris, and General Charles François Dumouriez thought immediately of Leonidas, the king who sacrificed himself for the *patrie*. The next year saw a series of French plays about Marathon and Thermopylae, all of them lauding the notion of consensual sacrifice for the nation.⁸⁶

It was not only the French who found the Thermopylae analogy useful, with the focus now on the soldiers rather than the king. Thermopylae also resonated with British readers who felt themselves the last hold-outs against the

85 As Jennifer Roberts, notes, however, French revolutionaries tended to prefer Roman heroes. Those who invoked the Greeks generally did so to dramatize their own sufferings; ‘... most republicans who wished to be transported back to Athens wished it so that they might glory in being mistreated.’ Roberts 1994: 197.

86 Chrestien and Tallec 2013: 194–195.

multitudinous armies of a new Great King. In a long travel poem, William Haygarth referred to Britain as a ‘the World’s Thermopylae.’⁸⁷ In the Germanies, too, young men needed to be encouraged to fight, whatever the odds. In 1809, three years after Prussia’s capitulation, the Graecophile pedagogues Johann Herbart and Friedrich Thiersch suggested that young boys should read some Herodotus, in whose accounts of Thermopylae and Salamis ‘mankind for the first time is expressly told that the greatest thing is not life, not enjoyment of [material] goods, and that the impassioned heart [Burst] sings a song of praise to sacrifice to the higher good and death for the fatherland.’⁸⁸ As Jacqueline Christien and Yohann Le Tallec argued in their wonderful overview of the uses of Leonidas, we have here a new sense of the moral of the tale of the ‘300’: it is the story not of the virtuous king but of the army of equals, sacrificing themselves for the Fatherland.⁸⁹ Interestingly, they show that the most famous painting of the period, Jacques-Louis David’s *Leonidas at Thermopylae* (Fig. 6.1), in its 1799 original conception was supposed to emphasize not the king’s heroism but the sacrifices of the soldiers. Napoleon nixed the design at the time, commenting: ‘One does not paint moments of defeat’; but in 1814, as the allies closed in on Paris, he grew less antagonistic, and allowed David to complete the painting which, after 1815, took on liberal and Bonapartist connotations.⁹⁰

5 Nineteenth-Century Liberals and the Wars

The outbreak of the Greek wars unsurprisingly unleashed a carnival of militaristic rhetorical effusions. Alexander Ypsilantis himself started the ball rolling, proclaiming already in 1821: ‘Let us recollect, brave and generous Greeks, the liberty of the classic lands of Greece, the battles of Marathon and Thermopylae ...!’⁹¹ General Markos Botzaris’ suicidal attack on a major Ottoman encampment at Karpenisi, with a party of just over 300, in 1823 gave rise to a number of analogies with Leonidas’ last stand.⁹² The heroics of Admiral Laskarina Bouboulina were compared to those of the Carian heroine Artemisia.

87 Rood 2007: 268.

88 Quoted in Willmann 1872: 5. Stefan Rebenich notes the poet Theodor Körner’s 1812 attempt to use the example of Thermopylae to embolden his countrymen to fight Napoleon. Rebenich 2002: 326.

89 Christien and Tallec 2013: 257.

90 Krul 2018: 185–186. Prints of the painting circulated widely in liberal circles in the 1820s. See Christien and Tallec 2013: 199–203.

91 Tsigakou 1981: 48.

92 Christien and Le Tallec 2013: 207.



FIGURE 6.2 Massimo D'Azeglio, *The Death of Leonidas*, ca. 1823. Oil on canvas. Castello Reale di Racconigi
UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP NORTH AMERICA LLC/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

In the wake of Byron's death at Missolonghi, the tributes grew thick and fast, from Berlioz's early 'La revolution grecque: scène héroïque' to the Thermopylae landscapes of the young Massimo d'Azeglio, destined to be one of Italy's great liberal politicians and proponents of the Risorgimento (Fig. 6.2).⁹³ Apparently two other paintings on the theme were shown at the Paris Salon in 1822 and 1824.⁹⁴ Prints of David's painting circulated, and the visual world of Europeans teemed with representations of the ancient as well as modern Greek wars. The perpetrators of these analogies were not the reactionary heads of state, but their liberal and nationalist opponents, men who particularly in the

93 All D'Azeglio himself had to say about the painting, however, was: 'There was an idea in it and quite decent color.' D'Azeglio 1966: 224. D'Azeglio's father, worried about the possibly radical implications of his son's paintings, convinced him to paint a heroic scene of the Crusades to balance his sentiments. Apparently both D'Azeglio's patron, Charles Felix, king of Piedmont Sardinia, and the critics liked the second painting better. Marshall 1966: 40–41.

94 Chrestien and Tallec 2013: 226.

British world also combined their liberalism with their support for new imperial ventures. Most were not democrats or radicals, but men who believed in secularism, progress, and equality under the law—at least for literate, white men.

Once again, however, we are faced with the question of how much of this new interest had to do with direct encounters with Herodotus' *Histories*. Examining the flood of German pamphlets, poems, and plays reacting to the Greek Revolution, Friedgar Löbker some decades ago argued that this new, philhellenic, literature drew precisely on the Athenophile panhellenism of the fourth century BCE, and not on Herodotus.⁹⁵ But let me extend this point a bit. Although by this time English, French, and German translations of the *Histories* had begun to flood the market, it is not entirely clear if any of the philhellenes of the 1820s had actually read Herodotus; conversely, it seems clear that those who *had* read Herodotus closely either cared little about the Wars, or held a rather jaundiced view of them. The great Greek nationalist Adamantios Korais had certainly not rushed to publish Herodotus in his Hellenic Library; his first volume, devoted to Strabo at Napoleon's bidding, was highly critical of Herodotus' geography.⁹⁶ The next volumes of Korais' Library focused on ancient Greek texts which offered moralistic messages with the aim of re-educating the Greeks, which meant not the *Histories* but—unsurprisingly—large lashings of Plutarch.⁹⁷

Interestingly, the most widely read and influential Anglophone Greek history of the revolutionary and Napoleonic period was that of the conservative William Mitford, a history that, for once, *did* display close and attentive readings of Herodotus' later books. Mitford's *History of Greece* (volume 1, 1784) offered a rather cynical account of the Persian Wars in which he explicitly preferred Herodotus' 'honest' account to the over-embellished Atticizing effusions of Isocrates and Plutarch. Mitford portrayed Xerxes as a noble character, and explained that in the circumstances of 480, medizing was as fully sensible as it was common. So far, so Herodotean, but then Mitford, who did not share Herodotus' fondness for democracy, or for Athens, foregrounded a rarely-invoked passage on the origins of the wars (5.101–103), arguing that the Athenians had only fought the Wars because after the burning of Sardis and the battle of Marathon, they had become so 'peculiarly obnoxious that, in submitting [to the Great King], they could little hope for favorable terms.'⁹⁸ Mitford's

95 Löbker 2000: e.g., 99–103.

96 This according to an 1810 article in the *Edinburgh Review*. Evrigenis 2010: 25 n. 18.

97 See Kitromilides 2010: 1–33.

98 Mitford 1789: 386. On Mitford, see also Rappale 2001: 361–381.

extremely widely read post-revolutionary editions would be even more critical of Athenian democracy. Similarly, the most devoted German Herodotean of the Romantic era was not an Enlightened champion of liberal democracy, but rather the Romantic mythographer Friedrich Creuzer, who was accused of being an orientophile and a crypto-Catholic mystagogue by philhellenic German liberals.⁹⁹ The new, heroic salience of the Wars, that is to say, did not come from close readings of *The Histories*, but in effect forced itself on a text that was perhaps even notorious for being enrolled in iconoclastic or apologetic agendas.

No wonder Mr. Liberal, Thomas Macaulay, felt he had to take on Mitford's second edition in a scathing review of 1824, in which he denounced Mitford for loving tyrants and barbarians and for his supposed indifference to arts and letters. Athens, Macaulay claimed, had directly or indirectly spawned 'all the noblest creations of the human intellect ... All the triumphs of truth and genius over prejudice and power, in every country and in every age, have been the triumphs of Athens.'¹⁰⁰ Note that Europe's monarchs and its Judeo-Christian religious foundations do not get a mention; all is focused, as Voltaire and Winckelmann would have wished, on political freedom and the arts.

In Prussia, too, the moment had come to celebrate the Greeks and 480, as secular liberals sought to deploy a secular history of western civilization in the face of the return of Restoration churches and despotisms. Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of world history, given five times at the University of Berlin between 1820 and 1831, did much to sell the story of Greek liberty, and also to identify the world-historical moment of 480. The battles of Thermopylae and Salamis, he argued,

had freed Greece from the burden (Last) that threatened to suppress it. Unquestionably, greater battles have been fought, but these live eternally not only in the historical memory of [those] nations but also in the histories of the sciences and arts, of the noble and ethical as a whole. For they were worldhistorical battles, they secured culture and intellectual vitality and defeated the Asiatic principle ... All other battles had a more particular end; the eternal fame of the Greeks, however, is justified, because of the exalted things that they saved.¹⁰¹

99 On Creuzer and Herodotus, see Marchand 2023a.

100 Thomas Macaulay's 1824 review of Mitford, in *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, reprinted in Macaulay 1860: 154–155.

101 Hegel 2020: 1358–1359.

Persia had been the first truly world-historical people, Hegel argued, but the Greeks had opened a new chapter in the history of nations by saving culture, for everyone, for all time. Europeans seeking the dawn of their true history should look no farther than 480 BCE.

The crucial importance of 480, I am claiming, was still a partisan, anti-clerical and anti-monarchical, talking point in the 1820s and 30s, the years in which George Grote was writing his *History of Greece*. Under the influence of German hypercriticism, liberal commentators like Macaulay continued the butchering operation promoted by Voltaire, in which the first books, with all of their oriental kings and natural history, were rendered mythical and beyond the parameters of 'real history.' Herodotus was repeatedly chastised for his credulous dependence on ill-informed 'oriental' ciceroni. The last books were another matter, however, and liberal historians did hope to save these; after all, they dealt with a topography that Europeans had now been able to study more closely.¹⁰² With respect to these books, source criticism had begun to work its magic, too, but in the opposite direction, upgrading their significance vis à vis the much later accounts of Plutarch and Diodorus. And then, too, historical context mattered. By the late 1820s, as Greek victory in their War of Independence seemed assured, some were even convinced that reading Herodotus would confirm that Providence was on the side of liberal progress. In 1828, the polymath Isaac Taylor undertook a bowdlerized Herodotus 'for the whole family' which purported to show, 'that, although the divine wisdom might doubtless have found other means of accomplishing its designs, yet was it in fact by the preservation of the independence of Greece, when almost crushed beneath the Asiatic hordes, that the western world was held in preparation for the diffusion of Christianity.'¹⁰³

In the 1850s and 60s, the heyday, not incidentally, of Rankean historical writing, the 480 narrative really hit its stride. National wars and their causes now mattered greatly, perhaps more than the biographies of great men. It is in this period that translations and summaries of the *Histories*, for the first time, are actually titled *The Persian Wars* and not *Histories* and that excerpted editions favor the last, rather than the first, books. This is the period in which, as Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Nicole Loraux argued some time ago, Athens became a model bourgeois city-state,¹⁰⁴ and one which saw the publication of George Grote's Athenophile *History of Greece* (1846–1856). This is also the era of Creasy's *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, where the author contends:

102 For a historiographical study of this topography, see van Rookhuijzen 2018.

103 Taylor, *Herodotus*, xiv.

104 Vidal Naquet and Loraux 1990: 191–210.

Had Persia beaten Athens at Marathon she could have found no obstacle to prevent Darius, the chosen servant of Ormuzd, from advancing his sway over all the known Western races of mankind. The infant energies of Europe would have been trodden out beneath universal conquest; and the history of the world, like the history of Asia, would have become a mere record of the rise and fall of despotic dynasties, of the incursions of barbarous hordes, and of the mental and political prostration of millions beneath the diadem, the tiara, and the sword.¹⁰⁵

Interestingly, by this time liberal intellectuals had rather lost interest in modern Greeks, or had reverted to thinking of them as barbarians. But the 480 rhetoric could easily be displaced into imperial settings, which Priya Satiya argues was key, at least for English authors. As the imperial noose tightened around India, she writes, ‘The contest between barbarism and civilization in Herodotus’s history ... acquired deeper resonance in a world divided into a backward East and a progressive West, becoming essential to modern historicism.’¹⁰⁶ This is by no means to say that Herodotus’ later books were immune from criticism; on the contrary, the second half of the century ushered in a period of intense scrutiny of his military knowledge, which was often found to be wanting. But writers did now conclude, as did Paul Cartledge in 2007, that the story of 480 had to be told with Herodotus as the foundation, or not at all.

Although space prohibits anything more than a mention, it is important here not to leave the impression that even in the age of gung-ho imperialism Herodotus’ first books had been forgotten. As I explore in other papers, nineteenth-century orientalists, Near Eastern archaeologists, and some theologians depended upon them; children’s writers continued to draw especially on books 1 and 2 and novelists, poets, painters, and musicians borrowed liberally, especially from the first books. Some writers even found resources to critique Eurocentrism.¹⁰⁷ To give just one example, Herodotus’ popularity soared among black American readers and their abolitionist colleagues, who delighted in invoking the authority of the father of history (at 2.104) with respect to the blackness of the Egyptians and the West’s deep cultural debt to the Africans.¹⁰⁸ And like so many of their forebearers, these readers did not care about the Wars, either.

105 Creasy 1853: 29.

106 Satiya 2020: 69.

107 Marchand 2020.

108 Malamud 2019: 150–183.

6 Conclusion

Nineteenth-century liberals did convince large portions of the reading public than 480 marked a watershed, and long into the twentieth century, the rhetoric of Hegel and Creasy continued to resonate, in new contexts which can only be very briefly sketched here. In the age of the world wars, and the Greek-Turkish conflict, the Whiggish reading of the last books took on new cultural salience, with civilization's battle lines, of course, drawn differently by various sides; Belgium already in 1914 was Thermopylae, as was Ukraine in its fruitless battle against the Red Army in 1918.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps it was the sickening use of the 300 in the Second World War, in the Luftwaffe's kamikaze Leonidas-Staffel and Göring's grotesque 'Thermopylae' speech in the face of the sixth army's suicidal orders to remain at Stalingrad, which provoked Heinrich Böll to pen his 1950 indictment of the Gymnasium's contribution to mass death, titled with only the beginning of Simonides' tag, 'Wanderer, if you pass through Spar ...'¹¹⁰

Of course, the Cold War simply reified the clash thesis, juxtaposing the free West and the Greeks with the 'barbaric' Soviets. In the 1950s, having adopted conservative Cold War values, the Austrian painter Oskar Kokoschka produced a triptych titled 'Thermopylae, or the Struggle to Save the West (Abendland)' for the University of Hamburg (see the cover of this volume). Here the three panels creatively adapted the story to dramatize the old-new threat of the advance of barbarism from the East.¹¹¹ A 1954 British textbook explained why students should care about the Persian Wars: 'We are interested in the tale because, if the Greeks had not defeated the Persians at Salamis, we in Western Europe would not be leading the lives we are today.'¹¹² This, of course, might have been said about the events of any war or major event one might like to choose. But by this time, the East-West clash, and this first turning point in its supposedly long history, had become proverbial, and did not really need Herodotus to substantiate it.

Perhaps, in fact, it never did. One would have thought his text central, and there is general agreement that at least one of Herodotus' main objectives was to dramatize the epic importance of 480/479. Iranologists and classicists today are showing us ways in which he subtly advanced Greek virtues and values.¹¹³ But our reception story tells us that many readers—Roman, Byzantine, and

109 Chrestien and Tallec 2013: 286, 291.

110 Rebenich 2002.

111 Schadow 2008: 22–39.

112 Quennell and Quennell 1954: 88–89.

113 See, e.g., Hall 1989 and the essays collected in Rollinger, et al. eds., 2011.

early modern—either did not care very much about the Persian Wars, or cared about them for reasons other than as the first ‘battle for the West.’ It tells us, too, that those who wanted to find this story could find it in Herodotus, but perhaps even more handily, in other sources such as Demosthenes or Plutarch. Readers, too, have their own interests, and often fail to read whole texts, or read excerpts and second- or third-hand gleanings; many learn the stories by way of poems, artworks, or theater pieces, all of which have their own generic devices or messages. Probably most of them, in any case, have always cared more about love, travel, and good local leadership than about historical events.

Finally, and with respect to its main subject, Herodotus, this essay hopes to have underscored the fact that there have always been alternative ways of reading the *Histories*, many of them better grounded in the text than the Athenophile narrative. This long and various ancient text has meant very many things to very many people, and Herodotus continues today to open up many windows not only on the ancient world, but also on our conceptions of human nature, fortune, and good government, to list only a few major themes. It is our job to remind our students that it is this feisty, dynamic, polyphony—in which the bombast of Creasy is merely one melody, if also a recently-revived tune—of the many that constitute the classical tradition.

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Revisiting the ‘Persian Destruction’ Wells of the Athenian Agora

Michael Laughy and Floris van den Eijnde

1 Introduction

In this chapter, we consider the destruction of the lower town of Athens in 479 by Mardonios’ troops.¹ We do this from the perspective of the wells that were decommissioned after the Persian destruction and filled in part with destruction debris.² The carefully sealed nature of the deposits contained in the wells has turned them into treasure-troves for establishing Athenian pottery chronologies.³ The importance of the Agora wells in establishing the chronology of Late Archaic ceramic styles are touched upon in the contributions by Lynch and Matter and Rotroff later in this volume. At the same time, their non-ceramic depositional histories have been much less studied, let alone theorized. These depositions represent crucial evidence not only for the *destruction* of the city, but also for its *rebuilding*.

We discuss the processes in which wells were constructed, used, decommissioned, and finally backfilled. This undertaking requires us to rethink the lifespan of these wells and the complicated character and chronology of the dumps that provided the backfill, for such a study has important implications

1 According to Herodotus (8.51–53), the initial attack on Athens in 480 was accompanied by the demolition of the Acropolis. Whatever was left standing of Athens (εἴ κοῦ τι ὀρθὸν ἦν, 9.13.1–2), presumably including much of the lower town, was demolished and burned during the second Persian occupation of 479. On the literary sources and archaeology of the Persian destruction of Athens, see most recently Camp 2021. All dates in this chapter are B. C. E., unless otherwise noted.

2 Our interest in the ‘post-Persian’ wells stems from a larger project that reexamines the depositional patterns in the wells that have been excavated by the American School of Classical Studies in the area of the Classical Agora of Athens. For the project we have looked at 126 wells ranging in date from the eighth century to the end of the fifth. We have had help or input from two students at Utrecht University who deserve to be mentioned: Anouk de Bruin and Alexandros Mourtzos. We have also benefitted immensely from reading the pre-published contributions by Kathleen Lynch and Stephen Matter and Susan Rotroff in this volume, as well as from the comments made by them and by Marion Meyer.

3 Cf. Lynch in this volume p. 229.

for the way we understand how and why wells were closed and filled. We argue that many of these wells could have been filled in much later than has previously been thought. We conclude our argument with a discussion of the twenty wells decommissioned between 479 and 450.

To begin, it is difficult to overstate the importance of well deposits to our understanding of the history of the Athenian Agora. To date, hundreds of wells have been excavated, producing several influential studies focused in whole or part on the contents of these deposits.⁴ An outstanding example of such a study is that of Shear, who in 1993 published an exhaustive account of 19 deposits—including 13 wells—that contained material from the Persian destructions of Athens in 479. This study has since not only become central to our understanding of the material evidence for the destruction, but also frequently cited as providing a *terminus ante quem* for both the material within the deposit and the period of use for the wells themselves.

While much has been written about what the deposits within wells can tell us about Athens, for the purposes of this article it would be good to review what we know about wells themselves as *artifacts*.⁵ For example, how can we determine the period of use for a given well? What depositional processes lead to the deposits found within wells once closed? Finally, how should we view the chronological relationship between the period of use of a well and these deposits? Revisiting these and other questions regarding wells and well deposits may provide additional insights into our understanding of the so-called Persian destruction wells.

2 Opening and Using a Well in the Early Fifth Century

The digging of a well was no easy task. The first order of business would have been to locate a favorable spot to sink a well. Potential locations would have been determined by close observations of local variations in plant life and

4 Examples pertinent for this chapter are the studies in *Agora* XII; Camp 1977; *Agora* XXIII; *Agora* XXX; Lynch 2011.

5 An important exception is the excellent recent article by Stroszeck (2017), speaking more specifically about wells in the Kerameikos, and that by Kimmey (2023) on the wells of Nemea. For general discussions of wells and their life cycle in the Athenian Agora, see Lang 1949; *Agora* VIII: 107–108; *Agora* XII: 43–45; Camp 1977: 175–182; *Agora Picture Book* 11: 5–10. The study of cisterns by Klingborg (2017) contains a useful chapter (3) on maintenance and use with some interesting overlapping considerations. For a discussion of archaeological assemblages as artifacts, see Shahack-Gross 2017.

humidity, and by experience with past well digging successes or failures.⁶ Having identified a promising area, most wells were hand dug through bedrock until the underlying aquifer was reached.⁷ Most well digging likely took place mid-summer, when the water table was lowest, to ensure that the well produced water throughout the year. If a well was dug in a year with relatively high water tables it may have been necessary to revisit it in subsequent years for further excavation.

The digging would have been slow, arduous, and dangerous. The bedrock had to be picked or chiseled by hand and sent up in a bucket for what gradually became an ever longer haul out of the well by the digger's companion(s). Any problems that would send this bucket—or any other material or tools—flying back down posed a significant hazard to the digger below. Equally perilous, the interior walls of wells of this period were rarely lined; instead, hand/foot holds were carved directly into the bedrock walls of the well to facilitate the digging and subsequent maintenance of the well.⁸ The dangers of a well shaft collapsing during excavation were real, and the evidence that the walls of some wells did, in fact, eventually collapse in antiquity is clear.⁹ Well digging, in other words, required expertise and experience, and was the work of full- or part-time professionals.¹⁰

Not all well-digging efforts proved successful. The reasons that some attempts were halted were surely varied, e.g., a lens of exceedingly hard material was reached, or the diggers no longer felt that the well was in an opportune area.¹¹ The well could also be abandoned due to wall collapse before water was reached. Most efforts, however, were successful. The functioning wells of the

6 Plin. *HN*. 31.27 and Vitruvius. 8.1.1–6. Cf. *Agora Picture Book* 11: 6; Crouch 1993: 243; Stroszeck 2017: 45.

7 'Bedrock' is the term most often used by the field archaeologists of the Athenian Agora in various reports and publications. Chiotis and Chioti 2012: 417, state more specifically: 'Most of the wells in the Agora and especially the deeper ones were dug in lenses of sandstones and platy limestones of the marly unit (...) Few and rather shallow wells were also dug in the alluvial sediments in the flat part of the Agora.'

8 Camp 1977: 176.

9 See, e.g., Fig. 7.8 for Well G 11:8 (Shear 1993: 451–453), whose wall collapse closed the well and necessitated the digging of a new well (G 11:3) right next to it.

10 Lewis 2020: 148, seems to have coined the term *phreorouchoi*, which is not otherwise attested. Of course, some had sufficient expertise or experience to dig their own wells; see Hdt. 1.68, for the story of one such well digger, who struck the grave of Orestes (according to the Spartans) during his attempt. It may be the case that certain well attributes, such as the treatments of foot holds, well diameters, and well-heads, allows for the identification of individual well diggers; cf. White 1994: 44.

11 For unfinished wells, see Wells E 14:5, F 19:5, and M 17:4.



FIGURE 7.1
Athlete drawing water from
a well with a rope. Red-figure
kylix attributed to Onesimos,
ca. 500–450
© ROMA CAPITALE—
SOVRINTENDENZE CAPI-
TOLINA—MUSEO DI ROMA

early fifth century have an average diameter of about 1 m and were dug to a depth ranging from 5.90 m (J 2:4, dug near the Eridanos river) to 19.50 m (G 6:3, on the slopes of Kolonos Hill), with an average depth of just over 9.5 m (see Catalogue). Though such evidence has not survived, it is likely that the bottom of the well was treated with a board *vel sim.*, in an effort to decrease sludge from the bottom of the well mixing with the water. That done, the mouth of the well was provided with cobbling to receive a terracotta well-head.¹² Surviving examples from this period tend to be pithos- or drum-shaped, and, once in place, narrowed the accessible mouth of the well by nearly half of the well's interior diameter.¹³ Lifting holes on either side of the well-heads allowed for easy removal, should the need arise for someone to descend into the well for maintenance (Figs. 7.1, 7.2).¹⁴

Rope marks on a great number of the well-heads indicate that vessels (often referred to as *kadoi*), tied to a rope, were often lowered down by hand (cf. Figs. 7.1, 7.2).¹⁵ A windlass or swing beam could also be used, particularly for

¹² Lang 1949.

¹³ For well-heads found within the deposits of the wells in our Catalogue, the top rim diameters are as follows: P 11062 (Well D 15:1): 0.68; P 11060 (Well D 15:1): 0.60 m; P 24921 (Well R 12:4): 0.60. Stone well-heads are mostly a Hellenistic and later feature; see Camp 1977: 180.

¹⁴ Lang 1949: 116–117.

¹⁵ Camp 1977: 181. Well-head P 24921, in n. 13, above, is one such example.



FIGURE 7.2 Athletes drawing water from a well with a rope. Red-figure kylix attributed to Euphronios (potter) and Onesimos (painter), ca. 500–450. Paris, Louvre G 291
© RMN-GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY

deeper wells (cf. Figs. 7.3, 7.4).¹⁶ Writing in the second century CE, Pollux 10.31 discusses these, and other types of equipment associated with fetching water from wells:

... If you are drawing water from wells or cisterns, I think you would need equipment, like a pail, bucket, [various ropes and lines], a *kados*, a windlass, and perhaps even a swing beam. [...] On top of that a grappling hook, flesh-hook, and wolf-hook is needed; for that is how they called the gear they used to draw up out of the wells the *kadoi* that had fallen from (the rope).¹⁷

In support of the use of hooks to bring fallen *kadoi* out of a well, Pollux cites Aristophanes' *Ekklesiazousai* (1002–1004):

Why, then, are we buying flesh-hooks for the *kadoi*, when it's possible to send an old woman like her down to get the *kadoi* out of the wells?

16 Sparkes 1975: 130–131; Stroszeck 2017: 53–58.

17 All translations in this chapter are our own. We are especially grateful to Mathieu de Bakker for his insights on the Pollux passage.



FIGURE 7.3 Soldiers at a well equipped with a windlass. Red-figure bell krater attributed to the Naples Painter, ca. 450–400. MAN 11039
CVA MADRID 1, SPAIN 1, PL. 16.3; © MUSEO ARQUEOLÓGICO NACIONAL,
MADRID



FIGURE 7.4 A satyr drawing water using a swing-beam. Red-figure pelike, attributed to the Geras Painter, ca. 500–450. Harvard University 1925.30.34
CVA HOPPIN AND GALLATIN COLLECTIONS 1, USA 1, P. 12.4; © HARVARD ART MUSEUM

A similar scene is found in Menander's *Dyskolos* (626–628), where we read of another attempt to retrieve *kadoi* that have fallen into a well:

He was going down (the well) so he could bring up his hoe and *kados*, and then he slipped from above, so just fell in.

Menander's character would have done well to have called in one more experienced in well maintenance, cleaning, and the occasional *kados* retrieval. As Socrates suggests in Plato's *Laches* (193c), there were such professionals:

And all who, descending and diving into a well without experience, are willing to be unflinching in this or in any other such action, you would say that they are braver than those experienced in these matters?

These quotes, while informative on the types of gear and equipment associated with wells and water retrieval, raise an important question: what vessels were used to draw water? The term that often appears in antiquity for a well-bucket is *kados*. What shape(s) our sources have in mind, however, is elusive. The material, uses, and shapes of *kadoi* vary enough in our sources that it appears best understood as a generic, context-dependent term for a range of shapes, much like the word 'bucket' in English today.¹⁸ In studies of deposits from the Athenian Agora, however, the term *kados* is used more specifically for a plain, squat, ovoid cooking-ware pot used to draw water (Fig. 7.5).¹⁹ At the bottom of Well R 12:4 (Fig. 7.6), for example, were found 'masses of pottery, especially water pots, of which many are complete. No evidence of stratification within period of use.'²⁰ The presence of intact *kadoi*, as well as other shapes of roughly similar size, such as *hydriai*, near the bottom of this well provides clear evidence for the use of these vessels in water retrieval.²¹

That said, extensive iconographic evidence of *kadoi* at the well does not depict the terracotta *kadoi* found in Athenian Agora wells, but rather larger,

18 Amyx 1958: 186–190; Sparkes 1975: 127–128.

19 *Agora* XII: 201–203; cf. *Agora* VIII 54: *kadoi* 'ceased to be used for cooking and began to be used for drawing water; for this latter purpose they were called *kadoi* in antiquity.' See also Stroszeck 2017: 58, for a ceramic pot of this type from the Kerameikos (inv. no. 3776), inscribed *κάδος εἰμι κάδος*.

20 Shear 1993: 471.

21 Intact *kadoi*: P 24665–24666, 24668–24670, 24672. Intact *hydriai*: P 24663. All but one of these vessels is pierced with one or more holes, perhaps to facilitate the filling of water.

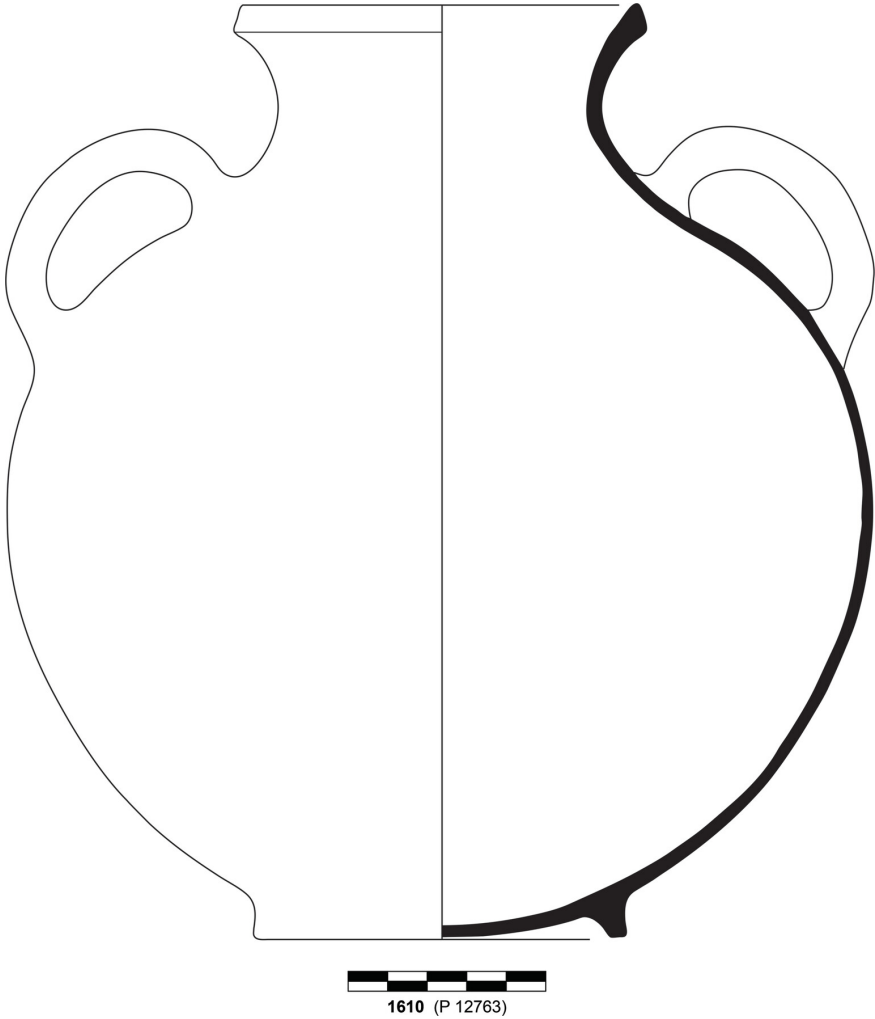


FIGURE 7.5 Profile of a *kados* (P 12763) from the Athenian Agora.

FROM AGORA XII, FIG. 17, NO. 1610; COURTESY AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS: AGORA EXCAVATIONS

metal *kadoi* for use in drawing water.²² In Fig. 7.2, for example, we see a young man pulling a large *kados* from a well; the sharp edges of the lip and foot,

22 Amyx 1958: 188. We are aware of only one image in which the vessels used to draw water appears to be ceramic: a late black-figure pelike now in Berlin that depicts a satyr drawing water, aided by a swingbeam (Berlin, Antikemuseum, inv. no. 3228); see Stroszeck 2017: 75, fig. 24.

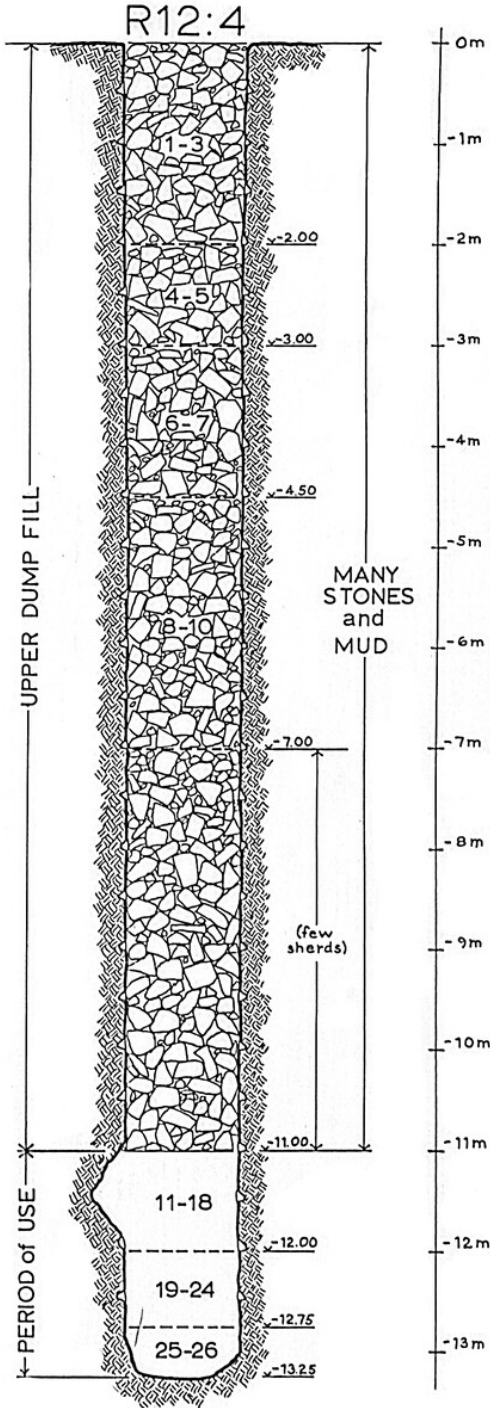


FIGURE 7.6
 Cross-section of Well R12:4
 SHEAR 1993, P. 470, FIG. 10;
 COURTESY AMERICAN SCHOOL
 OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT
 ATHENS: AGORA EXCAVATIONS

together with a rigid, curved bail handle, all suggest a metal vessel.²³ Other *kadoi*, with some variations in shape, can also be seen in Fig. 7.3 and 7.4.²⁴

It is also reasonable that the *kadoi* referenced in the Aristophanes and Menander passages above were metal, given that they were valuable enough to retrieve at some risk, and potentially at some expense if a professional were to be hired. Perhaps the use of metal hooks also supports the notion that the *kadoi* in these passages were metal, given the risk such gear would pose to ceramic *kadoi*.²⁵ Particularly in the case of rather deep wells, the use of metal *kadoi* also makes sense when we consider that, though expensive, a metal bucket would presumably prove a more durable and worthwhile investment than its ceramic counterpart, and potentially allow the drawing of larger amounts of water at a time, should that appeal.²⁶

Given that the cost of a metal bucket seems worth the risk retrieving should it fall within a well, there is little surprise that none of the wells in our catalogue contain an example. Within the wells of the Athenian Agora of all periods, however, remains of about thirty bronze or lead well buckets have been recovered, mostly from the Roman period, a time in which the wells could reach 20 meters or more—and were therefore less likely to be retrieved.²⁷ Nearly miraculously, the remains of five wooden well buckets, constructed of staves bound by metal bands, have also been found in Athenian wells. Once again, most are found in deeper Late Roman wells, but the earliest example is dated to the Late Archaic period, ca. 500.²⁸ The presence of wooden buckets reminds us that not only wood, but other organic material such as ox hide could be used as drawing vessels.²⁹

3 Closing and Filling a Well in the Early Fifth Century

The closing of wells in the aftermath of the Persian destruction is variously understood. While it is conceivable that some of the wells in active use when the Persians arrived had been deliberately contaminated by the Persians—

23 Amyx 1945: 514–515; 1958: 187–188.

24 Amyx 1945: 514; Amyx 1958: 188.

25 See *Agora Picture Book* 11: 10, fig. 13, for an image of such a hook.

26 Amyx 1958: 187–188.

27 The earliest metal bucket (B 184) dates to the Hellenistic period and was found 19.4 m deep within the well. For the increase in depth of wells by the Hellenistic period, see Camp 1977: 175–176.

28 This well, U 211, is located in the area of the Eleusinion; see Report 2003 EA: 3.

29 Stroszeck 2017: 58. If ox hides were used to draw water, none have survived.

and thus been rendered unusable—such a task would have been an enormous undertaking given the sheer number of wells throughout the city.³⁰ Such an act is in any case not recorded by Herodotus or Thucydides, nor has any secure evidence of a poisoning of a well by, say, an animal carcass been recovered in any well. Unfortunately, the wells under discussion were excavated before flotation methods (i.e. sifting for floral remains) had become part of the archaeologists' toolbox.³¹ That the quality of the underground water table was of much concern is evidenced by the existence in Athens in the fourth century of a special Overseer of the Wells.³²

It has also been suggested that the wells were physically destroyed as part of the general destruction of Athens to make the city unlivable—though exactly *how* any of the wells may have been destroyed remains unclear.³³ While some of the wells in the catalogue indeed show signs of interior wall collapse, such collapse would have been most likely due to structural failing of the well, rather than a deliberate Persian hacking at the well walls. As it stands, evidence from the wells themselves is silent on any Persian contamination. The only candidate for deliberate destruction is G 11:8, which was decommissioned right around 480–479 and immediately replaced by G 11:3. Both wells were filled in around 470 in order to accommodate the construction of the Tholos. Still, we cannot fully be certain that the well was deliberately destroyed, or whether it was inadvertently damaged when the associated Building F was destroyed, and debris collapsed into the well.

This means that we cannot *a priori* assume that the wells in our catalogue were decommissioned immediately after, and as a direct consequence of the Persian destruction of the city. Shear already conceded that some wells were probably 'delayed' (a phrase coined by Lynch), since they contain a few post-Persian sherds and were therefore filled in sometime in the later 470s.³⁴ As we

30 In the First Sacred War, famously and allegedly, the allied forces contaminated the water supply of the besieged inhabitants of Kirrha. This, however, was done by adding hellebore to the water supply leading into the city *during* not *after* the siege, to weaken resistance from within (Frontin. *Str.* 3.7.6; see also Mayor 2009: 100–106).

31 Interestingly, the modern water quality of many ancient wells is polluted, presumably a result of leaks in the modern sewage system; see Stroszeck 2017: 47–48, and cf. Crouch 1993: 278–280. In ancient times, throwing feces in the well may have served to pollute the wells, but we lack any evidence of this.

32 *Ath. Pol.* 43.1.

33 Shear 1993: 417 posits the possibility of hydraulic warfare, the intentional destruction of the wells to hinder the reoccupation of the city by the Athenians. No positive proof for this thesis exists, however, and the supporting literary passage (Hdt. 9.49) refers to the Persians cutting off the water supply of their enemies *in the field*.

34 Shear 1993: 414–415: '8 of the 21 deposits continued to gather broken pottery and other

argue, however, the contents of the wells can only provide a *terminus post quem* for their filling in and it is entirely possible that many of them remained in use for years, perhaps decades after the war. In fact, the very limited number of intrusions in the delayed well make it statistically likely that even those 'Persian' deposits without later intrusions were used to fill some of our wells much later than 479. To determine whether such was the case, we have to weigh and compare several factors, including the pottery, but also the broader composition of the deposits, as well as the wider archaeological context in which the well was situated.

It can also be trickier than previously acknowledged to determine which wells were in active use when the Persians arrived. In the vast majority of cases, it is difficult to assign a date for when a given well was initially dug other than within a broad chronological period based upon, for example, the treatment of well walls.³⁵ We usually also lack evidence for how long a given well, once opened, remained in use. Perhaps we should expect that the average viable well would function for at least a generation or so, given the investment and labor that it took to dig and maintain. But this is only a suggestion; each well would have had a different lifespan and may have failed or been closed for any number of reasons.³⁶ For example, a well may have dried up, due to factors from variability in annual rainfall to periodic droughts, or the walls of a well may have collapsed, resulting in terminal structural damage.³⁷ In other situations, wells were closed not because they failed hydrologically or structurally, but because they were located in an area that was now reclaimed to accommodate new building activity or some other reorganization of space.³⁸ But even in situations when it is clear that a well was put out of use by, say, structural collapse, we are in no better position to be able to determine how long beforehand the well had been viable. We are, though, better able to determine when a well may have been *closed*.

Whatever the reason a well was closed, a now meters-deep hole in the ground posed a threat to safety, as well as a possible source of contamination

debris for some years after the principal group of wells was closed and sealed.' See Lynch 2011: 22 as well as her contribution in this volume, pp. 249–251.

35 For example, almost all wells were unlined before the Hellenistic period, at which time stone well-heads became more common; see Camp 1977: 176–181; Crouch 1993: 52–53.

36 Cf. Shear 1993: 386.

37 For a discussion of ancient references to wells in Greek literature—many of which discuss the tendency of some wells to dry up—see Klingborg 2023.

38 See, e.g., Shear 1978: 5, who suggests that the closing of several sixth-century wells in the Athenian Agora indicates 'a deliberate effort to enlarge the area of the public square'; and Lynch 2011: 38–39, for wells closed to accommodate domestic renovations.

of the groundwater.³⁹ For these reasons, it is highly unlikely that wells were left abandoned for long, or that any subsequently served for a period of time as a veritable trash can until finally filled.⁴⁰ In addition, though filling in a well requires a lot of material, a small team could make relatively quick work of the process, lessening a reason for delay between the decommissioning of the well and rendering the area once again safe and the groundwater free from potential pollutants.⁴¹

Like the digging of the well, the closing of one was a matter overseen by those with experience. Importantly, the fill within the well could not simply be earth and soil, nor much that is biodegradable, for such material would eventually settle and necessitate secondary fill(s) over the years.⁴² Much denser material was needed to ensure that a well's fill remained compact and stable over time.⁴³ Such was readily available in waste heaps of material well suited for filling a well, including but not limited to: open-air heaps of discarded terracotta material from sanctuaries, workshops, and homes; architectural debris; and dumps from various ad hoc activities such as the *ostrakaphoria*.⁴⁴ Dumps of dense bedrock, produced by grading operations, were also available for use.⁴⁵ We should suspect that these bedrock dumps may have also included a range of material from a range of periods, should such operations have disturbed earlier levels of activity, such as graves. Also desirable for well filling would be dumps of potter's clay, field stones, and mudbrick.⁴⁶ Such dumps, organized and main-

39 Cf. the advice given by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater, PUB-DG-016 2020.

40 Shear 1993: 414, for example, suggests that they are some closed wells that 'continued to gather broken pottery and other debris for some years ...' For a similar suggestion, see *Agora v*: 123.

41 For example, a well 10 m deep and 1 m in diameter would require just under 8 m³, or about 50 large wheelbarrows, of material to fill it. Presumably carts were used to transport the material, although for the possibility that wheelbarrows were in use on construction sites at least at Eleusis, if not in Athens, by the late fifth century, see Lewis 1994: 468–475.

42 Cf. Shear 1993: 386.

43 This same holds true today; see, for example, North Dakota regulation Article 33.1-18-01, which considers material such as sand, concrete, and clay as acceptable for filling a closed well. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater, PUB-DG-016 2020, requires bentonite chips.

44 Laughy 2018: 654–656, with bibliography; see also Lindenlauf 2000: 120–127, 170, 201. For a discussion of the dating potential of and risks posed by ostraka, see Lynch in this volume, p. 233, 238–240.

45 Shear 1993: 401–406. Of the wells in our Catalogue, extensive bedrock dumps were found in B 19:10, D 17:10, H 12:15, R 12:1, U 19:2, B 18:6, G 11:8, and Q 21:3.

46 Dumps of potter's clay: D 17:10, E 15:6, U 19:2, H 6:5 and perhaps F 19:5; significant dumps of field stones: Q 12:3, R 12:4, U 19:2, and F 19:4; dumps of mudbrick: H 12:15. Mudbrick dumps,

tained by type, provided dense material not only for the filling of wells, but for other projects such as the construction of roads, backfill for terracing projects, and wall construction.⁴⁷

Those filling a well often accessed varying types of material heaps. Well H 12:15 (Fig. 7.7), for example, provides a clear example of different material dumps being accessed to seal the well. The lower dump fill consisted of a mass of broken pottery and stones, within which was a layer of discarded mudbricks; over this dug bedrock was dumped in, followed by dumps of stones and roof tiles, and then stones and gravel.⁴⁸ Also included were a number of terracotta figurines, likely from sanctuary waste heap(s) associated with the Eleusinion.⁴⁹ This is no surprise; as a recent study has shown, a large number of wells of this as well as previous and subsequent periods, derived at least some of their deposition fills from sanctuary dumps, the Eleusinion in particular.⁵⁰ The Persian destruction would have provided an ample and variegated assortment of dumps throughout the city, some of which remained available for decades (as we will see).

It is also clear that there were several independent dumps of each type of material. In other words, some wells show 'wheelbarrows' from one distinct heap of pottery, followed by 'wheelbarrows' from another, and then 'wheelbarrows' from a third. For example, in the Deposit Report for Well U 25:2, the excavator notes that:

There are three fills, all thrown into the unfinished well at the same time (end of sixth–beginning of the fifth century), but brought from different pottery dumps. Some of the material probably dates from the end of the seventh century, and nearly all is earlier than the last quarter of the

if used more extensively in well filling, would be hard to distinguish in most wells due to disintegration.

47 Laughy 2018: 654–656.

48 Shear 1993: 453–455.

49 T 3257–3258, 3262, 3264–3271. For discussion of sanctuary figurines and other material utilized as fill, see Lindenlauf 2000: 120–127; Laughy 2018: 654–656. Cf. Papadopoulos 2003: 175 (with references), esp. n. 92 with references to parallels with figurines from the Acropolis. While it is possible that the deposits contain some figurines derived from nearby private homes, good evidence of this practice is lacking due to the rarity of well-preserved domestic assemblages in Archaic and Classical Athens; see Harrington 2021.

50 Wells with figurines and other sanctuary material: D 15:1, D 17:10, E 15:6, F 19:5, G 6:3, H 12:5, R 12:1, U 19:2, B 18:6, G 11:3, G 11:8, F 19:4, M 17:4, Q 21:3. For a discussion of the close parallels between the well-figurines and those found in Eleusis as well as in the Eleusinion during the Archaic period, see van der Maas 2020: 92–99, 147–188.

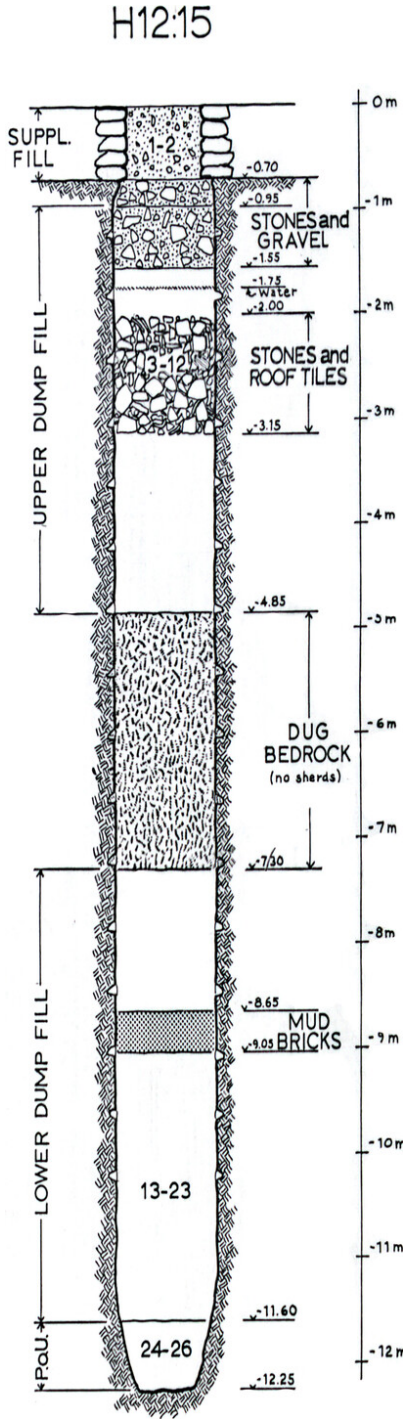


FIGURE 7.7
Cross-section of Well H 12:15
SHEAR 1993, P. 441, FIG. 7; COURTESY AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS: AGORA EXCAVATIONS

sixth ... but the filling up of the well cannot have taken place before the end of the sixth or even the beginning of the fifth century.

We should keep in mind that not all—or any—of the dumps, terracotta or otherwise, need have been particularly close to a given well.⁵¹ In fact, it is an open question whether any of these heaps would have been appropriately located within the bounds of the Athenian Agora proper, so we should regard with caution associating material within a given well deposit with activities in the immediate vicinity. In other words, all the material within a workshop well, for example, need not uncritically be associated with that workshop.

To sum up, it is good to keep in mind in our analyses of well deposits that what we call a 'well deposit' is in most cases best understood as a collection of secondary (or tertiary?) deposits. The primary deposit, so to speak, took the form of what we may call salvage or repurpose heaps, sorted and maintained by kind for valuable re-use, perhaps principally for construction projects. Importantly, these secondary deposits—and therefore the heaps from which they derive—often contain significant amounts of material dating decades or even centuries earlier than the well into which they were placed. That said, it is usually well deposits that provide our only and best evidence for when a well was closed and filled.⁵² Or more accurately, the latest material within a well deposit provides us with a *terminus post quem* for a given well's closing.

At this point, it is important for us to remember that in currently published well deposit summaries, the dates provided are for the deposits—i.e., the material used to fill the well—and not the period of use for the well itself. For example, Well D 17:10 in our Catalogue is dated in several deposit summaries to ca. 520–480. This does not mean that there is evidence that this well was viable for 40 years—a common mistake—only that the material accessed to fill the well dates to this period.

That said, the deposit summaries for a small number of wells do include an additional date which is particularly pertinent to any study of wells: period-of-use (POU) material. According to Shear, '[m]aterial which fell into a well while it served as a source of water can usually be distinguished from material dumped in to fill up the shaft after the well ceased to supply water.'⁵³ There is certainly evidence at the bottom of some wells, such as the presence of whole

51 Cf. Papadopoulos 2003: 28 n. 9.

52 As discussed above, an example of another dating criteria would be evidence that a well was filled to accommodate a building project or area renovation.

53 Shear 1993: 384. Cf. *Agora* XII: 107, fig. 7, which has 'use fill' labeled on a much since reproduced cross-section of a 'typical well.'

water-drawing vessels such as *kadoi* discussed above, which can be considered with confidence to be period-of-use material. While the presence of period-of-use pottery is a great boon for assessing the chronology of a given well, an examination of deposits currently considered 'period-of-use' raises a number of questions.

To begin with, the use of the word 'usually' in Shear's quote is an exaggeration. It has long been noted that relatively few wells have POU deposits, likely due in part to the extreme care that would have been taken to keep foreign material out of the water, and due to the regular maintenance of the wells, likely an activity done by those with special expertise of such activities, as discussed above.⁵⁴ Regular maintenance would also accord with the notion that, just as today, drinking water was valued for its clarity and cleanliness in antiquity.⁵⁵ As such, we may wonder to what degree an active well was an appropriate receptacle into which could be thrown, say, a broken lamp or roof tile, let alone meters of accumulated material.⁵⁶ If so, a domestic well might be expected to be cleaner than a public one.⁵⁷

And yet this is exactly what we find in some catalogues of POU layers. For example, in Well R 12:4, discussed above, the presence of complete shapes such as *hydriai* or *kadoi* at the bottom of the well are best understood as water pots that fell from a rope during use of the well, and not pots retrieved from a waste heap—for why would whole, perfectly functional pots have been discarded? That said, what has been published as the POU layer of this well contains much more than whole water pots and is surprisingly deep: 2.25 m. That is a lot of material to have gradually built up at the bottom of an active well. Furthermore, a good number of the objects in what is designated 'POU fill' are foreign to well use, such as an array of cups, a strainer, part of a well-head, and roof tile fragments.⁵⁸ Similarly, the lowest 3.30 m of Well G 11:3 (Fig. 7.8) is published as the POU level, within which is a band, 0.70 m deep, of nearly sterile sandy fill, an addition that would surely jeopardize the functionality of the well.⁵⁹ As with

54 Shear 1993: 386; *Agora* XII: 44.

55 Stroszeck 2017: 47–48.

56 Contra *Agora* v: 123: 'Use fillings generally contain large numbers of nearly complete vessels, predominantly those which had been designed for or adapted to use as water jars; broken household pottery, thrown into the well- or cistern-mouth instead of onto a more distant refuse heap, occurs in smaller quantities.' Cf. Lynch 2011: 15.

57 At Cetamura de Chianti in Etruria, several public wells were found with hefty layers of POU fill. These wells, however, as well as the bottom fill, was ritual in nature and much of the objects were deliberately thrown in for religious purposes. De Grummond 2015; 2020.

58 Shear 1993: 471–472.

59 Shear 1993: 449–451.

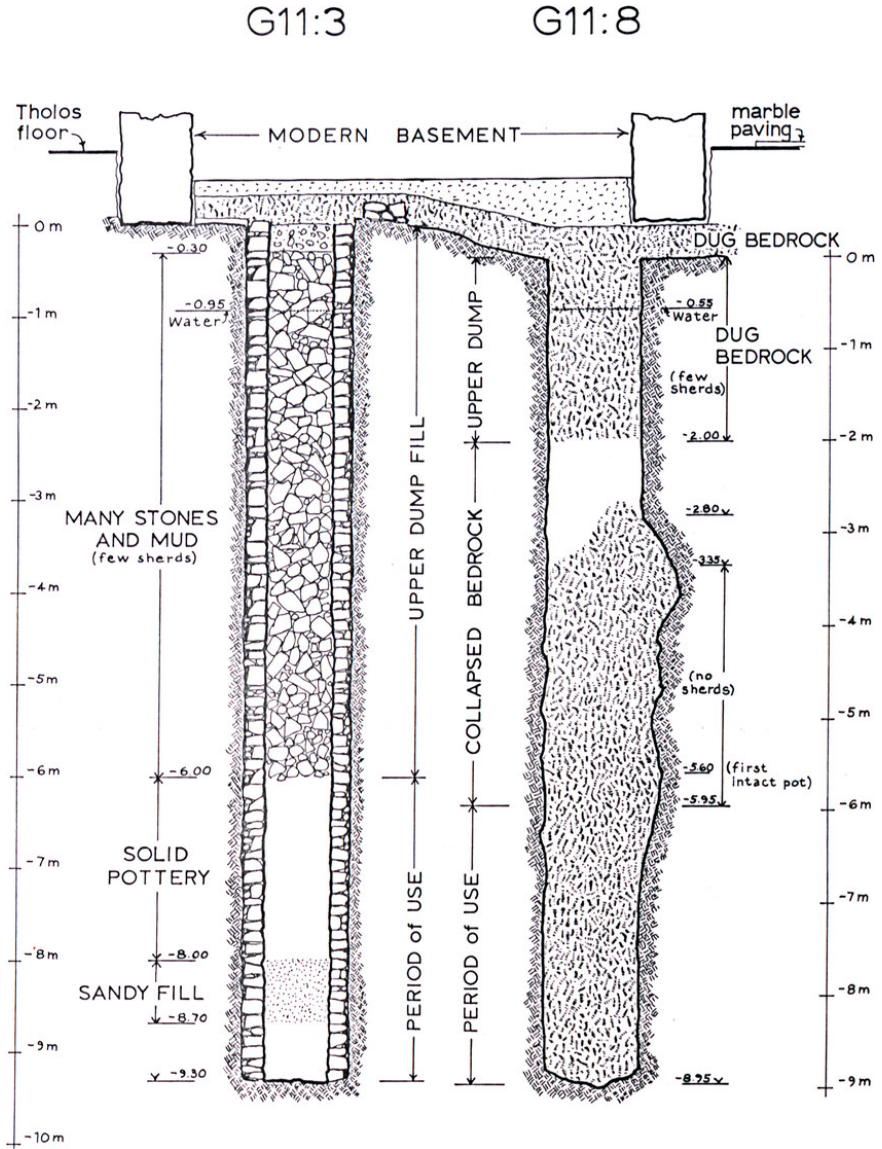


FIGURE 7.8 Cross-section of Well G 11:3 and G 11:8
 SHEAR 1993, P. 450, FIG. 8; COURTESY: AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL
 STUDIES AT ATHENS: AGORA EXCAVATIONS

Well R 12:4, many of the shapes within the POU layer(s) are not associated with well activities, such as pyxides, cups, psykters, dishes, saltcellars, lamps, spindle whorls, and loom weights.

Given what would have been a strong inclination to keep well water as fresh and free of contaminants as possible, it is best to assume that not all material found at the bottom of a well, even if found among whole water pots, is inevitably period-of-use material. In the case of the two wells discussed above, it is much more likely that roof tile fragments, strainers, lamps, loom weights and the like represent the first 'wheelbarrow' of material dumped in upon the closing of the well. In other words, it may be best to consider that the vast majority of 'POU' layers, as published in present catalogues, are in fact more likely layers that represent a comingling of true period-of-use pots and dumped material.⁶⁰ If so, this is an important consideration, given that the pots that are most securely considered period-of-use, such as whole *kadoi* and *hydriai*, are often dated by context, i.e., determined by the material within the supposed 'POU' layer that may ultimately have derived from a waste heap.⁶¹ As a result, we should perhaps be cautious before accepting any 'POU' dates provided in current catalogues until further studies of POU deposits are undertaken to distinguish and, if possible, independently date secure period-of-use material, such as intact *kadoi* that can reasonably be claimed to have been used for activities directly associated with a given well's active period.

4 The 479 Persian Destruction Horizon from a Modern Perspective

Zooming out a bit more, there are a few implications of this study for our understanding of the 479 Persian destruction horizon. While much of the evidence for this chronological horizon is found in well deposits, we should keep in mind that evidence of destruction debris within a well is not evidence of well destruction. Instead, the presence of so much Persian destruction debris in so many wells and other deposits reflects just how much material was available, sorted in waste heaps for re-use, due to Persian destruction of Athens. A recent parallel for such a situation is the 1940 bombing of Rotterdam.⁶²

On May 14, 1940, the German Luftwaffe's aerial assault on Rotterdam unleashed a devastating bombardment that transformed the city's heart into a

60 Cf. *Agora* XII: 44; Lynch 2011: 15.

61 See, e.g., *Agora* XII: 348–349, nos. 1595, 1601–1602. The same holds true for the *kadoi* found at the bottom of Well G 11:3; see nos. 1603–1604, 1610–1611.

62 Cf. the comparison with the destruction of Dubrovnik by Lynch in this volume.



FIGURE 7.9 Photograph of Rotterdam in the 1940s with rubble heaps still visible on the left

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smoldering ruin. The aftermath left behind vast masses of debris, covering an estimated 12 square kilometers. Initially, the debris was gathered and stored in temporary dumps and heaps scattered throughout Rotterdam (Fig. 7.9).⁶³ Most of the rubble was repurposed for landfilling, including the expansion of the city's waterfront.⁶⁴ Additionally, some of the debris was used to reclaim land from water in and around the city.⁶⁵ In this case, the debris was compacted and laid down in layers, and then covered with a layer of sand and clay. This process not only raised the land but also created a stable base for new housing and industrial developments. This innovative approach transformed the city's topography and provided sustainable uses for the debris.⁶⁶

Much of the five million cubic meters of assorted rubble was subdivided into different dumps by type: stone, wood, and metal. The stone was further sorted into 'coarse rubble, clean rubble, clinker rubble, reusable bricks and natural stone, such as marble and granite,' while metal was sorted into 'usable, reusable and scrap metal.'⁶⁷ It was then sold to the Ministry of Water Management and

63 Collectively, these heaps were known as *de puin* (the rubble) in Dutch, Robben 2021: 335–336.

64 Robben 2021: 331. Rubble was also deposited in several city canals and the Schie River. Cf. Roelofs 1989: 24.

65 E.g., the Bospolder-Tussendijken, Wehrmeijer 1993; Wagenaar 2003.

66 Robben 2021: 330, compares the efficiency of the Rotterdam cleaning operation with that of London, where 'much rubble was transported to dumping grounds or sunk thoughtlessly in the London Docks', only to be dredged up again later, cf. Woolven 2013, 67.

67 Robben 2021: 331. A total of 62,000 tons of iron were recorded and 'sorted into iron beams,

to construction companies throughout the Netherlands for a variety of uses, including: the reinforcement of dikes; the building up of land for airports, forest paths, and industrial areas; and the filling in of canals and rivers to create additional land for the building of residential areas throughout the country.⁶⁸

In the end, the cleanup of Rotterdam was a monumental undertaking, spanning decades. The initial removal of debris prioritized areas critical to the city's survival and functionality, such as the docks and transportation hubs. According to the 1941 Rotterdam Reconstruction Plan, the initial objective was to complete cleanup efforts by 1950.⁶⁹ In reality, another decade was needed to accomplish the bulk of the work. While the reconstruction of Rotterdam was officially declared finished in 1970, work on minor aspects of the destruction continues even today.

Like Rotterdam, the reconstruction of Athens was not merely a physical rebuilding process; it encompassed a broader transformation of the city's infrastructure, economy, and social fabric. The destruction of either city presented an opportunity for radical modernization. In Rotterdam, wide boulevards, modern public spaces, and new housing developments emerged, reflecting the city's ambition to embrace a new era. The management and re-use of debris from the Rotterdam bombardment was an integral part of the city's recovery. The debris, in fact, became a catalyst for transformation, shaping the city's physical and social landscape in the decades that followed.

In much the same way, the Persian destruction called for a rethinking of the ways in which the city—and especially its main axes, such as the Agora and Acropolis—was organized. There would have been no rush to 'dispose' of certain types of debris created by Persian destruction of Athens. Much—perhaps most—of the inorganic rubble and debris, carefully sorted and maintained, would have provided a wide variety of material available for re-use in various construction projects, including the filling of wells, as Athenians rebuilt and transformed their city following the Persian destruction of Athens. It is in the fills of these reconstruction projects, dating years and decades after the Persians left, that we find the 479 horizon.

short irons, and short and long rebars. The non-ferrous metals were zinc, lead, red and yellow copper, tin and aluminum.' A separate category consisted of stoves, heaters, radiators, gas, water and electricity meters, and water and gas pipes, van der Pauw 2006: 193.

68 Robben 2021: 331. Cf. Marlies Lageweg's Project DNA: <https://wederopbouwrotterdam.nl/artikelen/dna-rotterdam>.

69 This is the 'Stadsplan voor de Wederopbouw' or 'Plan Witteveen', which was commissioned a mere four days after the bombardment on May 18, 1940, and finished in four weeks. The final plan ('Basisplan van Van Traa') was formulated in 1946. Cf. www.wederopbouwrotterdam.nl.

5 Wells as Artefacts: The Depositional History of the Agora Wells beyond the Pottery

There is ample evidence that the wells were filled with material from salvage or repurpose heaps, sorted and maintained by kind for valuable re-use, perhaps principally for construction projects. As we discussed above, the stratigraphy of the wells allows us to recognize the specific nature of the primary depositional heaps, the contents of which were carted to the wells for filling in. The size and use of these heaps no doubt ebbed and flowed along with the building activities, but the Persian destruction of Athens resulted in the rapid creation of massive heaps of material for re-use. Heaps of pottery and other destruction deposits created in the aftermath of the Persian destruction are a securely attested feature of 18 of the 20 wells filled (all except F 19:4 and H 6:5) and sealed in the decades following the sack. We do not say anything new about the pottery or its chronology, relying instead on expert ceramicists, including the ones that have contributed to this volume. We do note, however, that the date ranges of the Persian destruction pottery found within wells often span a generation or two, which is no surprise. Just as today, not everyone would have had means, need, or interest in obtaining the newest shapes and styles of 480; decades of shapes would have been in active use at the time of the sack.⁷⁰

The wells in our catalogue (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2, Appendix, Fig. 7.10) are those that were closed in the Athenian Agora in the decades following the Athenian return to Athens after the Persian destruction, ca. 479–450. For the purpose of this chapter, we have not examined the wells on the north slope of the Acropolis, which were also excavated by the American School of Classical Studies and are discussed by Kathleen Lynch later in this volume.

Precisely when any of these wells—apart from G 11:3 mentioned above—would have been opened, and accordingly how long any would have been in active use, is not known, as the suggested period of use (POU) deposits are undependable (see above). Only in the case of G 11:3 can we suggest an opening date as it was presumably part of the temporary refurbishment of Building F after the sack (see below), when its predecessor G 11:8 was decommissioned (see catalogue). Stratigraphy, often the most reliable dating method, is generally unreliable in the case of wells, as surfaces are routinely scraped down in later periods, making it difficult to assess the original elevation of the well mouth.

⁷⁰ Cf. Lynch in this volume.

TABLE 7.1 Dates of the Agora wells closed ca. 479–450

	Closed	Opened	Under 5th-c. building	Figure
B 18:6	ca. 460		House D	
B 19:10	ca. 470		House C	
D 15:1	460s (?)			
D 17:10	450s?		Poros Building	
E 14:5	Ca. 480			
E 15:6	After 479			
F 19:4	Ca. 450			
F 19:5	Ca. 480			
G 6:3	470s or slightly later			
G 11:3	ca. 470	After 479	Tholos	7.8
G 11:8	ca. 470		Tholos	7.8
H 6:5	ca. 460 or later			
H 12:15	After 479		House of Simon	7.7
J 2:4	After 479		Classical House	
M 17:4	ca. 450			
Q 12:3	470s or 460s			
Q 21:3	460s (?)			
R 12:1	470s?			
R 12:4	After 479			7.6
U 19:2	After 479			

It is not unreasonable to assume, however, that those wells closed in the 470s were opened before the Persian sack and remained in use upon the return of the Athenians. On the other hand, it is not inconceivable that one or more of the wells closed in the 460s and 450s represent new wells dug to accommodate the returning Athenians, even when they were eventually closed with Persian destruction debris. Still, it is entirely possible that most if not all of the wells in this catalogue were opened before the sack and continued in operation for some time afterwards—as is also argued by Kathleen Lynch in this volume—until an immediate concern, such as a reorganization of the vicinity, or wall-collapse caused them to be decommissioned.

While dumps within wells can only provide evidence for a *terminus post quem* for a given well's closing, we are able to provide a more precise closing date when a well was closed to accommodate well-dated building projects. Indeed, nine wells in our catalogue (B 18:6; B 19:10; D 17:10; G 11:3; G 11:8; H 12:15;

TABLE 7.2 Contents of Agora well deposits (x = some evidence; xxx = abundant evidence)

	Pottery		Roof tiles	Potter's clay	Stones and mudbrick	Sanctuary material	Bedrock	Unfinished
	Pre-Persian	Post-Persian						
B 18:6	xxx	x	x			x	xxx	
B 19:10	xxx	x					xxx	
D 15:1	xxx	x				x		
D 17:10	xxx	?		xxx		?	xxx	
E 14:5	xxx					?		x
E 15:6	xxx			xxx	?			
F 19:4	x	xxx						
F 19:5	xxx		x	?		x		x
G 6:3	xxx	x	xxx		xxx	?		?
G 11:3	xxx	x	xxx		xxx	?		
G 11:8	xxx	x				?	xxx	
H 6:5		xxx		x				
H 12:15	xxx		xxx		xxx	x	xxx	
J 2:4	xxx						xxx	
M 17:4	xxx	x	x			x		
Q 12:3	xxx	x	xxx		xxx			
Q 21:3	xxx	x	x			x	xxx	
R 12:1	xxx		xxx			x	xxx	
R 12:4	xxx				xxx			
U 19:2	xxx			x				

J 2:4; M 17:4 and Q 21:3), are situated stratigraphically underneath a building that was constructed at some point between 470 and 450, thus giving us a *terminus ante quem* for the filling in of the well. It is only in these five cases that we can provide a complete chronological estimate for when the well was filled in, i.e. between the latest find in the dumped filling and the creation of a building over it.

Determining the latest datable feature in a deposit is less straightforward than it sounds. While the latest datable pottery provides crucial information in this regard, we have to keep in mind that deposits consist of much more than ceramics alone. The wells in our catalogue also include other evidence that has been directly associated with the Persian destruction including a plethora of rooftiles, rubble, mudbrick, and sanctuary debris.

Rooftiles are fairly common in Agora deposits in general, but they abound in some of the wells that contain destruction debris. Nine wells contain rooftiles (B 18:6; F 19:5; G 6:3; G 11:3; H 12:15; M17:4; Q 12:3; Q21:3; R 12:1).⁷¹ Stones and

⁷¹ A 'significant sampling of this was kept', Shear 1993, 401. In five of these case (G 6:3; G 11:3;

mudbrick are a fairly common feature in the wells and add to the distinct destruction-quality of these wells (e.g., E 15:6; G 11:3; G 11:8; H 12:15; Q 12:3; R 12:4, cf. Figs. 7.6, 7.7, 7.8). In addition to pottery, tiles, rubble, and mudbrick, Shear has suggested that dumps of potter's clay were accessed for the filling of Wells D 17:10, E 15:6, H 6:5, U 19:5 and perhaps F 19:5.⁷² None of this clay has been kept by the excavators. Given that clay meant for firing does not expire or 'go bad'—and was thus potentially suitable for reuse—we wonder whether any of these 'clay dumps' in reality represent mudbrick dumps.⁷³ Alternatively, a fine 'clay' deposit could result from natural runoff bringing mud into a well, especially if the well's curbing was no longer in place.⁷⁴

Sanctuary debris, including votive figurines, the vast majority of which clearly originates from the Eleusinion, is also a feature in most of the wells, indicating that sanctuary heaps were an important source for re-use in construction projects.⁷⁵ Yet another possibility could be that terracotta and other material from sanctuaries were added to existing terracotta heaps in the city. While sanctuary material has been found in wells from earlier periods, it is an almost standard feature in the wells closed in the three decades after the sack—sixty percent contains one or more fragments—suggesting that the Athenians faced a massive cleanup of their sanctuaries in the lower city, as they did on the Acropolis. Smashed terracottas must have abounded and added to existing heaps of trash. It should be noted that this practice, which was not limited to the emergency circumstances in the decades after the sack, runs counter to the orthodox belief that votive gifts must remain within sacred premises.⁷⁶

The most obvious 'missing' element from the wells is monumental stone architecture—the only exceptions seem to be two terracotta antefix fragments from well H 12:15.⁷⁷ Perhaps such material made more sense to reuse as build-

H 12:15; Q 12:3; R 12:1), enough was kept to fill up to five large storage containers (see catalogue).

72 E.g., Shear 1993: 403 notes that E 15:6 included a 'mass of pure clay, 1.50 m deep,' while D 17:10 included a 'similar dump of potter's clay, about 3.50 m deep'; cf. p. 436, fig. 6 and p. 440, fig. 7.

73 Cf. Lynch 2011: 23 n. 51. For H 12:15, Mudbrick could, but does not have to, contain small fragments of much earlier pottery, i.e. residual sherds mixed into the brick at the time of making.

74 The 'potter's clay' in a pit behind the Stoa of Zeus seems to have been ordinary silt deposited through natural infiltration. See Thompson 1937: 19–20 for the deposit; Monaco 2000: 48; Filleres, Harbottle and Sayre 1983: 60 for the analysis. We thank Susan Rotroff for bringing this to our attention.

75 See nn. 46–47 (esp. n. 47), above.

76 Laughy 2018: 654–656, with bibliography.

77 Inv. nos. A 2296 and A2345.

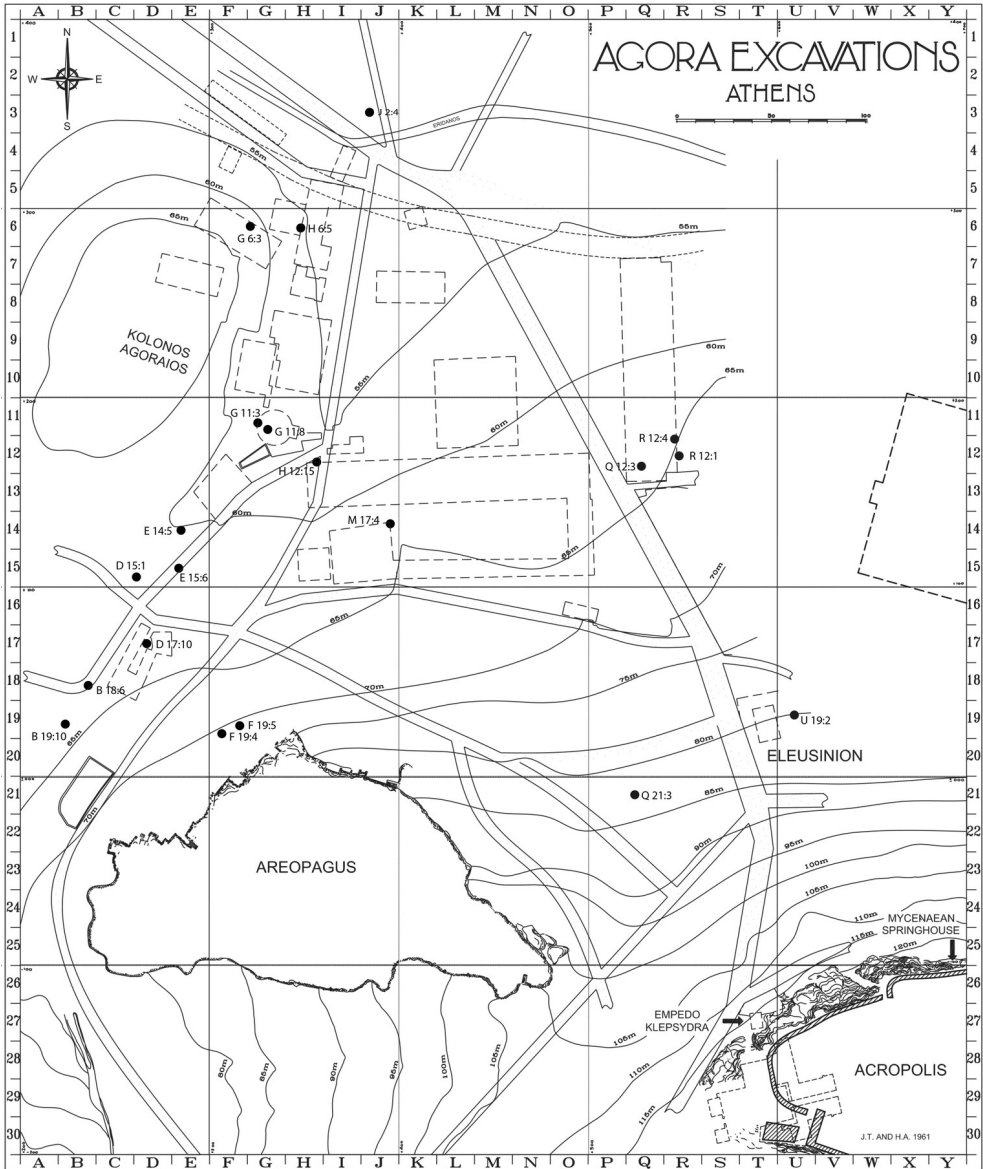


FIGURE 7.10 State plan of the Athenian Agora excavations—indicated are the 20 wells of the catalogue BY FLORIS VAN DEN EIJNDE, BASED ON A PLAN FROM THE AGORA ARCHIVES; COURTESY: AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS: AGORA EXCAVATIONS

ing material, e.g., in the hastily constructed Themistoclean wall (Thuc. 1.90–91). Nevertheless, several of the non-well deposits discussed by Shear do include stone architecture. Its absence in the wells supports the view that most of them were not backfilled immediately upon the Athenians' return, likely because they had not been decommissioned yet. When they were finally backfilled, the relatively rare, drafted blocks had already been reused.⁷⁸

That said, not all material is easily identified with the destruction of the city. For instance, the large quantity of dumped bedrock seems like a strange component in a destruction deposit. Bedrock is often associated with well collapse.⁷⁹ A closer look at the descriptions in the notebooks, literature and cross-sections reveals that it is possible only in one instance (D 17:10) to connect the bottom layer of bedrock with actual wall collapse.⁸⁰ However, five wells include substantial fillings of *dumped* bedrock.⁸¹ Altogether dumped bedrock is a feature of nine wells (B 18:6, B 19:10, D 17:10, G 11:8, J 2:4, H 12:15, Q 21:3, R 12:1, and U 19:2, cf. Figs. 7.7 and 7.8), either in distinct layers or in quantities far too great to be the result of well wall collapse. Furthermore, significant dumps of field stones, perhaps also collected during grading or other projects, are a feature of four wells: J 2:4, Q 12:3, R 12:4, U 19:2, and F 19:4. Such quantities of stones and bedrock can only have come from large-scale grading projects which would not have been of primary concern to the Athenians when they were trying to reinhabit their city. First, the city needed to be cleaned up. This would have included cleaning existing and digging new wells to ensure access to water for the mass repopulation of the city. Secondly, those buildings that permitted it would have been temporarily fixed up before enough resources could be made available to create a more durable solution. It was not until years—or in some instances even decades—later that new building projects could be undertaken.

Building F provides a good example of this scheme. It is clear that it was repaired in the immediate aftermath of the occupation.⁸² Some of the building blocks with finished surfaces were presumably reused in the fortifications. A layer of stone chips, however, shows that a part of the building itself, notably

78 Arthur Parsons (1943: 207) did find building blocks of poros and Acropolis limestone in one of the wells on the north slope of the Acropolis (T 25:2), which suggests that this well may have been backfilled soon after 479, when such material was still readily at hand. Cf. Lynch in this volume, p. 247 n. 73, who also mentions a chimney pot in T 24:3.

79 Shear 1993: 386, 403–404. In the case of B 18:6, which is in our opinion wrongly identified as a Geometric well, the bottom half of the shaft was filled with bedrock which is considered to represent well collapse (Shear 1993: 430, fig. 5).

80 Cf. Shear 1993: fig. 6.

81 Cf. Shear 1993: 403.

82 Thompson 1940: 33; Shear 1993: 424–425. Cf. *Agora* XIV: 27–29.

the colonnaded, courtyard, was immediately rebuilt. Around a decade after the destruction of the building, its repaired remnants were demolished to make place for a more permanent solution in the form of the Tholos.

The example of Building F shows that buildings (and their wells!) could continue to function for a while before a radical new design was decided upon. The wells that belonged to these buildings could therefore have remained in use for one or more decades before they were filled in. At that time, the radical reshaping of the city would have been underway and grading operations to create space for monumental building projects had created large bedrock heaps in addition to the already existing piles of rubble. Thus, it stands to reason that the wells with dug bedrock were not among the first to have been filled but were rather decommissioned a decade or more after the Persians destroyed the city.

Besides bedrock, grading operations undertaken to level a future building site would have caused previous stratigraphy to be overhauled, resulting in secondary dumps containing much earlier material. This explains why some wells exhibit a fair amount of such material, while others do not. Some of these grading operations could have been related to building activities in and around the Athenian Agora. Major landscaping operations were undertaken beginning around 470 and into the 460s and 450s, first for the construction of the Tholos and then for the construction of the Stoa Poikile. The Agora *destruction* deposits simultaneously represent the *creation* of something new.⁸³

6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined those wells in the Athenian Agora that were filled in the decades following the Persian destruction of the lower town of Athens in 479. The wells were filled with material from Athenian destruction deposits, including pottery, roof tiles, mudbrick, and sanctuary debris. The Athenians naturally reused readily available materials for their construction projects in the aftermath of the destruction; the filling in of wells was no exception. The scarcity of monumental stone fragments within the wells suggests, however, that its reuse was prioritized for the construction of the fortifications, which required immediate attention. It also suggests that the filling in of any failed wells was not the first priority when the Athenians returned. Heaps of destruction debris, presumably sorted to a degree as to their contents, would have been available for reuse for decades to come.

83 Cf. Papadopoulos 2003: 297.

While a precise dating of the period in which these wells were in use is difficult to obtain, many of the wells likely remained in use for a while after the Persian sack. The presence in certain wells of large quantities of field stones, bedrock and pockets of substantially earlier pottery is indicative of large-scale grading operations. Large-scale grading projects were not undertaken immediately after the sack and can only be associated with building projects that took place from the later 470s onwards. Such projects include the Tholos, and the Stoa Poikile, as well as the new domestic are that emerged in the southwestern part of the Agora.

Besides serving as testament of the Persian destruction, the wells offer a valuable insight into the Athenians' reconstruction efforts. The filling in of the wells reflects the radical transformation and modernization of the city. The materials found within them reveal the variable nature of destruction deposits and the changing priorities of disposing of them. Together, they point to a deliberate but pragmatic approach to rebuilding the city, utilizing available materials while prioritizing immediate needs and adapting to evolving plans over the course of several decades.

7 Appendix: Athenian Agora Well Catalogue

MWT Modern Water Table (at time of excavation)⁸⁴
 POU Period of Use
 NFE Not Fully Excavated

B 18:6

Depth: -5.80 m

Diam.: 1.20 m

MWT: -2.75 m

Closed: ca. 460 (?)

Literature: *Hesperia* XX 1951: 144–145, 218, 289, fig. 7; *Agora* VIII: 125; Camp 1977: 198; *Agora* XII: 385; *Agora* XXIII: 329; Shear 1993: 430–433; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: Originally thought to have been used in the LG period and then filled up in the decades before the Persian destruction (*Hesperia* XX; *Agora*

84 We have provided the modern water table for wells when known or recorded, though these levels must be treated with extreme caution. The relationship between the modern and ancient water table is unknown, and we must keep in mind that the wells in this catalogue were excavated in different years and at different seasons; B 18:6, for example, was excavated in the spring of 1949, while B 19:10 was excavated in the drier summer climate of 1947. The current water table has also been affected by modern drainage and building projects.

VIII; Camp, Shear: 430). It is, however, unlikely that this well was left open for more than two centuries, and what little LG material was retrieved from the lower part of the well must already have been contained in that part of the dump (mostly bedrock) when it was created. This may well have been a result of landscaping efforts in the years after the Persian destruction, as is also suggested by the large amount of bedrock in the dumped material. Both Shear (414–415) and Lynch speak of a ‘delayed well’ (cf. also Lynch in this volume). To the post-Persian period belong a Type C cup (P 19388: Shear: 432; *Agora* XII, no. 413: ca. 480–450; cf. Lynch in this volume, p. 248) and a *vicup* (Shear: 432; cf. *Agora* XII, no. 434: ca. 475; cf. Lynch in this volume, p. 248), a *lekaneis* (Shear: 432: ring foot, cf. *Agora* XII, no. 1551, ca. 490–450) and a griddle (Shear: 432: rim, cf. *Agora* XII, no. 1983, ca. 460–440). One piece, a projecting rim fragment from a tub, is compared to a late fifth-century example (Shear: 432; cf. *Agora* XII, no. 1848). Some rooftiles and sanctuary debris was found among the fills. The bulk of the material, however, dates to the decades before the Persian destruction (*Agora* XII; XXIII; Lynch). Just before the middle of the fifth century, a house (‘House D’) was built over it (*Hesperia* XX), marking the terminus for the closing of the well.

B 19:70

Depth: –8.60 m

Diam.: 1.00 m

MWT: –1.50–2.00 m

Closed: ca. 470 (?)

Literature: *Hesperia* XX 1951, 189, 208–209, fig. 7; *Agora* XII: 385; Camp 1977: 198; *Agora* XXII: 329; Shear 1993: 433–434; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: The dumped material is generally agreed to date to the decades before the Persian destruction (*Agora* XII, XXIII, Camp, Shear, Lynch), although it has some earlier infiltrations, perhaps pointing to a landscaping operation nearby. Post-Persian is the lekane with ‘a broader rim and less tightly rolled’ (Lynch in this volume, p. 248) Pottery was mostly retrieved from the upper 1.50 m of the mostly bluish-grey dumped fill. Shear (p. 433, fig. 5) compares a bean-parcher from this deposit to one that is dated to 420–400 (cf. *Agora* XII, no. 1987), which is clearly an anomaly since the well was closed before the construction of ‘House C’ at some time before the middle of the fifth century (*Hesperia* XX). The deposit consists almost entirely of bedrock, suggesting extensive landscaping in the wider area of the Agora. The closing of this well may therefore not have happened before the end of the 470s, when the most urgent removal of debris had taken place and new projects were begun that required large-scale landscaping.

D 15:1

Depth: -9.85 m

Diam.: 1.10 m

MWT: -8.50 m

Closed: 460s (?)

Literature: *Agora* v: 124; *Agora* XII: 387; Camp 1977: 199; *Agora* XXII: 330; Shear 1993: 434-435; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: The upper part of this deposit collapsed into a second, Roman well (D 15:2) when the latter was constructed. The lower dumped fill begins at -6.50 m and continues from the fill that had collapsed into the Roman well. The deposit is described as 'an accumulation of the late sixth century to ca. 480, including several ostraka of the 480s' (*Agora* XII, 387, cf. XXIII; Camp; Shear; Lynch). A *vicup* is dated ca. 475 (cf. *Agora* XII, no. 434, Lynch in this volume, p. 248). A *lopas* fragment (P 11056) is compared by Shear to one that is dated to 470-460 (cf. *Agora* XII, no. 1971). These could be intrusions from the period when the well was filled in with material from a cleanup heap consisting of Persian destruction debris. Sanctuary material is among the fill, as well as a number of official weights: B 492, 495 and 497 (*Agora* x: 25-26, nos. BW1-3). The well itself has not been associated stratigraphically with a building (cf. Camp).

D 17:10

Depth: -6.10 m (NFE)

Diam.: 1.50 m

MWT: -2.00

Closed: 450s?

Literature: *Hesperia* XX 1951: 174; *Agora* XII: 388; Camp 1977: 199; *Agora* XXII: 330; Shear 1993: 434-435; *Agora* XXX: 361; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: The main pottery assemblage in this deposit is universally dated to 520-480 and thought to belong to the Persian destruction cleanup. The upper few centimeters is thought to represent a small supplementary filling, which was added ca. 450 (*Agora* XII, nos. 1515, 1866, Shear: 438). However, since the 'Poros Building' provides a *terminus ante quem* for the filling in of the well (*Hesperia* XX: 179), this 'supplementary' fill could alternatively point to a later infiltration of the primary deposit. Besides the destruction debris, the dumped fill consists of 'potter's clay' (below -2.60; mudbrick?) and much bedrock from top to -1.40 m (Shear: 438, fig. 6). The latter could point to landscaping projects taking place in the 470s and 460s, which also explains the presence of some PG, LG, and PA pottery (Shear: 436). Sanctuary material is among the fill. Also, a 'mass of very adhesive, sticky pot-

ter's clay with very few sherds', (Shear: 436, cf. 403). Excavation was abandoned at -6.10 m because of wall collapse. The so-called 'Poros Building' dating to 450 marks the *terminus* before which the well was filled in (*Hesperia*).

E 14:5

Depth: -5.50 m

Diam.: 0.995 m (top); 0.58 (bottom)

MWT: -

Closed: Ca. 480

Literature: *Agora* XII: 388; Camp 1977: 199; *Agora* XXII: 330; Shear 1993: 439-440; *Agora* XXX: 36; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: Unfinished well shaft. The well was apparently only partially dug through bedrock and had to be reinforced on south and east sides with rough limestone blocks to prevent collapse. This was nevertheless in vain. Dumped filling is dated to 520-480, with a preponderance in of 500-490 (*Agora* XII). That this well contains several good comparisons with other Persian destruction material (Shear, pp. 399-401) and contains a large proportion of relatively complete pots (p. 439) argues for a closing date somewhat after 479—i.e. together with Shear's other post-Persian wells—but this is not a certainty. Since an unfinished well like this would have been filled in quite quickly after the construction effort had been abandoned, it could theoretically have been dug *and* filled in either closely before or after the Persian destruction.

E 15:6

Depth: -9.70 m

Diam.: 1.10 m

MWT: -2.20 m

Closed: After 479

Literature: *Agora* IV: 238; *Agora* XII: 389; Camp 1977: 199; *Agora* XXII: 331; Shear 1993: 440, 442; *Agora* XXX: 361-362; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: Limited evidence for POU (*Agora* XII: 389; 500-480). Dumped fill dates down to 480 (*Agora* IV, XII). Ostraka from the 480s. Some Hellenistic disturbance. Clay layer from -6.00-9.00 m could be from potter's workshop (Camp; Shear: 403) or alternatively represent mudbrick. Mudbrick is no doubt meant in case of the 'mud and stone' mentioned for the 'POU' fill (Shear, 440). Sanctuary material is in the fill.

F 19:4

Depth: -11.40 m

Diam.: 1.00 m

MWT: -5.30 m

Closed: Ca. 450

Literature: *Agora* XII: 390; Camp 1977: 213; *Agora* XXII: 331.

Discussion: Much household pottery dated to 490–450. As most material seems to date post-479, the dumped filling does not seem to belong to the Persian destruction and is therefore not included in Shear and Lynch. It may, however, have been dug immediately after F 19:5 (Camp), which could not be finished and should be dated around 480. Sanctuary material is among the fill.

F 19:5

Depth: -3.05 m

Diam.: 0.85 m

MWT: -

Closed: Ca. 480

Literature: *Agora* IV: 239; *Agora* XII: 390; Camp 1977: 200; *Agora* XXII: 331; Shear 1993: 442–444; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: Unfinished well shaft. The dump contains material dated to 520–480 (*Agora* XII, though *Agora* IV dates it into the 460s). Some roof tiles and sanctuary debris was found among the fills. Like E14:5, which was also unfinished, this well could have been dug *and* filled slightly before or after 480–479.

G 6:3

Depth: -19.50 m

Diam.: 1.20–2.40 m

MWT: -16.00

Closed: 470s or slightly later

Literature: *Hesperia* II 1933: 456–461, figs. 5–10; *Hesperia* VII 1938: 363–411, figs. 1–49; *Hesperia* XV, 1946: 265–336, pls. 25–69; *Agora* XII: 390; Camp 1977: 200; *Agora* XXII: 331; Shear 1993: 442–444; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: The so-called 'Rectangular Rock-Cut Shaft'. Deficient well that probably went out of use soon after it was dug, either because it caved in (Shear) or because it produced too little water (*Hesperia* VII: 365). Contains an upper and a lower dump belonging to two distinct periods, separated by roughly one generation. The lower dump (-12.00 m to bottom) contains material that belongs to ca. 575–535, but it is the upper dump (top to -

12.00 m), dated to ca. 510–480, that concerns us here. This dump contains a *vicup* dated to the 470s or even 460s (Cf. Lynch in this volume, p. 248). For a discussion of the ostraka in the upper deposit, see Lynch in this volume, pp. 238–240. The well deposits yielded 5 storage containers worth of rooftiles (Shear 1993: 401, 449). The deposition of the two dumps is somewhat puzzling. While it is conjectured that the lower dump gradually filled in, this scenario leaves the shaft open from ca. 575–479, when it was filled in with Persian destruction debris (upper fill). If so, its location on the northeast slope of the Kolonos Agoraios, away from major traffic, may have played a role in this. Some sanctuary material. From –4.85 m to –7.30 m, the fill consisted completely of crushed bedrock without any pottery (Shear: 454) supporting a date at the end of the 470s or later.

G 11:3 (Fig. 7.8)

Depth: –9.30 m

Diam.: 0.70 m

MWT: –0.95 m

Opened: After 479

Closed: Ca. 470

Literature: *Agora* XII: 390–391; Camp 1977: 200; *Agora* XXII: 332; Shear 1993: 449–451; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: The well is stone-lined with polygonal masonry of Acropolis limestone. It is the second well belonging to Building F, the predecessor of the Tholos and succeeds G 11:8 (Fig. 7.8). According to Shear: 449, the lowest 3.30 meters of the fill consists of POU material, within which is a band of 0.70 m of nearly sterile sandy fill. However, many of the shapes within the so-called POU layers are not associated with well activities and most likely represent dumped material, such as *pyxides*, cups, *psykters*, dishes, saltcellars, lamps, spindle whorls, and loom weights. The well figures among the ‘delayed’ wells (Shear: 414–415; cf. Lynch in this volume, pp. 250–251. The dumped fill has a few post-Persian pieces, including a skyphos fragment (P 12769 = *Agora* XXIII, no. 1542, dated ca. 480–470) and a *louterion* fragment (P 12751 = *Agora* XII, no. 1859, dated ca. 480–470). The well deposits yielded two storage containers worth of rooftiles (Shear: 451). The upper dumped fill (top 6 m), consisted ‘entirely of tumbled field stones and thick mud, with very little pottery’, (Shear: 451) This was followed by solid pottery and sandy fill. Some sanctuary material. If indeed, this well replaced G 11:8, which had collapsed, it may have been constructed *after* the Persian destruction; that is if some aspect of Building F requiring fresh water remained functioning. Both wells appear to have been closed together to make way for the construction of the Tholos, ca. 470. If so, this well may have been in use only for several years.

G 11:8 (Fig. 7.8)

Depth: -8.95 m

Diam.: 0.95 m

MWT: -0.55 m

Closed: ca. 470

Literature: *Agora* VIII: 127; *Agora* XII: 392; *Agora* XXII: 332; Shear 1993: 451–453; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: This well shaft was sunk in soft, greenish bedrock and put out of use by the collapse of the rock walls and replaced by well G 11:3 (Fig. 7.8). This is the earlier of two wells belonging to Building F, the predecessor of the Tholos, (cf. Thompson 1940: 25, 28–30). According to Shear, the lowest 3.00 m of the fill consists of POU material. Nine pots are associated with this layer, the latest a *kados* dated 520–480. The rest of the pots date middle to late sixth century. Since the well was finally closed and filled some years after the Persian sack, the proposed POU would necessitate that the well would have remained open for a decade or two before finally being filled in. The same layer of bedrock and reddish clay from disintegrated mud brick (with 'clear traces of burning') that also formed the upper fill of G 11:3 and much of the surrounding courtyard (Shear: 404). The lower fill of bedrock must be dug as well, not collapsed wall material as suggested by Shear (pp. 451–452). Some sanctuary material. The deposit contains a single 'late' fragment, a rim of a banded one-handler (cf. *Agora* XII: 741, dated ca. 475–450; Shear: 414 n. 83, 470s). In any case, the well was filled before the construction of the Tholos and may thus have remained open for several years after having been decommissioned.

H 6:5

Depth: -8.95 m

Diam.: 0.95 m

MWT: –

Closed: ca. 460 or later

Literature: *Hesperia* V 1936: 333–354; *Hesperia* VI 1937: 15–17; *Agora* XII: 392; Camp 1977: 215; *Agora* XXII: 332; *Agora* XXX: 363.

Discussion: This well was filled with a homogeneous dump dated to 470–460 (*Agora* XII, XXI; XXX; Camp). Not discussed by Shear—as the fill is post-Persian—this well nevertheless may have been in use during the Persian occupation.

H 12:75 (Fig. 7.7)

Depth: -12.25 m

Diam.: 1.15 m

MWT: -1.75 m

Closed: After 479

Literature: *Hesperia* XXIII 1954: 51–54; *Agora* XII: 393; Camp 1977: 201; *Agora* XXII: 332; Shear 1993: 453; *Agora* XXX: 363; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: This is the first well in the 'House of Simon' (cf. *Hesperia* XXIII). Stone lined at the top (Camp). The *POU* and the dump of this well are dated 520–480 (*Agora* XII, XXIII, XXX, Camp, Shear). According to Shear, the *POU* material consists of all shapes within the lowest 0.65 m of the well. Some shapes certainly may represent well activities, such as the drawing of water with *hydriai* and *kadoi*, but certainly many—if not the bulk—of the material within this layer represents dumped material, such as a miniature, a lamp, and a variety of cup shapes that are all represented in dumped fills above. The dump also contained a mudbrick (Shear: 454, fig. 7) as well as a 'mass of stones and broken roof tiles, comprising a depth of 1.15 m' (p. 401), one storage container of which was kept (p. 455). Sanctuary material completes the picture of clean-up debris. The position of this well underneath the 'House of Simon' means that it was closed before the house overlaying it was built, perhaps around the middle of the fifth century, when houses begin to appear in the SW corner of the Agora.

J 2:4

Depth: -5.80 m

Diam.: ca. 1.00 m

MWT: -0.70 m

Closed: After 479

Literature: Lynch 2011.

Discussion: The well was cut through fill on the northern side and into soft, gray bedrock on all other sides. The shaft had a fieldstone lining, preserved to a height of ca. 1 m below the top. The northwestern side of the shaft, including some stone lining and bedrock, caved in, perhaps as a result of the destruction of the house to which it belonged, or else during the filling in operation. The stratigraphy of the well consists of six distinguishable levels. In her exhaustive discussion of this well and its contents, Lynch has argued that the bottom-most fill belongs to its period of use deposit (Lynch, fig. 8.5 and Tables 8.1 and 8.2), while the 'pottery from the upper five levels represents fill deposited intentionally soon after the Persian destruction of Athens.' Joins of fragments between all the dumped levels confirm that the fill is one

depositional event, and it is striking that even the bottom layer contained joins with the layer above it. As this layer contains a great number of objects not normally expected in a fill created during the well's use (i.e. lamps, a *thymiatērion*, *lekythoi*, a loom weight, lead sheet and two figurines), it is not inconceivable that it was created together with layers above. Fine wares from the deposit indicate that the dumped fill 'formed soon after 479' (Lynch: 23). A definite *terminus ante quem* for the filling in is posed by the reconstruction of the house in the second quarter of the fifth century.

M 17:4

Depth: -2.50 m

Diam.: 2.00 m

MWT: -

Closed: Ca. 450

Literature: *Agora* XII: 394; Camp 1977: 217; *Agora* XXII: 333; *Agora* XXX: 365; Shear 1993: 461-464; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: This is either a large pit, or a shallow, unfinished well (*Agora* XII).

It is ranked among the 'delayed' wells for Shear and Lynch (cf. Lynch in this volume pp. 250-251). It contains pottery dating from 520 and later, including several post-Persian items: two red-figure cup fragments (P9271 = *Agora* XXX, no. 1442, dated ca. 450-440, cf. Lynch in this volume, n. 92; P 9282 = *Agora* XXX, no. 1430, dated ca. 470) as well as a one-handler (Shear: 414 n. 83). Some earlier ware, perhaps indicating landscaping waste. Some roof tiles and sanctuary material.

Q 12:3

Depth: -8.50 m

Diam.: 1.10 m

MWT: -

Closed: 470s or 460s

Literature: *Agora* XII: 397; Camp 1977: 203; *Agora* XXII: 335; *Hesperia* LV 1986: 1-74; Shear 1993: 468; *Agora* XXX: 366; Lynch 2011: 22; Matter and Rotroff in this volume.

Discussion: So-called 'Stoa Gutter Well', excavated underneath the gutter in front of the Stoa of Attalos. Dump material mostly dates to 520-490 (*Agora* XII; cf. Matter and Rotroff) but is generally consistent with the Persian destruction material (Matter and Rotroff) and contains roof tiles (Shear, 468). The contents are thought to represent the contents of a pottery shop. Two cups and a globular lekythos represent potential outliers among the assemblage (P 31293 = *Hesperia* LV, no. 20, dated ca. 480; cf. *Agora* XII,

no. 440, dated ca. 480–460; P 31294 = *Hesperia* LV, no. 21, dated ca. 480; cf. *Agora* XII, no. 440, dated ca. 480–460; for the lekythos, see Lynch in this volume: p. 248). These must represent infiltrations connected with the period before the cleanup heap was thrown into the well. A storage container worth of broken rooftiles was kept (Shear, 468).

Q 21:3

Depth: –8.50 m

Diam.: 1.10 m

MWT: –7.25 m

Closed: 460s (?)

Literature: *Hesperia* XLII 1973: 148 (plan); Camp 1977: 219; Shear 1993: 468; Lynch 2011: 22

Discussion: This well is situated west of the Eleusinion. It is not clear whether it was ever used (Camp). Shear: 468, notes *POU* material in the lower 0.20 m of fill, though the only shapes he identified are a cup and saltcellar. Much sanctuary material, though only ten pieces were inventoried, dating from the late sixth century onward. A stemless cup (P 28779, cf. *Agora* XII, 469: 480–470) and a one-handler (P 29363, cf. *Agora* XII, no. 748: 475–450) are the latest pieces. It is thus plausibly ranked among the so-called ‘delayed’ wells (Shear: 414–415; Lynch; cf. Lynch in this volume pp. 250–251). The lower part of the dump contains field stones and mudbrick (Shear: 464, fig. 9), while the upper fill down to –7.25 m consists of solid dug bedrock (Shear: 468). The fieldstones and bedrock especially support a ‘delayed’ date, possibly in the 460s. The overlying fourth century *andrōn* (*Hesperia*) is too late to have caused the well’s filling in. Some rooftiles.

R 12:7

Depth: –10.80 m

Diam.: –

MWT: –

Closed: 470s?

Literature: *Agora* VIII: 131; *Agora* XII: 398; Camp 1977: 204; *Agora* XXII: 335 Shear 1993: 469–471; *Agora* XXX: 366; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: The fill of this well consisted of two dumps. The upper fill (top to –7.00 m) was solid bedrock with no sherds, corresponding to a major landscaping operation, which seems to suggest a closing date not earlier than the middle to late 470s. The lower fill consists of much good figured and glazed pottery, dated ca. 520–480 (*Agora* XII; XXIII; XXX). The upper 7 m of fill contained ‘nothing but dug bedrock, with no sherds’, while the fill below

consisted almost completely of stones and mud[brick?] (Shear: 471, fig. 10). Figurines of a seated goddess (T 3410–3412) and much rooftiles, a storage container of which was saved (Shear, 471). The excavation report notes that 'at the bottom were a few fragmentary water jars indicating a brief period of use' and 'a quantity of animal bones, mostly skulls of oxen.'

R 12:4 (Fig. 7.6)

Depth: –13.25 m

Diam.: 1.20 m

MWT: –

Closed: After 479

Literature: *Hesperia* XXV 1956: 62–64; *Agora* XII: 398; Camp 1977: 204; *Agora* XXII: 335; Shear 1993: 471–472; Lynch 2011: 22.

Discussion: Situated underneath Shop III of the Stoa of Attalos. Originally, the well must have been somewhat deeper since the bedrock was cut down to accommodate the stoa. The upper 11 m was filled in with a solid dump of field stones and earth (*Hesperia* XXV). This presumably represents a dump of material that had already been carefully sorted from destruction debris. The lower 2.25 m consisted of 'mud[brick?], masses of pottery, especially water pots, of which many are complete. No evidence for stratification in period of use' (Shear). Terracotta figurines of seated figures (T 3403–3407; similar to those found in R 14:3, cf. Camp) represent waste from a sanctuary, likely the Eleusinion.

U 19:2

Depth: –6.60 m

Diam.: 1.10 m

MWT: –

Closed: After 479

Literature: *Agora* XII: 399; Camp 1977: 206; *Agora* XXI: 336; *Agora* XXXI: 177–179.

Discussion: Within the peribolos of the Eleusinion, east of the Archaic temple. This is not one of Shear's Persian Destruction Deposits, even though its deposit is generally dated in the early fifth century (Camp; *Agora* XXXI). A supplementary fill was added in the mid-fifth century (*Agora* XXXI). Some sanctuary material. Fill contained field stones and clay (or mudbrick?).

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Persian Destruction Deposits from the Athenian Agora Excavations: Pottery Chronology and Its Challenges

Kathleen M. Lynch

1 Introduction¹

This chapter complements other contributions in this volume in assessing the confidence of a ‘ca. 480 BCE’ date for the formation of closed deposits excavated by the Athenian Agora Excavations.² The focus here is on the use of these deposits in establishing the chronology of Athenian pottery. The benchmark of the Persian destruction of the city of Athens in 479 and its subsequent clean-up looms especially large for the typo-chronology of Athenian ceramics. The prevalence of closed deposits, especially abundant abandoned wells, allowed researchers to seriate fills and their contents according to their closing date.³ The deposits associated with the clean-up following the 479 destruction form a crucial rung on the ladder of Late Archaic Attic fineware chronology especially because absolute dating through coins, stamped amphora handles, or scientific techniques is not available, and, as we will see below, dating by ostraka

1 I thank Janric van Rookhuijzen for the invitation to participate in this important conference, and Stephen Matter, Susan Rotroff, Michael Laughy, and Floris van den Eijnde for their kind collaboration and excellent discussions about the archaeology of the Athenian Agora. I thank the directors of the Athenian Agora Excavations past and present, John McK. Camp, II and John Papadopoulos, for permission to study pottery from the Persian destruction clean-up deposits. The anonymous reviewer also provided valuable inspiration for reorganization and clarification, for which I am grateful.

2 This chapter and that of Stephen Matter and Susan Rotroff in this volume complement each other in a review of the chronology of Persian destruction clean-up deposits excavated by the Athenian Agora Excavations with a focus on ceramic evidence from the deposits. The chapter of Michael Laughy and Floris van den Eijnde in this volume further investigates the formation processes of Athenian wells filled with debris around the time of the second Persian invasion of Greece.

3 On seriation: Banning 2020: 300–316. The use of wells and pits to create artifact seriation contrasts with most excavations which use stratigraphy, accumulated layers of fill, to do the same; see Banning 2020: 317–326.

can be complicated.⁴ The Agora typo-chronology publications, in turn, form a touchstone for ceramic chronologies and archaeological dating throughout the Mediterranean because Athenians exported their exceptionally fine pottery in abundance during this period.⁵ For these reasons, it is important to understand how we use the destruction date to date both the formation of the deposits and their ceramic contents.

In his 1993 holistic study of Persian destruction deposits from the Athenian Agora Excavations, T. Leslie Shear, Jr. presented archaeological evidence for the horizon of destruction debris.⁶ He argued that this widespread evidence of sudden destruction should be associated with the clean-up of domestic, commercial, and public properties following the Persian sack of the city in 479. He further supported this association through a careful interrogation of textual sources. Nevertheless, his true object was to defend the existing chronology of Athenian pottery in response to a contemporary challenge, discussed below.

As Shear documented, most of the Athenian Agora Persian destruction deposits were formed over a (relatively) short period of time, so they seem to reflect an urgency to tidy-up and revitalize the city. Reality probably varied with some residents cleaning up rapidly and others taking more time. The date 'ca. 480' for the creation of the Athenian Agora Persian destruction deposits, then, somewhat obscures the precise chronology of artifacts within the deposits. Some objects within the deposits date much earlier but remained in use up to the invasion. Additionally, Shear notes that some of the Athenian Agora Persian destruction clean-up deposits contained pottery apparently produced after 480, that is, closed deposits very much like the others but containing some pottery with more advanced chronological features. Matter and Rotroff's chapter, along with the present chapter, will explore how confident our pottery chronology can be considering the variable formation history of the '480' Persian destruction clean-up deposits.⁷

2 Persian Destruction Deposits and Pottery Chronology

The Athenian Agora Excavations have uncovered almost 500 decommissioned wells dating from the Neolithic to Turkish periods filled with discarded arti-

4 Shear 1993: 383.

5 *Agora XII, Agora XXIII, Agora XXX*.

6 Shear 1993.

7 Further discussion of deposit formation processes can be found in Laughy and van den Eijnde in Chapter 7 of this volume, pp. 196–205.

facts.⁸ Wells five to 25m deep could easily access subterranean water within the clay-like bedrock in this area of Athens, but obviously the tapped water frequently gave out, and the well then became a convenient trash receptacle.⁹ Excavators refer to these deposits—out of use wells filled with debris and covered over—as closed deposits. Sometimes the filling occurred over centuries; other times over a short period.¹⁰ More than fifty of these wells contained artifacts, especially pottery, discarded around the same time and filled over a relatively short time. This considerable concentration of deposits does not occur in any other period of the site. In combination with the assumed development of artifacts, excavators associated this wave of closed deposits with the clean-up following the Persian sack in 480–479 (Fig. 8.1).¹¹ Strata and other types of deposits add further evidence, although stratigraphic fills are more likely to be disturbed by later building operations, and thus the assemblage will be preserved less completely.¹² This abundance of evidence—an embarrassment of riches, really—offers an unusual opportunity to examine questions ranging from domestic activities to the psychology of rebuilding after destructions; but, the deposits are best known for their contributions to ceramic chronology.

American excavations of the Athenian Agora began in 1931, and already in the second year of work, excavators proposed a historical connection between a 19.60 m deep well-like pit full of burnt and broken pottery and the Persian sack of Athens, the upper fill of deposit G 6:3, nicknamed the Rectangular Rock-cut Shaft.¹³ This deposit featured two distinct fills: the lower 12 m with a closing date of ca. 540 based on the latest stylistically dated pottery, and the upper 8 m

8 Camp 1977 considers the full history of the water supply for the area around the Athenian Agora as understood at the time of writing.

9 Camp 1977: 20–21. Alternatively, ancient users may have closed the well owing to perceived pollution of the water source, see Lynch 2011b.

10 *Agora* XII: 43–44. Shear 1993: 384–387 describes the process specifically for deposits from the Agora Excavations; Gawlinsky 2014: 184–186. Laughy and van den Eijnde, in Chapter 7 of this volume, further explore the difficulty in assessing exactly when a well was closed vs. the date of the material within the deposit; see especially, pp. 195–204.

11 Shear 1993 considers only 21 of those deposits and does not explain his selection rationale (see 387). The author identified the number of deposits through the Agora Excavations archive.

12 For example, Agora deposit J 1:18, a layer of Persian destruction debris used as fill, Camp and Martens 2020: 625–626 and currently being studied by the excavator, Dr. Brian Martens.

13 Vanderpool 1938: 58. See also the discussion of the fill in Laughy and van den Eijnde, in Chapter 7 of this volume, pp. 219–220.

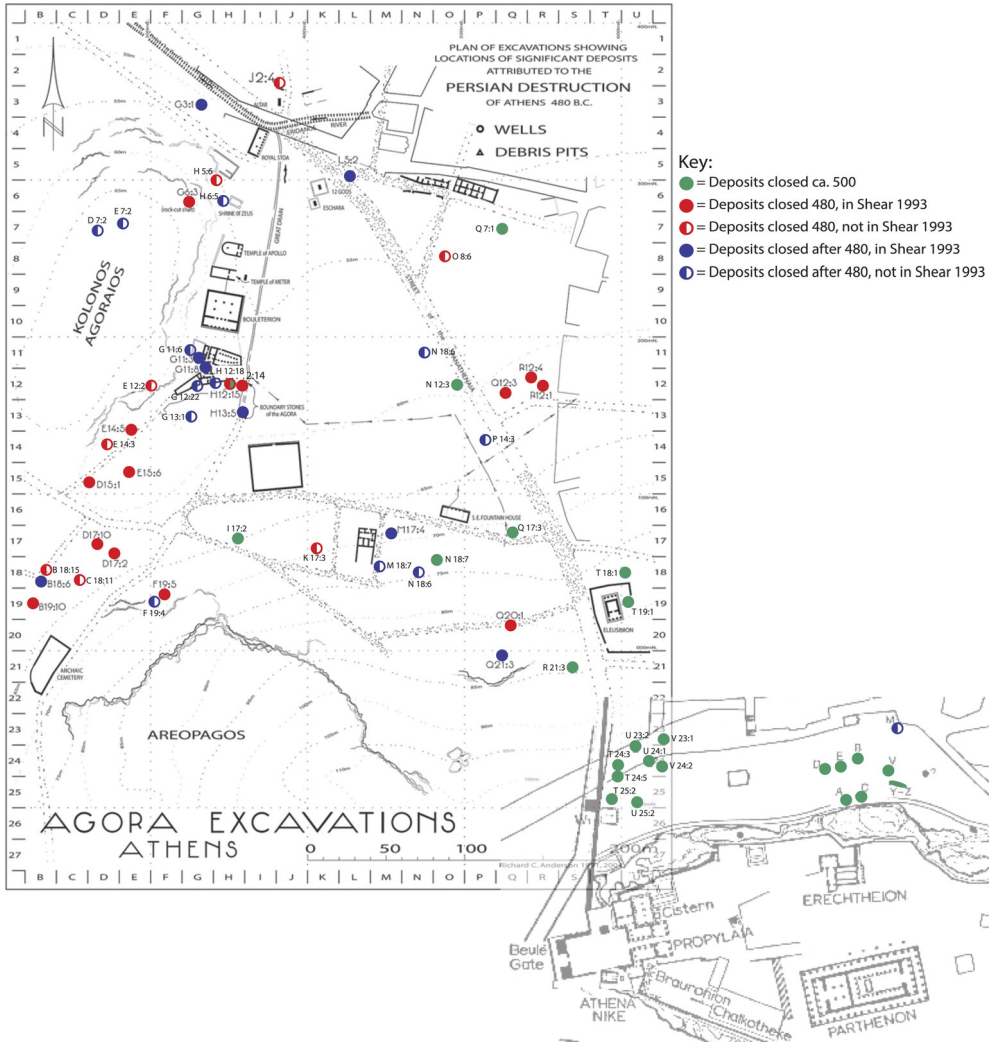


FIGURE 8.1 Plan of the area of the Athenian Agora Excavations showing deposits mentioned in the text. Green = closed between 500 and 490; Red = closed 480; Blue = closed after 480 but contain Persian destruction debris. Half circles indicate deposits in Shear 1993 AFTER PLAN BY R. ANDERSON, PUBLISHED CAMP AND MAUZY 2009, FIG. 69, COMBINED WITH A PLAN BY J. TRAVLOS MODIFIED BY GLOWACKI 1991, FIG. 16 ASCSA, AGORA EXCAVATIONS

filled with debris the excavators associated with the Persian destruction.¹⁴ In his publication of the upper fill, Eugene Vanderpool used the dates of ostraka, sherds inscribed with the name of an ostracism candidate, to ‘fix beyond question within a few years [before 480]’ the figured and plain pottery found in the same levels as ostraka.¹⁵ The confidence of his claim may make us bristle today, but the seemingly ‘absolute’ chronology of ostracism candidacy did offer a welcome check on the pottery otherwise dated on the basis of stylistic change. Brian Sparkes and Lucy Talcott also use ostraka to check the pottery chronology they present in *Agora* XII, but they clarify that the ostraka offer a *terminus post quem* for deposit fillings. That is, the deposit was formed after the date of the ostracism (if known). The sherd on which the name is inscribed, however, may come from a pot that had been out of use for some years, so the ostracism candidacy date, if there is one, offers a *terminus ante quem* for the pot itself, a date before which it was made.¹⁶ It is Vanderpool’s over-confident use of ostracism dates to fix pottery chronology that ultimately led to Shear’s important paper on the Agora deposits.

3 The Challenge

Shear’s staggering 100-page 1993 article in the American School of Classical Studies at Athens’ journal *Hesperia* was prompted by ongoing challenges to late Archaic Greek chronology presented in a series of articles by E.D. Francis and Michael Vickers in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁷ Shear explains the purpose of his article:

Until recently, Vanderpool’s conclusions [that the Upper fill of the Rectangular Rock-cut Shaft came from the Persian destruction clean-up] have been widely accepted, and the upper fill of the Rectangular Rock-cut Shaft seemed to provide a welcome fixed point in the chronology of Athenian pottery. Vanderpool’s dating of the pottery has now come under heavy attack by the late E.D. Francis and Michael Vickers as a part of their far-flung campaign to lower the dates of all Archaic Greek art by roughly fifty years.¹⁸

14 Lower fill: Vanderpool 1938. Upper fill: Vanderpool 1946.

15 Vanderpool 1946: 265.

16 *Agora* XII: 46.

17 Cook 1989, in a note in *JHS* lists the relevant articles, summarizes the gist, and rebuts the conclusions.

18 Shear 1993: 383–384; Francis and Vickers 1988.

The ‘far-flung campaign’ of E.D. Francis, Michael Vickers, and later with David Gill, produced over twenty articles and books, and had several fronts, one of which made the argument that the relative chronology of late Archaic material culture established by assuming progression of artistic style should be lowered by fifty to sixty years. They primarily questioned the ‘fixed points’ used to create rungs on the stylistic ladder. While their objections began with the chronology of Geometric pottery, and covered ground from Greece to Italy to Egypt, it was their points about late sixth to early fifth century Athens that prompted Shear’s article.¹⁹ Although their downdating claims ultimately resulted in small adjustments, not widescale redating, it did cause scholars to question assumptions and argue their case.²⁰ As Susan Rotroff has demonstrated elsewhere in detail and here in the context of one such deposit, genuine dating inconsistencies exist in our assumed stylistic chronology, especially of red-figured pottery.²¹ Francis and Vickers had identified an area of scholarly overconfidence that deserved more critical consideration. Additional fronts of their campaign famously proposed that red-figure pottery aimed to emulate ‘gold-figured’ metal vessels that no longer survive.²² These points were less successful than their chronological challenges.²³

A notable feature of the Francis-Vickers period of scholarship was a spirit of gentlemanly—for the main characters were all men—*ad hominem* attacks. Shear expressed the impetus for his 1993 study:

The revised chronology [of Francis and Vickers] has broad ramifications not only for the dating of pottery but also for the architectural history and urban development of Athens, since the remains of buildings have without exception been dated by the associated pottery. For this reason it seems important to revisit the Agora once again in order to salvage a few of the pieces flung down by the maelstrom of Francis and Vickers.²⁴

Shear continues in a footnote to the above text:²⁵

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- 19 Again, for a summary of their arguments see Cook 1989.
 20 For a period in the 1990s–2000s, all scholars of late Archaic material culture had to include a comment on whose chronology they favored, e.g., Neer 2002: 186–205.
 21 Rotroff 2009, 2020.
 22 Vickers and Gill 1994, especially chapter 6, ‘The Influence of Precious Materials on Greek Painted Pottery,’ 105–153.
 23 Boardman 1987; Williams 1996.
 24 Shear 1993: 384.
 25 Shear 1993: 384 n. 4.

Francis and Vickers did not consult either the original excavation records or the pottery that they propose to redate. To be sure, they state that their conclusions are based only on published accounts of Agora material, but this is no way to redate pottery.

With these statements, Shear situates his study of 21 of the Athenian Agora Excavation's Persian destruction deposits as a robust rebuttal of Francis and Vickers' 1988 article, 'The Agora Revisited: Athenian Chronology c. 500–450 B.C.'²⁶ As of 1993, publications recognized the chronological value of Persian destruction deposits from the Athenian Agora, but never had the deposits been gathered for study. Sparkes and Talcott in *Agora* XII, which presents a typology and chronology for black-glaze and household pottery, proposed date ranges for undecorated pottery using a combination of an assumed 480 closing date for the Persian destruction deposits and stylistic dates for figured wares found with the undecorated pottery; the latter reflecting somewhat circular logic because the stylistic sequence of Attic figured pottery also depended upon assuming presence in a Persian destruction deposit meant a date of 480 or slightly before. *Agora* XII identifies 34 deposits as 'closed' ca. 480 in the deposit summaries (Table 8.1).²⁷ In her publication of one of these, the Stoa Gutter Well, for example, Sally Roberts spent little time justifying the identification of this deposit as closed, or its Persian destruction date, as Matter and Rotroff discuss in their article.²⁸ The identification of Persian destruction clean-up deposits had developed based on similarities among the fills and the extraordinary wealth of material—an obvious horizon of Archaic period destruction—that had to originate in some major catastrophic episode. The present chapter, however, considers some deposits that Shear did not include in his study to provide a more nuanced (and complex) view of the seemingly homogeneous picture of a destruction horizon.

For late Archaic Athens specifically, Francis and Vickers reassessed the date of the evidence for the deposits scholars associated with the destruction of the Acropolis and the Agora in 480–479. They argued that the latest Acropolis korai should date later than the Persian Wars on stylistic analogy with the caryatids on the Siphnian treasury at Delphi, which they also dated to the 470s. They

26 Francis and Vickers 1988.

27 *Agora* XII, deposit summaries, 383–399. Table 8.1 does not include graves, which also receive Agora deposit numbers. An example is the Stoa Gutter Well, Q 12:3, published in full in 1983, and the subject of the article by Matter and Rotroff, Chapter 9, and discussed in Laughy and van den Eijnde in this volume: Chapter 7, pp. 223–224 and *passim*.

28 Roberts 1986: 4.

TABLE 8.1 Agora Excavation deposits closed ca. 480

	Type of deposit, <i>Agora XII</i> deposit date	Shear 1993 reference
B 18:6	Well, Upper: 500–480	pp. 430–432
B 18:15	Pit: 500–480	–
B 19:10	Well: 500–480	pp. 433–434
C 18:11	Drain: 490–480	–
D 15:1	Well: 500–480	pp. 434–435
D 17:2	N/A: Pit	pp. 435–436
D 17:10	Well: 520–480	pp. 436–438
E 12:2	Pit: 520–480	–
E 14:5	Well: 520–490	pp. 439–440
E 15:6	Well: 500–480	pp. 440–442
E 14:3	Pit: 520–480	–
F 19:5	Well: 520–480	pp. 442–444
G 6:3	Well, Upper: 410–480	pp. 445–449
H 5:6	Stoa of Zeus: a: 480; b: 480–425	–
H 12:14	Pit: 490–480 and later	–
H 12:15	Well: 520–480	pp. 453–455
J 2:4	N/A: Well: 520–480	–
K 17:3	Pit: 500–480	–
O 8:6	Pocket: 500–480	–
Q 12:3	Well: 520–480	pp. 464–468
Q 20:1	N/A: Pit	p. 468
R 12:1	N/A: Well	pp. 469–471
R 12:4	N/A: Well	pp. 471–472

based their dating on Vitruvius, who says caryatids were not invented until after the Persian Wars.²⁹ To Vitruvius—and Francis and Vickers—the female columns on the Siphnian treasury represented a symbolic memorial of the Persian invasion. They attributed the damaged sculptures on the Athenian Acropolis not to the Persians, but to a civil riot in 462/461 in support of the reforms of Ephialtes: no ancient author mentions such a riot.³⁰ Francis and Vickers' Athenian Acropolis arguments failed to convince, but they did stumble onto

29 *Vitr.* 1.5; Francis and Vickers 1983: 54–67.

30 Vickers 1985: 27–29; see Cook 1989: 169 for discussion.

something: not every deposit on the Acropolis contained *Perserschutt*. Andrew Stewart restudied the Late Archaic and Early Classical Acropolis deposits, carefully sorting out the Persian destruction debris from what he calls Classical Acropolis construction fills. In fact, he identified only one ‘closed’ Persian destruction clean-up deposit, which did contain Archaic korai including one that may be a caryatid.³¹

The pottery found in the Classical period fills of the Athenian Acropolis presents our first wrinkle in pottery chronology time. Although we would dearly love to consider most of the fragments published in Graef and Langlotz, *Die antiken Vasen von Akropolis zu Athen* to be victims of the Persian destruction and burning of the Acropolis, Stewart cautions us that vast quantities of fill, 50,000 m³ or more, had to be brought up to the Acropolis from the lower town to create flat terraces for the construction of the Classical buildings and landscaping.³² Therefore, the question remains *which* of the published fragments, themselves a selection of the original finds rarely with precise findspot, represent votive objects dedicated before the Persian sack? Some clearly show evidence of burning, for example, the Nearchos kantharos fragment, which dates to the mid sixth century,³³ but other fragments, such as pieces of white ground funerary lekythoi³⁴—a pottery type dating later than 480 and meant for the grave, not a sanctuary—remind us of Stewart’s caution that much of the fill came from elsewhere in the city for Classical period construction. In short, *some* of the Acropolis pottery represents pre-Persian dedications, and the burnt pieces may date sometime before 480, but how long before must still rely on stylistic dating. A ‘fixed point’ becomes unmoored.

In their 1988 article, Francis and Vickers focused on the Athenian Agora. In the first section, they reassessed Vanderpool’s 1946 chronology for the upper fill of the Rectangular Rock-cut Shaft and disassociated it with the Persian destruction. They made a very creative argument that the Persians, not the Greeks,

31 In a pair of articles Stewart considers evidence for the dating of late Archaic to early Classical sculpture, but Stewart 2008 specifically addresses the Acropolis fills. Ridgway 1977: 108–109 suggested that the Lyons Kore, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon H 1993 joining with Acr. 269, was a caryatid, an identification supported by many later scholars, including Marszal 1988.

32 Graef and Langlotz 1909–1933; Stewart 2008: 389. In comparison, the total volume of a large passenger airplane is about 1500 m³.

33 Athens, National Archaeological Museum Acropolis Collection, 1.611; *ABV* 82, 1; Boardman 2001: 55, fig. 65.

34 For example, Athens, National Archaeological Museum Acropolis Collection, 2.857, ca. 440 BCE, Graef and Langlotz 1933, vol. 2, pl. 75.857.

dug the rectangular shaft for water.³⁵ It is true that the function of the shaft remains perplexing. The northeast corner features foot holds, as do many of the normally round Agora wells, but the absence of water jars and no evidence of a water table or collapse at the bottom suggest that it never functioned as a well.³⁶ It seems improbable that the Persians would pause their marauding to dig a 20 m deep, 2.4 m × 1.2 m failed well when abandoned Athenian houses around the Agora featured functional wells.³⁷ The true refutation of Francis and Vickers' theory is that a clear chronological distinction exists within the fill of the Rock-cut Shaft: between the earlier, sixth century lower fill and the fifth century upper fill.³⁸ The Athenians certainly dug the shaft, possibly as a well or a storage pit, and definitely used it as a trash receptacle long before the Persians arrived.

As mentioned above, in his publication of the Rock-cut Shaft and the date of its fills, Vanderpool used ostracism dates to establish the pottery chronology. Francis and Vickers rightly identified this reliance on ostraka as a weakness in his argument. Vanderpool saw a stratification of the upper fill: the 'oldest' of the ostraka in the lowest part of the upper fill, and the 'most recent' in higher levels of the upper fill.³⁹ Vanderpool assigned dates to the ostraka based on the known ostracism date of the candidate, that is, the year that the candidate 'won.'⁴⁰ Because the 'oldest' of the ostraka based on ostracism dates were lower in the fill (those for Hipparchos, ostracized in 487, and Megakles, ostracized in 486), and the 'latest' above (Aristides, ostracized in 482), Vanderpool reconstructed a slow formation of the upper part of the shaft from about 490 to 480 prior to the Persian destruction, then capped with destruction debris afterwards.⁴¹ Importantly, Vanderpool further assumed that the other figured and plain pottery in the fill followed a similar chronology with 'oldest' at the bottom of the upper fill.⁴²

In an equally problematic interpretation of ostraka, Francis and Vickers conclude that the upper fill of the Rectangular Rock-cut Shaft could and should

35 Francis and Vickers 1988: 47–151, esp. 150.

36 It may have been a storage pit on analogy with the Hypogeion 2 at Methone, Morris et al. 2020: 702–705, figs. 54a and 55.

37 The Southeast Fountainhouse is now dated to the post-Persian Wars period, not to the Peisistratids; see Paga 2015.

38 Vanderpool 1938 and 1946.

39 Vanderpool 1946: 266–267.

40 All from *Ath. Pol.* 22, see *Agora* xxv for each candidate.

41 Vanderpool 1948: 266–267; Megakles, no. 1 (P 2617), 2 (P 2650), 3 (P 2651); Hipparchos; no. 4 (P 2652); Aristides, no. 14 (P 2797), 15 (P 2799).

42 Vanderpool 1948: 270, chart.

date as late as the 470s on the basis of a Themistocles ostrakon as the latest datable material.⁴³ Themistocles was officially ostracized in 473; however, he must have been a candidate for many years before this. In fact, the Agora and Kerameikos excavations have found many Themistocles ostraka discarded with those of Aristides, son of Lysimachos, whom the Athenians exiled ca. 482, which strongly implicates Themistocles as a candidate at least in the late 480s, a decade before his actual ostracism.⁴⁴ Francis and Vickers propose that all of the upper fill of the Rectangular Rock-cut Shaft was deposited after the ostracism of Themistocles in 473 and that Vanderpool's perceived chronological stratification of ostraka was 'illusory.'⁴⁵

Additional cautions for dating by ostraka occur on two fronts. First, a man could have been a candidate for many years *before* his successful ostracism; therefore, the ostrakon could date earlier than the historical date of his ostracism.⁴⁶ Second, Francis and Vickers note that some ostraka found in the upper fill of the Rectangular Rock-cut Shaft are 'out of chronological order.'⁴⁷ An ostrakon for Hipparchos (ostracized in 487) was found above ostraka for Megakles (ostracized in 486).⁴⁸ The ostrakon itself can be quite old when inscribed, so its value for pottery chronology is complicated.⁴⁹

For the purposes of this chapter, however, let us pause to consider what the ostraka tell us about the formation of the Rectangular Rock-cut Shaft deposit. The material used to fill in this 'hole in the ground' is basically trash. Where did this trash come from? Vanderpool plausibly suggested that the large number of black-figure objects produced by stylistically related potters' workshops and their largely complete condition indicate that a portion of the trash came from a pottery sales shop.⁵⁰ The ostraka, votive pottery, terracotta figurines, loom weights, personal pottery, and even bone styli indicate that a portion of the fill arrived as trash from somewhere else, probably nearby, and probably in

43 Francis and Vickers 1988: 151; Vanderpool 1948, no. 11 (P 2777).

44 Sickinger 2017: 444; *Agora* XXV, see discussion of groups of ostraka, 20–29.

45 Francis and Vickers 1998: 151, 147.

46 Francis and Vickers 1988: 144–145.

47 Francis and Vickers 1988: 147.

48 Vanderpool 1948, Hipparchos, no. 10 (P 2776) found above Megakles, no. 1 (P 2617), 2 (P 2650), 3 (P 2651).

49 Also Shear 1993: 412–413.

50 Vanderpool 1948: 266, but he refers to the waste from a pottery production facility citing 'broken, mis-fired, or otherwise unsaleable wares.' More recent evidence suggests that Athenian consumers did not mind misfired pieces, Lynch 2011a: 99, and 99 n. 167, fig. 11; 2011b: 69–70, fig. 3. The Stoa Gutter Well deposit discussed by Matter and Rotroff in Chapter 9 of this volume also represents stock from a pottery sales shop.

secondary or even tertiary deposition.⁵¹ Nevertheless, for pottery chronology, the dates of the ostraka only provide a *terminus post quem* for the date of the deposit, including pottery. That is, we can be 100% certain that the discarded artifacts went into the well sometime after 482 on the basis of the Aristides ostrakon,⁵² but the deposit date cannot tell us how old the individual pots or sherds were when they went in.

Responding to the challenge of Francis and Vickers, Shear's 1993 publication, then, provided the first holistic examination and accounting of the Persian destruction clean-up deposits discovered by the Athenian Agora Excavations. It is a masterful presentation of archaeological data, and its thoroughness, especially in the list of artifacts by deposit, both inventoried and uninventoried, provided a methodology for subsequent scholars.⁵³ Shear's transparent presentation of artifact evidence also allows scholars to ask completely different questions of the data, unrelated to chronology. There are issues of course. Shear's deposit inventories list suspiciously few 'unknown' fragments, and from experience, it is not possible for a ceramic specialist to identify every scrap of pottery in a deposit. He does not explain how he selected these 21 deposits for inclusion in his study, because other deposits listed as closed in 480 in *Agora XII* are not included (see Table 8.1). Nor does he consider the relationship of his 21 deposits to those earlier or later, but those questions would have distracted from his objective of characterizing them as Persian destruction clean-up deposits.

4 Persian Destruction Clean-up Deposits from the Athenian Agora

To illustrate that the deposits share both character and date, Shear identified consistent patterns of shapes and style of fineware pottery found within the contents of the 21 deposits. He concluded, '... the picture that emerges from the 21 deposits is one of extraordinary similarity. ... most of the deposits must have been buried at the same time and all the rest were closed within a very short period thereafter.'⁵⁴ He continued, 'In repeated instances, pottery is seen to have progressed to the same point in the development of the shape by the

51 See Laughy and van den Eijnde Chapter 7 generally and especially pp. 196–205 for further on the formation processes of fills in Agora deposits.

52 On the assumption that an individual would no longer be a candidate after having been successfully ostracized.

53 See for example see the context pottery descriptions in *Agora xxxi*: 105–185.

54 Shear 1993: 393, see also tables 1–4.

time the deposits were closed; this can only have happened if their contents were dumped into the wells and pits within a very short period of time.⁵⁵ If we zoom out and view the Agora Persian destruction clean-up deposits together, as Shear did, his assessment holds: the pottery from these deposits shares remarkably consistent features of shape and stylistic development. However, Shear envisioned a coordinated effort to fill wells with debris within a short period of time. At a finer resolution, the picture is more complicated, and the variation may lead to new thoughts on both the dating of pottery and formation processes that reflect socio-cultural behavior.

4.1 *Athenian Agora Deposits Closed Ca. 500*

Some closed deposits around the Athenian Agora feature pottery that dates closer to 500 or 490 than 480, but otherwise have the character of Persian destruction deposits. Matter and Rotroff's chapter examines one such deposit and questions whether our conventional pottery dating schemes are sufficient to identify the crucial difference of ten to twenty years. Is this a real chronological difference or a scholarly mirage? In addition to the Stoa Gutter Well a group of wells on the north slope of the Acropolis also present pottery of 'earlier' date in deposits that certainly look like the other Persian destruction fills.

To make a case that his twenty-one deposits dated to the clean-up following the 479 Persian destruction of Athens, Shear showed that the deposits contained pottery dating *after* 490, the date of the first Persian invasion. He compared black-figure lekythoi from the Persian destruction clean-up deposits with the black-figure lekythoi found in the Marathon tumulus, which should date to 490, if it is the place where the Athenians cremated their war dead on the site of the battlefield (Fig. 8.2).⁵⁶ Presumably family members brought the lekythoi as grave gifts for their departed, and they had to use what was on hand or in stock because of the short timeline from death to burial.⁵⁷ At the time of the Persian Wars, Athenians were using black-figure lekythoi in their homes and as grave offerings, and likely as votive gifts.⁵⁸ Indeed, through this com-

55 Shear 1993: 401.

56 Shear 1993: 406–411. There is, however, more debate over the stratigraphy and identification of the mound at Marathon than Shear allows: see more recently, Fromherz 2011: 388–391.

57 Despite the ostentation of the mound and mass cremations, which purposely evoke heroes (see Whitley 1994), the grave goods were distinctively modest (see Brendle 2018: 125–126).

58 Black-figure lekythoi were found in 20 of Shear's 21 Persian destruction clean-up depos-

parison, Shear demonstrates that some of the black-figure lekythoi within the Persian destruction deposits match the characteristics of lekythoi from Marathon, thus dating them to ca. 490. In addition, excavations at Eretria, which the Persians sacked in 490, provide further evidence for the formal development of black-figure lekythoi ca. 490 and before.⁵⁹ A pit along the agora of Eretria published by Tamara Saggini, contained over 1200 sherds, among them a minimum of 120 black-figure lekythoi, many of them Attic. Saggini also observes the extensive similarities between the lekythoi found in Athens, Eretria, and Marathon.

Shear, having established that some of the black-figure lekythoi in the Persian destruction deposits dated to ca. 490, further demonstrated that the deposits also contained lekythoi with more developed features; thus, he attempts to characterize features of black-figure lekythoi dating to the decade between 490 to 480. In general, he sees a shift from stout to narrow profile, the upper wall becoming slightly concave, with foot profile in two degrees.⁶⁰ Through this close consideration of the black-figure lekythoi, Shear documents that the deposits contain 'earlier' pottery but also pottery dating after 490. In fact, black-figure lekythoi continue to be made after 480, on the conventional chronology, but in far smaller quantities.⁶¹ Their forms go on to develop features that mark them clearly as post-Persian. Other shapes Shear identifies as common in the Persian destruction clean-up deposits, such as the psykter or stemmed dish nearly disappear after 480.⁶²

The Rectangular Rock-cut Shaft upper fill contained lekythoi like those found at Eretria and Marathon but also some showing Shear's later features. We are back to our chronological conundrum: the pottery must date sometime before 480, but how much before? One day or ten years? If the pottery in the Rectangular Rock-cut Shaft and the Stoa Gutter Well originated in pottery sales shops, indicated by many replica scenes and tight workshop relations within each deposit, then some of the pottery stock of these shops must have stood on the shelves for over 10 years. Matter and Rotroff assesses this possibility for the Stoa Gutter Well.

its, many of which represent household contents; Brendle 2018 discusses use in Athenian graves throughout the fifth century.

59 Saggini 2022; Saggini 2024.

60 Shear 1993: 410–411.

61 Brendle 2018.

62 These and other forms invented at the end of the sixth century are short lived, compared to many long-lasting Athenian pottery shapes; see Lynch 2020.



FIGURE 8.2 Black-figure lekythos development. a): AP 1665 from Well A, ca. 500; b): P 24327 from deposit Q 12:3 ca. 480; c): P 8536 from deposit D 7:2 ca. 490–470
 EPHORATE OF ANTIQUITIES OF ATHENS CITY, ANCIENT AGORA, ASCSA: AGORA EXCAVATIONS © HELLENIC MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS/HELLENIC ORGANIZATION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (H.O.C.RE.D.).

Although we are considering pre-480 artifacts and contexts in this section, it is worth mentioning a different chronological problem: one lekythos from the Marathon tumulus dates significantly *later* than the Battle of Marathon on the basis of style. The lekythos was excavated from the tumulus, burnt and definitely in the offering trench, but clearly presents an even more post-480 profile, probably dating to 460, or thirty years later than the others.⁶³ Ursula Knigge recognized this problem when she set out her typo-chronology for lekythoi from the Kerameikos, with which Shear agrees. She speculates that, 'If it was actually found together with the other lekythoi [at Marathon], then the only conclusion possible is that a considerable time elapsed between the burial of the fallen and the raising of the great mound.'⁶⁴ Such a delay between cremating the bodies of the Athenian dead and commemorating them with offerings does not seem likely, and I cannot explain this singular anomaly. I introduce it to demonstrate that pottery from even the most confidently dated contexts can pose difficulties.

Shear looked for pottery dating to 490. What about pottery dating to ca. 500? Can we distinguish it from the pottery dated to 490 or 480 conventionally? *Agora XII* lists 18 deposits other than burials closed ca. 500. Only a few fewer than the 21 Persian destruction deposits Shear considered. The pottery from these deposits, however, does indicate a different chronological moment. As Table 8.2 shows, of the well deposits listed in *Agora XII* as closed around 500, red-figure pottery appears very rarely and black-figure lekythoi only slightly more often. These deposits, therefore, mark the moment before black-figure lekythoi became wildly popular in the first two decades of the century, while the 'regular' Persian destruction deposits coincide with the popularity of the form.⁶⁵

TABLE 8.2 Agora Excavation deposits with latest pottery date ca. 500–490 BCE (not including burials)

	Type of Deposit, <i>Agora XII</i> date	RF	BF Lekythoi
H 12:18	House: a) from beneath floor ca. 500	0	0
I 17:2	Well, ca. 500	0	0

63 Marathon Museum no. 1033 (MMK758); illustrated and discussed in Brendle 2018:126, fig. 3.

64 Knigge 1976: 37.

65 Or perhaps black-figure lekythoi became more associated with Athenian graves after the Persian Wars. See Brendle 2018.

TABLE 8.2 Agora Excavation deposits with latest pottery date ca. 500–490 BCE (*cont.*)

	Type of Deposit, <i>Agora</i> XII date	RF	BF Lekythoi
N 12:3	Well, Supplemental: ca. 500	0	0
N 18:7	Well: 520–500	0	0
Q 7:1	Well: 525–500	0	1
Q 17:3	Well: POU ca. 500	0	0
R 21:3	Well: ca. 500	0	0
T 18:1	Well: POU 550–525; Upper: 500 and earlier	0	1
T 19:1	Well: POU and Upper: 550–500	0	1
T 24:3	Well: POU and Upper: ca. 500 and earlier	0	0
T 24:5	Well: 525–500 and earlier	0	0
T 25:2	Well: 500 and earlier	0	0
T–U 19–20	Eleusinion fills: ca. 490	0	0
U 23:2	Well: POU: 525–500; Upper to 500 or soon after	0	0
U 24:1	Well: POU & Upper to 500	0	0
U 25:2	Well: 6th century to 520–500	0	3
V 23:1	Well: POU 525–500	1	0
V 24:2	Well: 525–500	2	0

Other North Slope Deposits not in Agora Excavation System;^a Dates from Roebuck 1940 and Broneer 1938

Well A	Well: 480	7	17 ^b
Well B	Well: ca. 500	0	2
Well C	Well: very early 5th century	0	1
Well D	Well: 480	0	0
Well E	Well: 480	6	4
Well M	Well: middle: 480; upper: mid 5th century	1	1
Well V	Well: early 5th	3	1
Cutting Y–Z	Aborted well?	1	1

a Records for Broneer's North Slope excavations are housed at the Excavations of the Athenian Agora, but most inventoried fragments do not have a shape assigned, so the numbers may be an underestimate. The author was not able to examine the pottery, only records of unpublished pieces with hand drawings, in addition to the publication.

b Roebuck 1940 publishes only two, relatively complete black-figure lekythoi (AP 1861, no. 202, fig. 39; AP 1694, no. 200, fig. 42). Excavation records include an additional 17 black-figure fragments described as lekythoi, but these would need to be confirmed by autopsy.

A group of well deposits excavated on the north slope of the Athenian Acropolis contain evidence of a destruction event but with pottery dating to ca. 500 at the latest; however, these are not included in *Agora* XII because an American team excavated them in the 1930s on behalf of the Ephoria.⁶⁶ These deposits feature the same kind of material evidence that Shear uses to characterize the regular 480 Persian destruction deposits: layers of disintegrated mud brick, some tiles, rubble, and the occasional piece of architectural stone, as well as broken and burnt pottery.⁶⁷ He considers this evidence for large-scale clean-up of the destruction of buildings wrought by the Persians, so do these north slope deposits come from the same destruction or a slightly earlier one? What does the answer mean for our pottery chronology?

Oscar Broneer and Carl Roebuck excavated on the east end of the north slope of the Acropolis in 1937–1934 and 1937–1939, and Arthur Parsons excavated on the west end in 1937–1940 (Fig. 8.1).⁶⁸ Of the eight wells excavated by Broneer and Roebuck, two contained pottery dating no later than 500 (Wells B, C), five dating to 480 or ‘early 5th’ (Wells A, D, E, and V), and one remained open after the clean-up (Well M), but all contained artifacts similar to Shear’s regular Persian destruction wells (Table 8.2).⁶⁹ Five of the wells contained broken roof tiles and/or worked stone (Wells A, B, D, E, M), broken wooden objects (Wells B, D) and at least five (Wells A, D, E, M, and V) contained pottery and/or sculpture fragments with joins to pieces found in the Acropolis fills, and probably relate to Persian destruction or the clean-up on the Acropolis.⁷⁰ A stratum of Well M contained the famous kylix feet ostraka against Themistocles and other artifacts resembling Shear’s regular Persian destruction debris.⁷¹ However, above this stratum with ostraka, Well M contained artifacts dating to the third-quarter

66 Explained in Glowacki 1991. The wells excavated by Parsons have been entered into the *Agora* records system with deposit designations (e.g., T 25:2). Those of Broneer were not, so continue to be referred to by his original designations (e.g., Well M). Because Broneer’s wells are not recorded in the same way, scholars rarely consider them, although the *Agora* Excavations Archives preserve the notebooks, inventory cards, and some artifacts. Glowacki 1991 is the only study that unites the two areas. I thank Kevin Glowacki and Trevor van Damme for discussing the history of these deposits with me in Summer 2023.

67 Shear 1993: 401–402.

68 Broneer 1933, 1935, 1938a, 1938b, 1939; Pease 1935; Roebuck 1940; Parsons 1943; described together in Glowacki 1991: 6–11.

69 Glowacki 1991: 21–38; Broneer 1933, 1935, 1938a; Roebuck 1940. Because the Broneer/Roebuck wells were not incorporated into the *Agora* record system, Mary Moore did not include the figured pottery from these deposits in either *Agora* XXIII or *Agora* XXX.

70 Roebuck 1940: 142; Glowacki 1991: 21–25.

71 Broneer 1938a: 212–252; Glowacki 1991: 35–36. The profiles of the kylix feet suggest the ostraka date to the late 480s, not the actual ostracism of Themistocles in 473.

of the fifth century. Therefore, Well M remained open for discards long after the Persian Wars, and thus represents a different formation behavior.

Parsons also excavated eight wells on the north slope of the Acropolis. Along with broken pottery, he noted the fills contained broken roof tiles, mudbrick, building stones, and in one deposit (T 25:2), building blocks of poros and Acropolis limestone.⁷² An example of wholesale house destruction comes from well T 24:3, which included both a well-preserved well-head and a chimney pot.⁷³ However, the pottery in these deposits, again, based on traditional chronology, dates to ca. 500 at the latest.⁷⁴

That the north slope wells went out of use because of some destruction seems clear, but how they relate to the Persian destruction of Athens is more difficult to ascertain. Parsons, in his 1938 excavation report, already observed, 'still more convincing [is] that the filling up must have been the result of some catastrophe. ... While the bulk of the pottery dates to the sixth century, it seems altogether likely that the wells went out of use as a result of the Persian sack [in 480].'⁷⁵ Roebuck makes a similar, more confident, statement in his publication of some of the wells.⁷⁶ Kevin Glowacki, the only scholar to study all of the wells together, suggests that those closed ca. 500 (vs. 480) may represent a reorganization of activities on the north slope.⁷⁷ Parsons, in the *Hesperia* publication of his excavation, posits that the destruction of these wells by the Persians resulted in the decision to formalize the Klepsydra fountain house mid-fifth century as a replacement water source; however, he was under the impression that some of the pottery dated to 470.⁷⁸ John Camp, in his study of the water supply of ancient Athens, speculates that Parsons's north slope wells may have been dug during Peisistratos' use of the Acropolis in the first period of his tyranny (561) or when Kleomenes besieged Hippias in the Pelargikon (510).⁷⁹ Camp's historical analysis may explain why the wells were dug, but it does not help understand why they were closed.

Many of the artifacts in this group of wells on the north slope of the Acropolis originate in sanctuaries either on top of the Acropolis or along its north

72 Parsons 1943: 207.

73 Well-head (A 957), Lang 1949: 126, no. 10, pl. 7, fig. 3. Chimney pot (A 958), which may better be understood as a ventilator, see Tsarkigis 2007: 229, fig. 24.3c; Tsarkigis 2001: 173–175, fig. 7.

74 Table 8.2, and see the deposit list in *Agora* XII, 399 where Sparkes and Talcott assign a latest date of 500 or 490 for these wells.

75 Parsons 1938: 2; Parsons 1939.

76 Roebuck 1940: 142.

77 Glowacki 1991: 38.

78 Parsons 1943: 207.

79 Camp 1984: 40–41.

slope.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the good preservation of domestic objects including the chimney pot from well T 24:3 and household cooking and food preparation pottery indicate that some fill originated in a residential areas or perhaps places to prepare meals for rituals or staff.⁸¹ Regardless, the fill of these deposits matches the character of Shear's regular Persian destruction deposits, (with the addition of votive sculpture and other objects). The lesson may be that not all Persian destruction clean-up deposits contain pottery dating up to the night before the Persians knocked on the door. These deposits may have been formed during the clean-up after 479, but some contained fill with pottery dating no later than 500. This complicates the use of 'closed ca. 480' for the establishment of pottery chronologies.

4.2 *Athenian Agora Deposits Closed Sometime after 480*

Shear recognized that eight of his 21 deposits contained a few pieces of pottery of more advanced shape or style than the thirteen others he studied (Table 8.3).⁸² He cites several markers of a production date slightly later than 480 (Figure 8.3):

1. The most developed cup of Type C with concave lip and an upward sloping foot as a kind of transition to the vicups of the 470s and 460s. For example, from B 18:6, P 19388.⁸³
2. Vicups: single fragments in D 15:1, G 6:3; more in B 18:6 and H 13:5.⁸⁴
3. A new form of stemless cup: one in G 3:1; 21 fragments in H 13:5; one in Q 21:3.⁸⁵
4. One-handlers entirely black, not banded.⁸⁶
5. Globular lekythoi: examples in G 3:1 and H 13:5 are more advanced than those in E 14:5 and Q 12:3. The post-480 version has a more flaring mouth, rounded rim, and handle attached below drip ring.⁸⁷
6. Lekanai: with a broader rim and less tightly rolled. Examples in B 18:6, G 3:1, H 13:5, L 5:2.⁸⁸

80 Pease 1935, esp. 214; Broneer 1939; Roebuck 1940.

81 Broneer 1938a: 219–221.

82 Shear 1993: 413–415, deposits B 18:6, G 3:1, G 11:3, G 11:8, H 13:5, L 5:2, M 17:4, Q 21:3.

83 *Agora* XII, no. 413, fig. 4, pl. 19.

84 For the shape, see *Agora* XII: 93.

85 For the shape, see *Agora* XII: 100–101. The fragments compare to *Agora* XII, no. 456 (P 15015).

86 For the chronological significance of the all-black version of the shape, see *Agora* XII: 126–127.

87 For the development of the shape, see *Agora* XII: 151–152.

88 For the development of the shape, see *Agora* XII: 213–214.

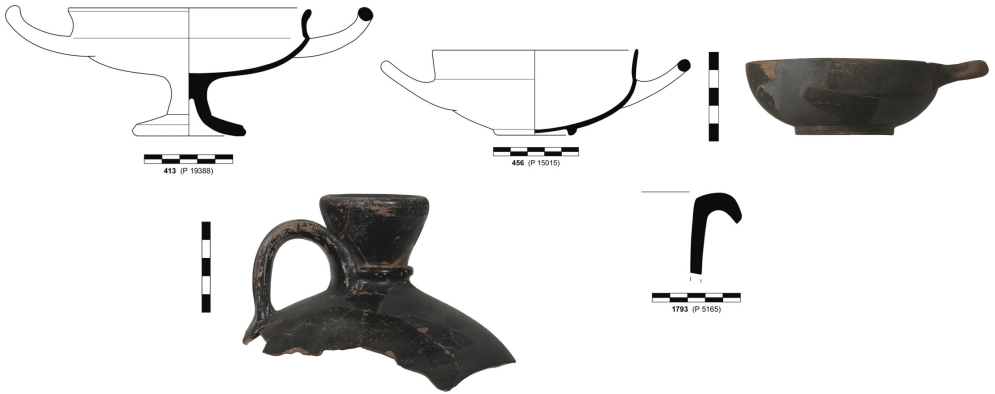


FIGURE 8.3 Pottery with post-480 features. a) type C cup, P 19388 from deposit B 18:6; b) stemless cup, P 15015, from F 19:4; c) all-black one-handler, P 15224 from deposit F 19:4; d) globular lekythos, P 10820 from deposit G 12:22; e) household lekane rim fragment, P 5165 from deposit H 6:5
 EPHORATE OF ANTIQUITIES OF ATHENS CITY, ANCIENT AGORA, ASCSA: AGORA EXCAVATIONS © HELLENIC MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS/HELLENIC ORGANIZATION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (H.O.C.RE.D.)

TABLE 8.3 Agora Excavation deposits closed ca. 470/475/460 BCE

Type of Deposit, <i>Agora</i> XII date		Shear 1993 reference	RF
B 18:6	Well, Upper: 500–480	pp. 430–432	0
C 9:6	Pit: ca. 460		21
D 7:2	Under cobblestones: 500–470		25
E 7:2	Pit: 500–470		1
E–F 12–14	Construction Fill; first half 5th to ca. 460–450		0
F 19:4	Well: 490–450		0
G 3:1	Pit: 500–470	pp. 444–445	3
G 11:3	Well, Upper: 480–470 or soon after	pp. 449–451	2
G 11:6	Pits: 500–470		0
G 11:8	Well	pp. 451–453	0
G 12:22	Pit: 470–460		0
G 13:1	Pocket: 500–475 and later		0
H 6:5	Well: 470–460		0
H 12:18	House: b) 490–450 between floors		0
H 13:5	Trench: N/A	pp. 455–459	7
L 5:2	Pit: N/A	pp. 459–461	0
M 17:4	Well: N/A	pp. 461–464	8
M 18:7	Pit: 480–440		0

TABLE 8.3 Agora Excavation deposits closed ca. 470/475/460 BCE (*cont.*)

	Type of Deposit, <i>Agora</i> XII date	Shear 1993 reference	RF
N 18:6	Pocket: 500–450		○
P 14:3	Cobbled floor: 470–460		○
Q 21:3	Well: N/A	p. 468	○

As for red-figure pottery, it is useful to note that it is never common in Agora deposits closed ca. 500, 480, or mid-fifth century; therefore, it does not help establish latest date as reliably as we would hope.⁸⁹ Broneer, Roebuck, and Parsons's publications of the ca. 500 north slope deposits altogether contained a minimum number of 15 red-figure vessels. Further study of one of Parsons's deposits, v 24:2, revealed two more tiny fragments of red-figure: one inventoried,⁹⁰ and an even smaller uninventoried cup fragment in the context pottery. In Shear's publication of Persian destruction deposits, with the addition of J 2:4, there are 120 pieces of red-figure pottery in 22 deposits.⁹¹ Shear's eight, delayed clean-up deposits contained only 20 pieces of red-figure pottery. Thus, although chronologically sensitive because of its stylistic development, red-figure pottery does not occur in abundance in the deposits under consideration here to be the most visible evidence of a 'later' depositional date. The red-figure pottery does, however, allow us to see the chronological range of some deposits. For example, well M 17:4 contained a black-figure stand with Artemis and Apollo that dates ca. 500–490, but also a red-figured cup fragment, which Mary Moore attributes to the Painter of Bologna 417 and dates to 450–440.⁹²

The small number of Shear's 'delayed' deposits and the short delay time—a decade or so—does not seem like the end of the story. Could the Athenian homeowners have cleaned up so quickly after the sack so that the closing of 13 of the 21 deposits allowed no intrusive material? Possibly, but not every household would have been able to work so quickly. Thucydides says that the Atheni-

89 See also Matter and Rotroff, Chapter 9 in this volume, pp. 257–261 which discusses how red-figure pottery from the Stoa Gutter Well is not the latest datable pottery.

90 P 35519, inventoried in 2007 by Susan Rotroff.

91 Data from Shear 1993, table 4 and Lynch 2011a, table 4.

92 Black-figure stand: P 9275, *Agora* XXIII: 174, no. 575, pl. 55; red-figure cup: P 9271, *Agora* XXX: 325, no. 1443, pl. 136. To confuse things, *Agora* XII and *Agora* XXX deposit summaries date M 17:4 to 'ca. 520–475 and shortly after.'

ans focused on rebuilding the city walls immediately—the public good coming before the private: ‘... [upon returning from their refugee sites] they prepared to rebuild the city and the walls, for only short stretches of the circuit wall had been left standing, and most of the houses were in ruins.’ (Thuc. 1.89.3). Filling 15 or 20 m deep wells is a major operation, and when available, stratigraphy makes it clear that Athenians closed their wells as part of household rebuilding with major revisions to house plans.⁹³ We must consider the possibility that Athenians filled in wells ‘later,’ but with fill that did not include any post-480 artifacts. Just as the north slope deposits may have been filled in ca. 480, but did not include any post-500 artifacts. The picture may not be as clear as assumed by Shear.

If we think about the devastations to cities caused by wars and natural disasters, it can take decades to rebuild, not a few more years. Even with strong modern government intervention and funding, clean-up and rebuilding take time. Dubrovnik, besieged and bombed in 1991 by the Yugoslav National Army, returned to its former appearance in about ten years through determined Croatian and international support, although pockets of destruction remain.⁹⁴

In fact, a category of ‘more delayed’ Persian destruction deposits does exist around the Athenian Agora. For example, pits on the Kolonos Agoraios, C 9:6, D 7:2, and E 7:2 were probably created as part of a leveling project as the Athenians started construction on the Hephaisteion.⁹⁵ These deposits contained a mix of trash: some of it pre-480, and some distinctly post-480.⁹⁶ The ‘more delayed’ deposits seem more likely to fill depressions or serve as building fill, such as the stratum J 1:18 discussed above, rather than well fills. Renovations of the house with well J 2:4 also included a ‘delayed’ floor fill.⁹⁷

93 Shear 1993: 405–407; Lynch 2011a: 38–39.

94 Oberreit 1996.

95 Agora deposit C 9:6: Dinsmoor 1941: 128–150 (prepared by Lucy Talcott); deposit D 7:2: Shear 1937: 343–345, Dinsmoor 1941: 126. Deposit E 7:2 is probably the same filling operation as D 7:2, *Agora* XII: 388.

96 Pre-480: red-figure psykter fragment attributed to the Manner of the Kleophrades Painter, P 7240, *Agora* XXX: 225–227, no. 589, fig. 33, pls. 62–63, *ARV*² 129, 5. Post-480: Ostraka for Dieitrephe: P 6818, *Agora* XXV: 43, no. 98, fig. 5; Dinsmoor 1941: 143, fig. 71:36; black-figure lekythoi of post-480 profile: P 8536, from D 7:2, *Agora* XXIII: 246, no. 1188, pl. 87, Manner of the Haimon Painter (ca. 490–470 BCE), *ABV* 542, 97.

97 Lynch 2011a: 34.

5 Conclusions

This chapter, in conjunction with the chapters in this volume by Matter and Rotroff, and Laughy and van den Eijnde, examined deposits from the Athenian Agora Excavations associated with the city's clean-up following the 479 Persian sack of the city. A distinct horizon of late Archaic deposits, many of them decommissioned wells, containing architectural debris and broken pottery exists. Indeed, the fill in the deposits characterizes a large-scale catastrophe, and like a bell curve, most of the deposits contain pottery that dates no later than 480, the 'on-time' deposits. At either end of the curve, however, deposits contain debris with pottery dating either earlier than 480 or later than 480. A group of deposits along the north slope of the Athenian Acropolis share the architectural debris present in Persian destruction deposits, while their pottery more likely dates to 500 than 480. At the other end of the curve, we find the delayed deposits with more developed forms of pottery or new shapes along with pottery made before the invasion. Essentially, these three types of deposits make our assessment of dates of individual pieces of pottery more difficult.

We started with the question, 'How useful is the date "480" for the chronology of pottery in the Athenian Persian destruction clean-up deposits?' Again, Shear said it best, 'The general conclusion that the upper fill of the Rectangular Rock-cut Shaft (G 6:3) and the 20 contemporary groups of pottery were all deposited as a result of the Persian destruction of Athens agrees well with the archaeological evidence so far reviewed.'⁹⁸ Instead, the Athenian Persian destruction clean-up deposits, which represent a remarkable alignment of historical event and material culture with notable chronological features, that is, the best of the best from a pottery perspective, still leave us with pottery-dating doubts. Perhaps the safest approach is to remember that some households did not have up-to-date pottery (such as the north slope group); other households stayed à la mode, so their clean-up deposits contain up-to-date styles; and finally, human nature being what it is, Persian destruction debris still found its way into deposits 30 years after the attack. To conclude, yes, 480 is still a useful date for the typo-chronology of Athenian pottery as long as we keep all of these variables in mind. Beyond chronology, the true value of pottery is in the stories it tells us about ancient people who used it. These deposits tell a story of a resilient city, undeterred by their war-ravaged homes, and determined to rebuild better—and surely in need of new crockery.

98 Shear 1993: 411.

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Another Look at the Stoa Gutter Well

Stephen F. Matter and Susan I. Rotroff

1 Introduction

It would be hard to overstate the impact of the Persian destruction of Athens on our understanding of the physical world of the early fifth century, providing as it does a firm chronological anchor for the stylistic sequences of almost every class of Athenian material culture. There is the drawback, however, that the destruction can act like a magnet, attracting every damaged building or cache of debris into its orbit; almost any assemblage of objects stylistically datable to the early fifth century is likely, at least on first inspection, to be labeled ‘Persian destruction debris.’ It has taken many years and the work of many scholars to begin to make adjustments and corrections, as, for example, in Andrew Stewart’s exposition of the complex deposition history of the supposed *Perserschutt* on the Acropolis and its implications for the dating of early Classical sculpture.¹ The present chapter focuses on a less monumental body of material, the Persian destruction deposits in the Athenian Agora. A review of this material in 1993 by T. Leslie Shear, subsequently pursued further by Kathleen Lynch, made an important distinction between deposits discarded very shortly after the event and those that contain a considerable amount of later material and so must have lain on the surface for some time before being dumped into a well or pit.² They did not, however, address the question of deposits that were discarded shortly before the Persian destruction and can therefore be mistakenly read as Persian debris. This topic has now been taken up by Lynch elsewhere in this volume; the present chapter focuses on a single possible example of such a deposit.

1 Stewart 2008.

2 Shear 1993: 414–415, 417; Lynch 2011b: 22; see Chapter 7 in this volume.

2 The Stoa Gutter Well

The Stoa Gutter Well, located on the east side of the Agora, contained a large Late Archaic deposit with an ambiguous terminal date. In what follows, we not only examine the chronology of the well's contents, but also offer an example of the kind of scrutiny that must often be applied to apparent Persian destruction deposits in order to clarify their association with the dated event. The well owes its discovery to the reconstruction of the Stoa of Attalos to serve as the museum and offices of the Agora Excavations. This ambitious plan was laid shortly after the Second World War, and, from 1948 onwards, excavation increasingly focused on preparing the site for reconstruction and ensuring that the existing structure would be able to support a modern building. The slight sinking of a gutter block in front of the Stoa's stylobate would probably have passed unnoticed in other circumstances, but the block needed to be lifted and reset for structural reasons, and doing so revealed the Archaic well that lay beneath it. Homer Thompson, director of the Agora Excavations at that time, oversaw its excavation from May 24 to June 9, 1954, recovering one of the largest Late Archaic deposits of the Agora (Fig. 9.1; for the location, see Lynch, this volume, Fig. 8.1, deposit Q 12:3). It was by all accounts a straightforward undertaking: removal of a single fill of mud and stones in a well 9.70 m deep and 1.2 m in diameter, producing sixty-four boxes of pottery. Ultimately, over 500 objects—almost exclusively pottery—were reconstructed and entered into the Agora inventory. Hundreds more lie in fragments in the storerooms of the Stoa of Attalos.

Thompson's brief preliminary report of the well's excavation included an analysis of the pottery, on which he was advised by ceramic specialists Lucy Talcott and Barbara Philippaki (Fig. 9.2).³ On their authority, he reported that the well's contents dated between 520–510 and 490–480, but, despite the flexibility built into that formula, he added: 'it is hard to escape the conclusion that the disaster which led to its destruction was the Persian sack of 480 B.C.' The large amount of pottery, with the same shapes and hands repeated, further suggested that it represented the stock of a pottery sales room.⁴ The question of why this stock was ten years old at the time of destruction was not raised.

Considerable afterthought must have followed this initial assessment, at least on the part of the pottery specialists. The well received only brief comment in *Agora* XII, Brian Sparkes' and Lucy Talcott's authoritative publication

³ Thompson 1955: 62–66.

⁴ Thompson 1955: 62.



FIGURE 9.1
Excavation of the Stoa Gutter well in
May, 1954
PHOTOGRAPH BY HOMER THOMP-
SON, AGORA ARCHIVES

of the black-gloss and plain pottery from the Agora excavations (sometimes referred to as ‘the Bible’), published fifteen years later, but those comments are striking. The authors agreed that ‘the deposit most probably represents the stock of a potter’s shop ... damaged in the Persian sack and discarded by the owner immediately thereafter,’ but with the surprising addendum that ‘None of the figured pieces is later than 490 B.C.’⁵ Consequently, the date applied to the deposit throughout the book is ‘520–490’—not 480, in clear contradiction of the supposed historical occasion for its destruction.

None of the figured pieces alluded to appear in that book, which is devoted exclusively to black-gloss and plain ceramics, but the dates applied to some of those vessels raise interesting questions. For household and cooking wares from the well, which Sparkes and Talcott did not attempt to date stylistically, a date of ‘context of 520–490’ is always quoted. Eight pieces of black gloss, however, are dated outside the 520–490 range. A cup skyphos stands in the decade 490–480;⁶ since it could date any time in that range, it technically respects the 490 closing date. But seven vessels have been dated later, to ‘ca. 480’.⁷

5 Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 397, under Q 12:3.

6 Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 276, no. 575, pl. 25.

7 An olpe, a Type C cup, and a cup-skyphos are fully published (Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 255,



FIGURE 9.2 Barbara Philippaki examining pottery from the Stoa Gutter Well in July, 1954

PHOTO AGORA ARCHIVES

Normally, the latest piece provides the terminal date of a deposit; if several pieces—even black-gloss pieces—date ‘ca. 480,’ why didn’t Sparkes and Talcott apply a terminal date of 480 to the deposit as a whole?

The answer may lie in the interpersonal dynamics of the individuals involved. Thompson was a scholar with a particular talent for seeing the big picture. Even as he excavated, he was fitting details into a large vision, so it would have been second nature to him to slot this deposit into the saga of the Persian destruction. One could imagine Philippaki and Sparkes and Talcott replying with a ‘but ...,’ and then Thompson pulling directorial rank and sweeping their objections away. But Sparkes and Talcott quietly maintained their position; whatever the big picture might be, they were confident that the most securely datable pottery was earlier than 490. Given the pressure to fit the facts into the historical narrative, there is little question that they gave very serious consideration to the application of that terminal date.

Mary Moore and Mary Zelia Philippides, in their 1986 corpus of the black-figure pottery from the Agora excavations, also quote a date of 520–490 for the fill of the Stoa Gutter Well, although they too strain at the lower limit, placing

264, 276, nos. 271, 410, 578, fig. 6, pls. 13, 19, 25). The other four—two cup-skyphoi and two banded one-handlers—are cited as comparanda to vessels dated ca. 480 (Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 276, 289, under nos. 576, 577, 737; Agora inventory P 24585, P 24586, P 24619, P 24620).

six cup-skyphoi in the decade 490–480.⁸ A decade later, Moore's 1997 volume on the red figure maintains the 520–490 date,⁹ and she places all of the well's small collection of red figure well before that date.

A fuller publication of the contents of the Stoa Gutter Well had appeared by then, however, in a 1986 *Hesperia* article by Sally Roberts. She was the first scholar to reexamine all the contents, including the massive collection of uninventoried pieces, and she lowered its terminal date to 480, in agreement with its supposed historical situation. Both Shear and Lynch adopted this dating,¹⁰ which has been quoted in subsequent literature.¹¹ It seems as though the problem has been solved.

Two points, however, suggest taking another look at this solution. The first is the status and expertise of Philippaki, Sparkes, and Talcott as ceramic scholars. They knew the pottery and the collection extraordinarily well. Talcott, long-time Secretary of the excavations, had spent decades working at the Agora, had the opportunity to revisit and reexamine the pottery and the comparative material time and time again, and took chronology as one of the main foci of her research. Philippaki had a remarkable familiarity with the deposits, having examined the uninventoried sherds from many of them in search of additional significant figured pieces for inventory. Sparkes' residency in Athens was not as long, but his knowledge of the extended corpus of Archaic and Classical pottery from excavations and in museums is encyclopedic. As a result, their opinions need to be given serious consideration.

A close reading of Roberts' article on the well reveals some puzzling inconsistencies and constitutes a second reason to pause before accepting a 480 terminal date and moving on. In this publication, Roberts took the innovative step of placing shape, rather than painting style, in the foreground. Her adoption of a later terminal date rested primarily on the shape of the undersides of some of the red-figure cups: she wrote, 'a lower limit of ca. 480 is indicated by the pointed conical line of the foot of certain cups, Type B.' Further support came from the feet of two Acrocups, previously unnoticed among the uninventoried pottery.¹² Even from the feet alone, their form is diagnostic, with their flat resting surfaces and the small lip at the top of the outer face, the latter a detail

8 Date: Moore and Philippides 1986, p. 335. Pottery: *ibid.*: 283, 284, 288, nos. 1515, 1525, 1527, 1564–1566, pl. 104. Note, though, this amounts to only six vessels out of the over 200 black-figure pieces in the well.

9 Moore 1997: 366.

10 Shear 1993: 464–468; Lynch 2011b: 22.

11 E.g., Townsend 1995: 231; Sapirstein 2013: appendix, 5.

12 Roberts 1986: 4.

that Sparkes and Talcott explicitly date to the second quarter of the 5th century.¹³ Acrocups occur very occasionally in Persian destruction debris at the Agora,¹⁴ and their presence argues for a post 480 discard date for the Stoa Gutter Well deposit.

Roberts made significant progress in reconciling the contradictions that had bedeviled the deposit, but in doing so she raised new questions that remain unaddressed. Beyond her discussion of the red figure cups, Roberts' article is largely limited to a catalogue, often little more than a list summarizing published information. It includes nearly 90% of the inventoried vessels, but many are listed only by number, and almost none are given a date, so it is not possible to reconstruct her overall concept of Late Archaic ceramic chronology. The dates she does give usually follow the standard chronology, but there are occasional deviations. She placed two black-figure cup-skyphoi in 500, rather than accepting Moore and Philippides' date of 490–480,¹⁵ and while Sparkes and Talcott dated the black-gloss Type C cups in the two decades before 480, Roberts moved them back significantly, to 520–510,¹⁶ probably on the basis of the wide cone of the underside.

More surprising adjustments appear among the red figure, another important piece in the Stoa Gutter Well puzzle, but one that is outside the scope of the present article. It has been repeatedly remarked that, not only is the red figure in the Stoa Gutter Well significantly earlier than the Persian sack, it is also significantly earlier than the accompanying black-figure.¹⁷ This disparity between black and red figure has been noticed throughout the Agora's Persian deposits, and it has been cited as an argument for adjusting the red-figure chronology. Roberts' downdating of the Type B cups on the basis of their shapes erased the discrepancy, but it did not take account of the figured decoration of those same cups. This involved moving works by Epiktetos as well as those of the Epileios Painter, the Painter of Bologna 433, and the Gorgos cup down to 480 from their usual position in the late 6th century. Shear accepted these dates as confirmation of a 480 destruction date, marking the pieces as the latest in the deposit, but there has been little discussion of this topic by scholars of figured pottery.¹⁸

13 Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 94.

14 Shear notes one Acrocup of this flat-bottomed form in each of two unquestioned Persian deposits, G 3:1, and M 17:4 (Shear 1993: 444, 462), which suggests that the form may have existed before 479, but was rare.

15 Moore and Philippides 1986: 284, nos. 1525, 1527; Roberts 1986: 26, nos. 46, 47, fig. 16.

16 Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 263–264, nos. 407, 408, 420, fig. 4, pls. 19, 20; Roberts 1986: 10, 13, nos. 3, 5, 11, figs. 2, 7, pl. 3.

17 Neer 2002: 202–205; Rotroff 2009; 2020. Lynch (2011a: 71) offers a solution particular to the Stoa Gutter Well.

18 A recent summary of scholarship on Epiktetos, for instance, ends his career around 490

At this point it should be clear that straightforward analysis and arguments about the physical features of the pottery in the Stoa Gutter Well do not lead to a resolution of this problem. To make progress, we need to try a different approach.

3 A Model: Boudicca and the First Colchester Potters' Shop

In 60 or 61 CE, the Celtic queen Boudicca, in revolt against the occupying Roman forces, besieged and sacked several settlements in southern England. Roman forces soon defeated the queen and reestablished Rome's sovereignty, but the episode left behind a distinctive layer of debris known as the Boudiccan Destruction Horizon, which has been identified and excavated at many sites over the past century. Like the Athenian Persian destruction debris, it has played an important role in the construction of chronologies, particularly that of the fine red ware known as Samian (usually termed *terra sigillata* by Mediterranean archaeologists), serving as a fixed point for determining the introduction of forms and the activity of potters. British archaeologist Martin Millett undertook an exhaustive examination of the whole of the Boudiccan material in the 1980s.¹⁹ His overarching concern was the degree of variability present in deposits associated with one and the same historical event, and he chose the Boudiccan horizon as a body of material on which he could test the hypothesis that the deposits in question had been correctly identified as Boudiccan debris. He was well aware of the implications of this study for ceramic chronology, and introduced his article with these words:

Historically dated pottery assemblages have been widely used in the establishment of ceramic chronologies ... The methods employed in the construction of these chronologies have hitherto been comparatively unsophisticated and the results have rarely been subjected to critical scrutiny. Further, in most of the development and use of these chronologies it has been the presence of specific types (for instance stamps or decorated sherds) that has been considered significant rather than the overall composition of the assemblages.²⁰

(Sapirstein 2013, appendix, 18–19), but Dimitris Paleothodoros, in his 2004 study of the career of that painter, found no difficulty in accepting Roberts' lowered dates (Paleothodoros 2004: 13, 44, 135–136).

19 Millett 1987.

20 Millett 1987: 93.

Despite the passage of some decades, these words are eerily appropriate to the chronological difficulties surrounding the Persian destruction. Like Millett, we aspire in the statistical analysis below to move away from the particulars of shape and design towards a consideration of the assemblages as a whole.

Millett was the first to apply a statistical approach to the question of variability among contemporary assemblages. He focused on the Samian ware because, while some proportion of the coarser ceramics had been discarded, he could assume that all of the distinctive and attractive Samian had been kept. He used techniques such as principal components analysis to study the variation among three features—forms, makers' stamps, and decoration—of Samian potsherds in ninety-two supposedly Boudiccan deposits in Colchester, London, and Verulamium.

One of the largest among the Boudiccan deposits is an assemblage known as the First Colchester Potters' Shop, excavated in that city in 1927. It was identified from the beginning as the debris from a potter's establishment, based on the abundance and homogeneity of the pottery.²¹ Excavation of a thick layer of burnt clay and wattle two years later in the lot next door provided evidence of a catastrophic destruction, most likely in the context of the Boudiccan revolt. As a particularly rich collection of Samian ware, the deposit was an important piece of the evidence for that ware's chronology. Thus, the First Colchester Potters' Shop parallels the Stoa Gutter Well deposit on three counts: as debris from a potter's shop, as a supposed victim of a widespread, dated historical destruction, and as a key support for the dating of fine pottery.

As far as we are aware, no doubts had previously been raised about the Boudiccan date of the assemblage. Millett found, however, that in all three of the features examined—form, stamps, and decoration—the Colchester Potters' Shop tended towards a slightly earlier date than other deposits, including those also identified as potter's debris. He therefore advised caution in using the Colchester Potters' Shop collection in the construction of Samian chronology.²²

21 Hull 1958: 153, site 127.

22 Millett 1987: 106.

4 A Statistical Analysis of the Agora Persian Deposits: Introduction

This example suggested that a similar statistical analysis of Persian debris might be able to detect subtle variations among deposits that could clarify the chronological position of the Stoa Gutter Well deposit. The differing natures of Classical Greek and Early Roman pottery, and the ways it has been studied and classified, make it impossible to apply Miller's methodology directly to the Persian debris. Sigillata/Samian ware was mass produced in a factory setting, with controls that resulted in a rigid definition of shapes. The typology in use for sigillata today describes a series of discrete shapes that do not gradually morph from one to another; rather, after a limited span, a shape is replaced by another shape.²³ Shape has taken second place to decoration, however, in the analysis of Attic figured pottery. A shape may develop fluidly through datable stages, while remaining the same in its basic details, and shapes are often linked with hands or production groups, the two developing in tandem. Roman potters' stamps provide unequivocal evidence of authorship, in contrast to the more subjective attribution of Greek pottery on stylistic grounds. The Persian debris (twenty-two deposits) also provides a much smaller body of material than the ninety-two deposits of Boudiccan debris.

A different type of statistical study, however, can throw some light on the question. We began with the black-figure, the most closely datable material found in relatively large numbers in the Persian debris and, like Millett's Samian, an admired fine ware that was rarely if ever discarded. Out of the twenty-two deposits studied by Shear and Lynch, we selected fifteen that contain sufficient amounts of black-figure, giving a total of 655 vessels. This assemblage includes almost all of the vessels that have been entered into the excavation inventory, though not uninventoried fragments; these, however, constitute a small group and are generally neither attributable nor closely datable. We used the dates given in the main Agora corpora.²⁴ Although there is some disagreement about chronology among scholars in general, this ensured that all fragments were independently dated according to the same chronological framework. The one unavoidable exception is vessels from deposit J 2:4, which was excavated after the publication of those works; for those we used the dates from its publication by Lynch in 2011.²⁵

23 Whether this is the way sigillata actually developed is impossible to say, but these are the facts as Hans Dragendorff and other early analysts have established them for us.

24 Moore and Philippides 1986; Moore 1997.

25 Lynch 2011b.

We then expanded our project to include the black-gloss pottery, which is much more abundant, although not as closely datable. It has the disadvantage that its dates are more heavily dependent upon context than those of the figured pieces; many owe a terminal date of 480 simply to the fact that they were found in supposed Persian deposits, and this injected a greater degree of circularity into our study. There is also less assurance that all excavated examples had been retained. The larger numbers, however, made the experiment appealing; we were now able to include twenty-one of the twenty-two Shear/Lynch deposits, with a total of over 1,243 dated items. Again, this does not represent every black-gloss vessel from the deposits, but rather the inventoried vessels, augmented by counts of uninventoried fragments that were recorded by Lynch and, in some cases, by Shear.²⁶ The sample is skewed, but it is the only one available without an examination of the context pottery that goes beyond the limits of this exploratory study.

5 Methods and Results

The application of statistical analysis to ceramics is now commonplace, but few ceramic specialists are familiar with the sequence of calculations involved. We offer below an introduction to the methods employed in this study, followed by a discussion of the results of their application. Our aim was to determine whether the analysis could adjudicate between the two claims described at the beginning of this chapter: that the filling of the Stoa Gutter Well is Persian destruction debris discarded shortly after 480 (based on historical probability); or that the whole deposit dates slightly earlier than other victims of the Persians and thus should be excluded from that group (based on stylistic dating of the black-figure pottery).

To determine if the dates of the deposits differed, we conducted separate analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests for the End date (E date) and Mean date (M date = (E date + Beginning date)/2) for black-figure and black-gloss pottery.²⁷

²⁶ Shear reexamined the context pottery and recorded counts and dates for black-gloss pottery for nine of his twenty-one deposits.

²⁷ The E date and B date are the chronological limits of the date of a vessel, which is estimated on stylistic grounds, that is, on details of shape, proportions, and, for figured ware, the style of the painting. The B date for a deposit is the B date for the earliest vessel in the deposit, and the E date is the E date for the latest vessel in the deposit. The mean date attempts to incorporate some of the uncertainty in the dating.

Because many archaeologists and historians do not have a background in statistical analyses, here we begin with an example using the End date for black-figure pottery within the deposits. The philosophy behind this type of analysis is that we can never prove anything because we will never have all the data or observations. We can, however, disprove things. For this reason, statistical hypotheses need to be falsifiable statements. The classic example is 'all swans are white'. The observation of any non-white swan would falsify this statement. For most statistical analyses we begin with what is termed the 'null hypothesis'. This hypothesis is usually exactly opposite of what we 'hypothesize'. In our case, the null hypothesis is that End dates of black-figure pottery *do not* differ among the deposits.²⁸ In actuality, we hypothesize that the Stoa Gutter Well deposit may be earlier than the other deposits, but statistically, we are trying to disprove the null hypothesis to reveal differences.

The procedure begins with the omnibus ANOVA to determine if any deposits differ in their end dates for black figure. Another way of thinking about this is if knowing which deposit a piece of pottery was found in provides any more information than the mean End date of the pottery across all deposits. As an example, if you were asked to guess the end date of a random piece of pottery from the total assemblage, your best guess would be the mean end date of all pottery, if there were no differences among deposits. However, if there were significant differences among deposits, your best guess would be the mean end date for the deposit in which that piece of pottery was found. The mean (or average) is calculated as the sum of all end dates divided by the number of samples. The mean End date across all samples is called the 'grand mean' and represents the statistical 'null hypothesis' or 'null model'. The null model assumes that all pottery comes from the same underlying distribution of end dates with a mean equal to the grand mean and variance equal to the observed variance. Variance is a measure of the spread of data. Variance is derived by first calculating the 'sum of squares' or the sum of the squared differences between each observation of a particular datum and the mean of the observations.²⁹ For the E date for black figure, the sum of squares is calculated as the sum of the squared difference between the grand mean of E dates (-491.67)³⁰ and the E date of each piece of all the pottery being examined, which turns out to be 77,344. In ANOVA this value is called the total sums of squares. The sums of

28 This parallels Millett's 'working hypothesis' for his analysis of the Boudiccan material: that all of the groups had been correctly identified as Boudiccan (Millett 1987: 94).

29 If the difference were not squared, the sum would always be zero. In some alternative formulations the absolute values of the difference have been used.

30 For purposes of arithmetical calculation, we use negative numbers to represent dates BCE.

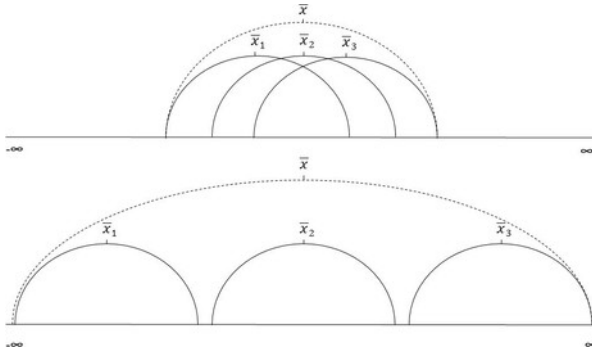


FIGURE 9.3 A number line illustrating three distributions. The top shows a case where means of group 1, 2, and 3 would not be different while the bottom shows a case where they would.

squares provide a measure of how variable the data are, but it is not that useful for comparison because it increases with the number of samples. To make it comparable, we divide the sums of squares by the ‘degrees of freedom’ (df)³¹ to calculate the ‘average’ variance (or Total Mean Square in ANOVA terms). In the case of the E dates, the sample size is $N = 655$ and we lose one degree of freedom, so the variance is $77,344/654$ or 118.26 .

To see how much variation is explained by assigning pottery to deposits, we use a similar procedure, but here we calculate the variance between the grand mean and the mean E date for each deposit. If this variance is large, deposits differ greatly in their E dates, if it is small, they do not (Fig. 9.3). For the E dates of the black-figure pottery, the sums of squares after assigning them to deposits is $11,399$. Here, the df is 14 because we have 15 deposits and we lose one for calculating the grand mean, thus the variance (or Groups Mean Square) is $11,399/14 = 814.2$.

The next value we need, the error (or residual) sums of squares, we can get by subtraction. This is the total sums of squares minus the groups sums of squares. For the black-figure E date this is $77,344 - 11,399 = 65,945$. Again, we must adjust this value based on the degrees of freedom. Here, we lose one degree of freedom for each of the 15 group means we calculated, thus $df = 655 - 15 = 640$, and the error variance (Mean Square Error) is $65,946/640 = 103.0$.

31 Calculating the mean of a group of numbers ‘fixes’ one value. For instance, if the mean of 1,2, and Y is 2, we know that $Y = 3$, and thus it is not ‘free’ to vary. When we calculate a mean, we lose one degree of freedom.

those that did not. These groups are coded with different letters. The end dates of black figure (Fig. 9.4) have two main groups 'a' and 'b' with the end dates of black figure being significantly earlier for b (Q 20:1 and R 12:4) than for a. The end dates for two deposits with 'a,b' (E 15:6 and H 13:5) are not significantly different than either group a or group b. The end dates of black figure for the Stoa Gutter Well group with all the other presumed Persian destruction deposits except Q 20:1 and R 12:4.

We found a similar result analyzing the mean date for black figure. There were significant differences in the mean dates of black-figure pottery among the deposits ($F_{14,640} = 9.45$, $P > 0.01$). Post-hoc analyses indicated that the Stoa Gutter Well fill grouped with the other deposits except for again Q 20:1 and R 12:4 which had significantly earlier mean dates (Fig. 9.5). The mean date for deposit D 17:10 could not be distinguished from either the earlier or later groups of deposits.

Analysis of the deposits additionally containing black-gloss pottery tells a similar, but less clear, story. There were significant differences among the deposits in the end dates of their black-gloss pottery ($F_{20,1487} = 2.23$, $P = 0.01$). The end dates of black-gloss pottery for deposit L 5:2 ('b') are significantly earlier than several deposits, including that in the Stoa Gutter Well ('a', Fig. 9.6). However, most deposits cannot be distinguished based on the end dates of their black-gloss pottery ('a,b'). The mean date for black-gloss also showed significant differences among deposits ($F_{20,1487} = 3.16$, $P < 0.01$), but the grouping pattern was more complicated (Fig. 9.7). The mean dates of black-gloss for most deposits were not significantly different. Deposit L 5:2 was again significantly earlier than eight other deposits, including that in the Stoa Gutter Well. Deposit G 6:3 was significantly earlier than three deposits, but not the Stoa Gutter Well fill.

Overall, the analyses indicate that the material in the Stoa Gutter Well groups with many other deposits.

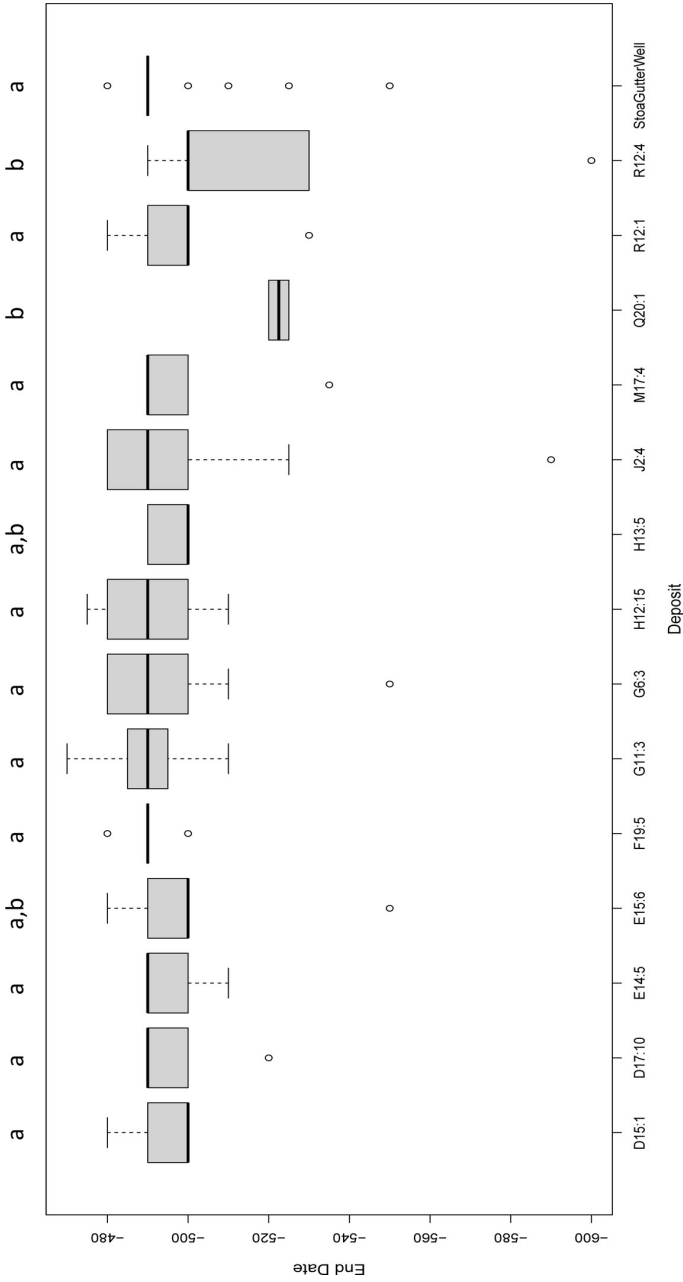


FIGURE 9.4 End dates for black-figure pottery from presumed Persian destruction deposits in the Athenian Agora. Different letters represent deposits with statistically significant differences in dates (experiment-wide $P < 0.05$). Deposits with two letters could not be distinguished from either group. For the box and whisker plots (Figs. 9.4–9.7), the dark bar represents the median (most common observation), the box the 25th to 75th percentiles, the caps approximately 2 standard deviations, and points data beyond that range.

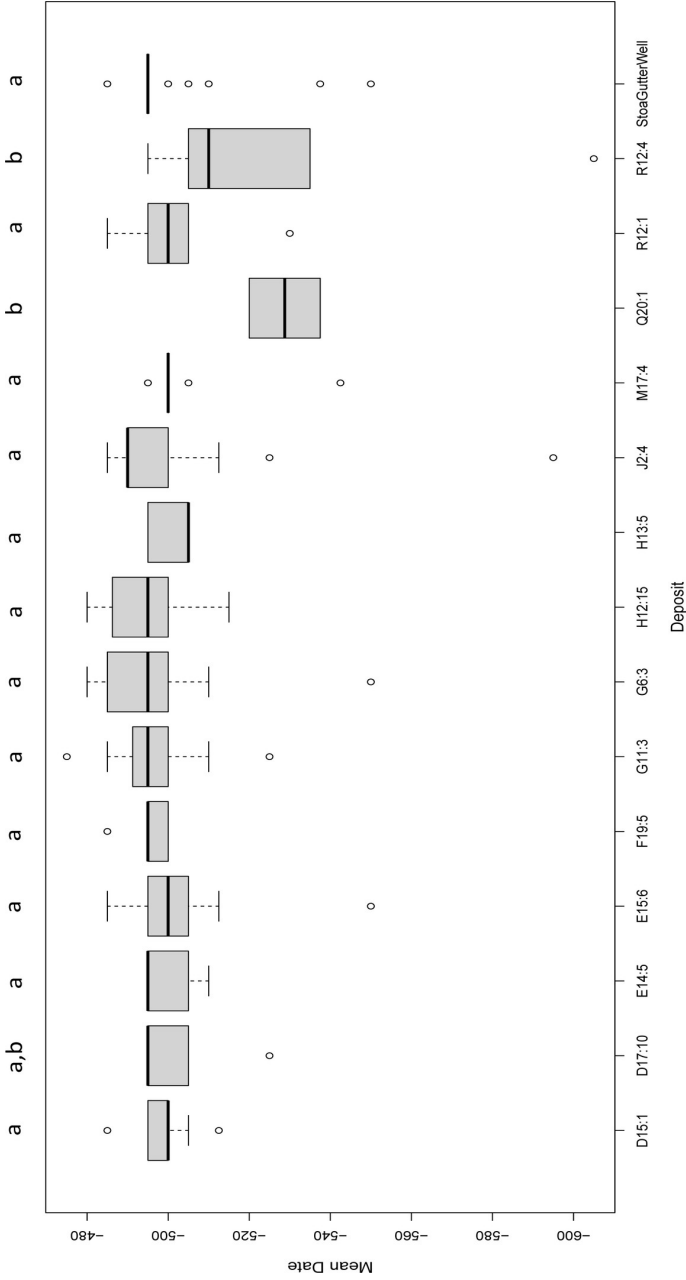


FIGURE 9.5 Mean dates for black-figure pottery from presumed Persian destruction deposits in the Athenian Agora

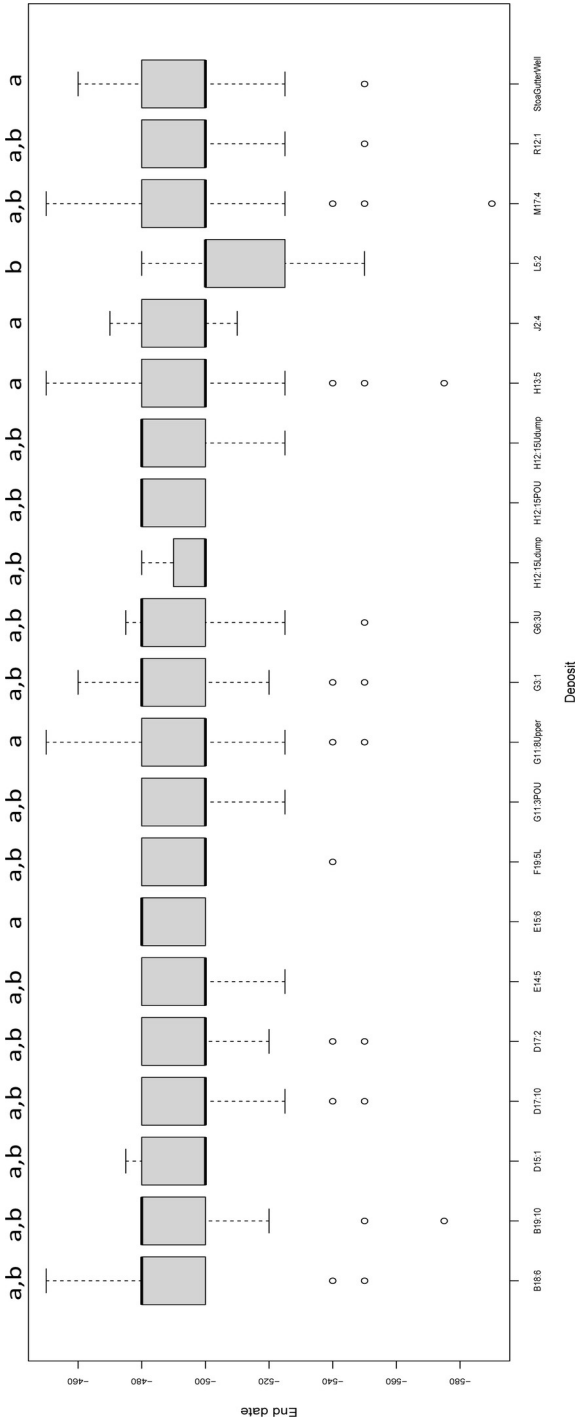


FIGURE 9.6 End dates for black-gloss pottery from presumed Persian destruction deposits in the Athenian Agora

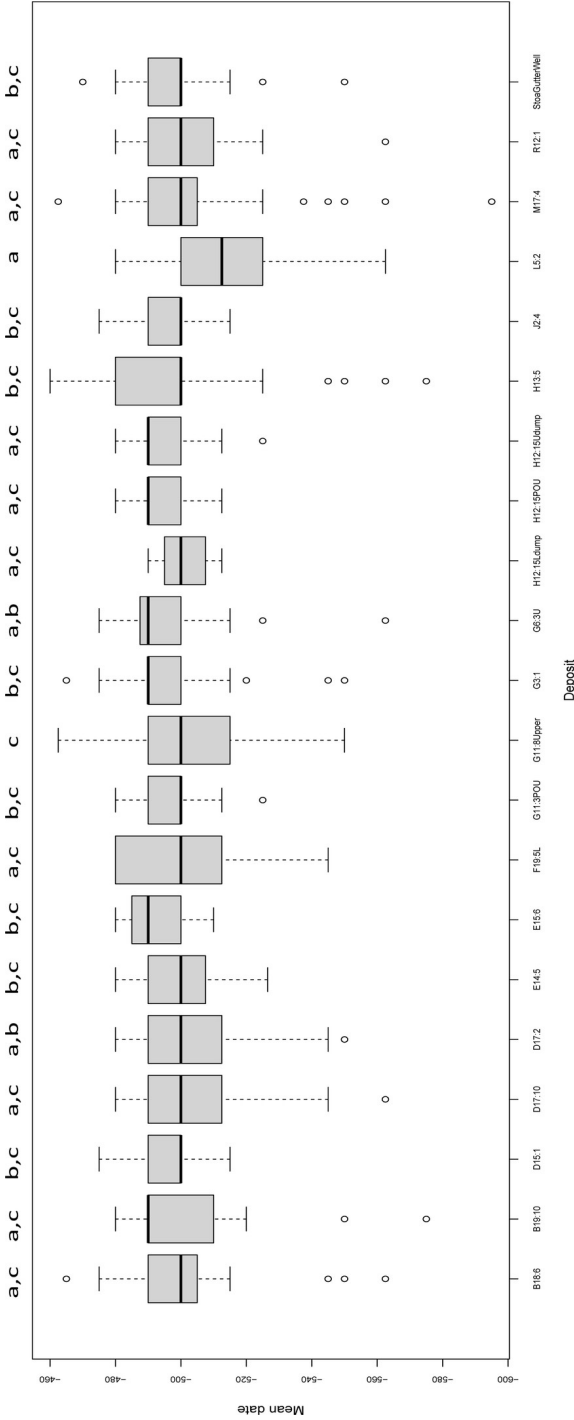


FIGURE 9.7 Mean dates for black-gloss pottery from presumed Persian destruction deposits in the Athenian Agora

6 Conclusion

Our analysis provides no support for a pre-Persian date for the filling of the Stoa Gutter Well. The statistical tests comparing pairs of deposits show the end and mean dates of its black figure to be comparable to that in most of the Persian deposits (Figs. 9.4, 9.5). The more loosely dated but also more numerous black-glaze also fails to support an earlier date for the Stoa Gutter Well (Figs. 9.6, 9.7). The analysis provides no obstacles to Roberts' shifting of the date of deposit from 490 to 480 and allows us to use the well's contents more confidently as a chronological marker. It thus resolves the problem set out at the beginning of this article. At the same time, it reveals other features and anomalies that need to be addressed.

The plot of the end dates of the black figure in the Stoa Gutter Well (Fig. 9.4, far right) emphasizes this pottery's remarkable chronological homogeneity; the single dark line of the median date coincides with the box and whisker of nearly two standard deviations. This distribution of dates is what would be expected in the sales room of a successful business, where pottery would be moving quickly from kiln to shop to buyer.³² The plot also, however, reveals several remarkably early pieces in the well, indicated by the outlying circles below the dark median line in the box and whisker plot. This is hardly unusual—half of the Persian deposits have one such early outlier each. The higher number of these outliers is of interest, though, and we wondered at first if these might be earlier products of the shop that were purposefully retained, perhaps as displays of a founding ancestor's work. Their fragmentary state does not support that notion, but if the business was a family affair that had been in operation for multiple generations, fragments of much earlier products may have accumulated in out of the way places and ultimately found their way into the well.

The early position of deposits Q 20:1 and R 12:4 in the plot of black-figure End and Mean dates (Figs. 9.4, 9.5) points out some of the limitations of our analysis and underlines the need for a variety of different tools in assessing deposit chronology. Our study is primarily focused on the black-figure pottery in the Stoa Gutter Well that led to its earlier dating, and to what degree that pottery varies from other black figure in our sample. It does not embrace the full range of finds that have an impact on the dating of some of the deposits. The case of Q 20:1 shows how crucial some of that other material can be. This small and poorly documented pit contained only six pieces of pottery, includ-

32 The similarly close grouping in deposit F 19:5 at first glance is interesting, but the number is too small (5 vessels) for this to be very meaningful.

ing three black-figure fragments, two of which are unquestionably early (before ca. 520 according to the standard chronology); perhaps the deposit should have been omitted from the analysis on the basis of its small size. But it also yielded an ostrakon of Xanthippos, a candidate for ostracism in the 480s, and a fragment of a red-figure krater dating around 490,³³ making a Persian connection feasible. The pit's contents thus emerge as a small miscellany that does not represent the broad picture of ceramics in use at the time of its deposit.

Deposit R 12:4 presents more of a puzzle. Like the Stoa Gutter Well, it was discovered when a block of the Stoa was lifted, but its fill contained much less pottery: fourteen black-figure and three black-gloss vessels were inventoried, along with a larger collection of plain ware.³⁴ The preliminary publication gave a terminal date of 500 on the basis of the black figure.³⁵ Sparkes and Talcott moved that date to 480, observing that the black-figure vessels—mostly amphoras and jugs that would have had their first use as fine tableware, some as early as the 540s–520s—'had been demoted to serve as water-pots,' and that the plain, unglazed water pots found with them supported a later date.³⁶ Unfortunately, they never explained what particular features of those plain pots they saw as significant chronological markers. Shear, presumably hoping to throw more light on the question, pointed out the similarity between the single black-gloss water jug in the deposit and black-gloss jugs in other more certainly Persian debris.³⁷ It is still a very strange case, and it invites further investigation of the situation of the well and its immediate surroundings to try to discover what made so many fine old pots available for service, and why no clearly newer ones ever joined them.

Another deposit, L 5:2, omitted from the figured analysis because of its small amount of black figure, stands out as early in the analysis of the End and Mean dates of the black gloss (Fig. 9.6, 9.7). The nature of this deposit is very different from the others: a large, irregular pit dug down through bedrock in the middle of the Panathenaic Way.³⁸ This location, obstructing the city's most important thoroughfare, suggests it was dug in disturbed times, and it contained frag-

33 Contents summarized by Shear (1993: 468). Thompson 1958: 158 n. 25, pl. 45b (red-figure volute krater); Lang 1990: 135, no. 1068 (ostrakon).

34 Summary of contents, Shear 1993: 471–472.

35 Thompson 1956: 62–64, pls. 20–22. Note that the plot in Fig. 9.4 shows their mean end date (the dark horizontal line) as 500.

36 Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 398.

37 Shear 1993: 400–401. The oinochoe was not published by Sparkes and Talcott, only listed as a rare example of a pre-Persian jug of this form (Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 244, under no. 109, Agora inventory number P 24662).

38 Shear 1993: 402, 427, 459–461.

ments of architectural blocks from a building that was probably destroyed by the Persians. This situation, along with a few fragments of pottery stylistically datable near 480, constitute good reasons to accept a Persian destruction date. All of the pottery, however, consists of sherds, not pots, more like ceramics from a stratigraphical sequence than that from a well. Over fifty fragments of much earlier vessels, ranging from prehistory to the seventh century, attest to the early strata that the diggers disturbed in opening the pit. The early date of the black gloss—also single sherds, not whole pots—reflects the incorporation of long-broken pottery unearthed while digging the pit and thrown back in when filling it. In singling out deposit L 5:2, the analysis signals the need to pay close attention to the nature of each deposit: the deposition processes for a newly dug pit and an abandoned well are different, and the complexion of the deposits they contain will differ as well.

The Stoa Gutter Well deposit is only one of thousands of pieces of physical evidence that go into constructing a picture of the material world of the early fifth century, but a close look at the issues surrounding its chronology raises questions that are worth considering. Can we really date ancient pottery accurately enough to recognize a ten-year gap between deposition dates? Put differently, can we truly date ancient pottery within a ten-year span? A date within 25 years may be more truthful—we can feel very confident that the ‘real’ date is somewhere in that range—but it is also less useful, hence the need to continue our efforts to refine and to test the credibility of those refinements.

A second question is whether it is possible, using the received, conventional dates, to identify deposits with an earlier skew, to distinguish between the Persian and the shortly pre-Persian. The statistical analyses undertaken in this chapter provide reason for optimism here, as they allow us to compare whole assemblages rather than individual pots and types. Progress here, however, requires a very large and sufficiently diverse body of material. Inclusion of the pottery from the Marathon Mound, the putative burial place of the fallen heroes of the Battle of Marathon in 490 BCE, and the pottery from a deposit in Eretria currently under study by Tamara Saggini, which she associates with the Persian attack on the city in that same year,³⁹ would contribute both more data and another fixed chronological point, a decade earlier than the Persian debris. Incorporation of statistical methods into further studies would throw light on both the development of the ceramics and the utility of pottery for distinguishing among chronologically similar deposits.

39 Saggini 2019. The full publication of the deposit has now appeared (Saggini 2024), too late for inclusion of that data in this study.

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Revolution or Evolution? Reassessing the Relationship between Vase and Free Painting after 480 BCE

Federico Figura

1 Introduction¹

This chapter deals with periodization in ancient Greek art. Specifically, I intend to discuss modern attempts to detect caesuras by reflecting on how literary sources and archaeological data have been used to establish them. Recently, the transition between Archaic and Classical periods has been at the centre of a heated debate in this respect. Several reassessments of material data and ancient sources have challenged long-standing assumptions, indeed showing how difficult it is to identify clear boundaries.²

In this chapter, I apply the same deconstructivist approach to Attic vase-painting by focusing on a specific topic: the relationship between vase- and free-painting. When outlining the transition between Archaic and Classical vase-painting, nearly all scholars stress the ‘unprecedented’ influence of another medium: large-scale painting. As John Boardman remarked, ‘previously, there is no reason to suspect that “major painting” on panel or wall was much unlike vase-painting.’³ But we know from literary sources that, during the second quarter of the fifth century, artists such as Polygnotos of Thasos and the Athenian Mikon painted large cycles in some of the most relevant cities of Greece. Buildings like the Stoa Poikile and the Theseion in Athens, the Les-

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- 1 I would like to heartfully thank the organizers of the conference, Janric, Floris and Josine, for giving me the extraordinary opportunity to take part in it and for their continuous support. This chapter benefited greatly from the insightful discussions held at Ravenstein, and in particular, I express my gratitude to Astrid Lindenlauf, Marion Meyer, Eric Moormann, and Gianfranco Adornato for their suggestions. Finally, allow me to dedicate this work to Andy Stewart, whom I had the fortune and honour to meet in Berkeley a few months before the conference: *semel pro semper*.
 - 2 Maderna 2007; Lapatin 2010: 257; Barringer 2014: 147–149, 189–193; Meyer 2017: 43–70, 244–264, 361–422; Adornato 2019; and the several essays in Meyer and Adornato 2020.
 - 3 Boardman 1989: 11.

che of the Cnidians at Delphi, and the temple of Athena Areia at Plataea were adorned by wall/panel paintings, introducing a new, Classical style.⁴ This new language, as Robertson stressed, made a profound break in tradition by trying to suggest the solidity and depth of figures both beyond and around them, in contrast to what Archaic art had hitherto conceived.⁵ Equally revolutionary was the exploration of the inner worlds of the figures, their character and emotions.⁶ Relying on information provided by literary sources, but also on the different technical possibilities offered by wall/panel surface, scholars such as Boardman recognized ‘a growing dependence on the example of major painting’ for vase-painting following the Persian Wars.⁷ This dependence would have brought several, likewise revolutionary developments:

1. Style

- The introduction of separate ground lines within the composition and, more generally, a new conception of space.⁸
- Bolder foreshortenings and an increasing use of three-quarter views in rendering figures, compared to the limited attempts of the previous generations.⁹

2. Technique

- A change in the use of relief lines to delineate the outline of figures, influenced by large-scale painting on a neutral background.¹⁰
- The development of a certain polychromy on white-ground vases, a class often thought to be particularly sensitive to innovations in large-scale painting.¹¹

4 Richter 1958: 89; Buschor 1978: 133; von Bothmer 1987: 6; Boardman 1989: 8, 11–13; Stewart 2008: 8; Stansbury-O’Donnell 2014: 146–152, who entitles the chapter focusing on Early Classical painting ‘The Polygnotan Revolution’; Stewart 2021; La Torre 2022.

5 Robertson 1992: 133–135.

6 See most recently Stewart 2021: 215.

7 Boardman 2001: 272, but see also Buschor 1978: 138; Moreno 1979: 632; Lydakias 2004: 107; and the chapters devoted to Early Classical vase-painting in handbooks by Boardman (1989) and Robertson (1992).

8 Richter 1958: 90; Robertson 1975: 241–242, 253–254; 1992: 133, 135; Buschor 1978: 140–141; Moreno 1979: 655; Boardman 1989: 11–12; McNiven 1989: 118; Denoyelle 1997: 17; Lydakias 2004: 107; Tanner 2006: 169; Stewart 2008: 103–104; Roscino 2010: 79; Stansbury-O’Donnell 2014: 148, 151; Chiarini 2018: 24; Plantzos 2018: 115–116.

9 Richter 1958: 89; Buschor 1978: 138, 140; Moreno 1979: 638–639, 643; Boardman 1989: 12–13; Denoyelle 1997: 17; Lydakias 2004: 112; Tanner 2006: 169; Stansbury-O’Donnell 2014: 151.

10 Williams 1991a: 112–115.

11 Walter-Karydi 2002: 76–77.

3. Iconography

- A new interest in representing emotions, in particular *ēthos* and *pathos*.¹²
- A peculiar ‘taste for stillness’ in scene depictions, as opposed to Archaic art’s focalization on the action’s climax.¹³
- A spread of scenes depicting Amazonomachy, Ilioupersis and Centauro-machy, often in connection with the Persian Wars.¹⁴

In short, the revolution in large-scale painting is regarded as the driving force behind the ‘passive’ development of a new Classical language by vase-painters—and 480 still represents a watershed date concerning this change. Indeed, scholarship has nearly always approached the relationship between the two media in a hierarchical way, and even in the most recent accounts of the topic, this scheme is reiterated without any substantial problematization.¹⁵

It is my intention to challenge these assumptions by bridging the gap between vase-painting of the second quarter of the fifth century and that of the previous generation (510–480). It is not possible to ascertain whether a post-480 chronology has been assumed for the vases that display these innovations, as this is never explicitly stated. The absolute dates proposed here are primarily grounded on the stylistic development following the periodization proposed by Beazley and subsequently refined by other scholars; as such, they must be taken *cum grano salis*. However, I believe that this chronological framework is not too far from reality. Recent analyses by Rotroff and Neer have suggested lowering the introduction of the red-figure technique by about five to ten years compared to the generally accepted date of 530–525, or extending the activity of the Pioneers beyond 500, respectively.¹⁶ Both proposals must be taken with great caution. The first relies on an argument *ex silentio*—as Rotroff herself admits—and must lead us to reconsider the relationship between the

12 Robertson 1975: 263; Diepolder 1976: 14–15; Moreno 1979: 637–641; Boardman 1989: 13; Denoyelle 1997: 17; Lydakis 2004: 107; Tanner 2006: 182–183; Stansbury-O’Donnell 2014: 152.

13 Robertson 1975: 251, 266; Buschor 1978: 135–136, 140; Boardman 2001: 92; 2005: 64; Stewart 2008: 101–103; Stansbury-O’Donnell 2014: 148; Plantzos 2018: 116.

14 Prange 1989: 90; Schefold, Jung 1989: 283–285; Ferrari 2000: 120; Mangold 2000: 112; Boardman 2016: 206; Themelis 2019: 108–109.

15 A passage by Robertson (1992: 135), referring to spatial innovations introduced by large-scale painters, is highly illustrative of this: ‘This tentative approach to the dissolution of the picture-surface, the opening of a window on a feigned world, would not naturally occur to a vase-painter. Most vase-painters ignore it; and when they do attempt it their efforts have all the air of imitation’. For recent contributions on this topic, see Stansbury-O’Donnell 2014 and Plantzos 2018.

16 Rotroff 2020; Neer 2002: 186–205.

first steps of red-figure vase-painting and the Siphnian treasury.¹⁷ The *direct* connection proposed by Neer between Euphronios' krater in Arezzo and the metopes of the Athenian treasury at Delphi is problematic for three reasons: 1) it is not clear under what circumstances the painter may have *copied* the reliefs; 2) the dating of the treasury to 490 is not certain, as Neer assumes;¹⁸ and 3) the straightforward consequence that they must be chronologically coeval.¹⁹ What is important for the present chapter is that most of the mentioned painters were active *before* 480, as evidenced by the debris in the Athenian Agora or the Marathon tumulus.²⁰ It therefore seems, as Neer rightly states, that a "post-Pioneer" style had developed by the time of Marathon.²¹

Because of the top-down role assigned to large-scale painting, vase-painting produced after the Persian Wars has rarely been contextualized in relation to earlier developments. By providing an illustrative selection, the archaeological evidence will be considered to understand whether a caesura after 480 can indeed be detected.

2 Anchoring Innovation in Attic Vase-Painting

Pausanias' description of Polygnotos' paintings at Delphi testifies to some rather complex solutions in terms of composition, including the breaking of *isokephalia* (namely, having the heads of all figures on approximately the same level) and the figures' arrangement on different planes.²² As Stansbury-O'Donnell has shown, the prepositions used by the author can be divided into two groups, indicating either a horizontal or vertical relationship between the figures.²³

17 On the Siphnian Treasury as chronological anchor for Archaic Greek art, see Kellner in this volume, p. 127.

18 See Fittschen 2003: 13–15; von den Hoff 2009: 98; Meyer 2020: 27–33.

19 Furthermore, the architectural sculptures display a coexistence of archaisms and more advanced formulas that seems to reflect different artistic conceptions and variously trained sculptors at work: de La Coste-Messelière 1957: 194–195, 246–267; Ridgway 1977: 236–238; Partida 2000: 58–60.

20 On the Agora pits, see Rotroff, Lynch, and van den Eijnde and Laughy in this volume. They claim, as I accept as well, that they contain *Perserschutt*. Among the painters attested, we find Epiktetos, the Eucharides Painter, the Kleophrades Painter, Myson, Euphronios (manner of), Douris, and perhaps the Berlin Painter (Neer 2002: 202–203). From the Marathon tumulus comes an important fragment by Onesimos: Marathon, inv. 848 (Williams 1991c: 44, fig. 5; Neer 2002: 192–193).

21 Neer 2002: 195.

22 Paus. 10.25–31.

23 Stansbury-O'Donnell 1990: 215–216. Words such as 'ὑπό', 'ὑπέρ', 'ἄνωθεν' or 'ἐπάνω' clearly belong to the latter group.

A select group of vases belonging to the second quarter of the fifth century, sometimes dubbed 'Polygnotean' by modern art historians, display a similar spatial approach.²⁴ The eponymous krater (ca. 455) by the Niobid Painter is probably the most cited example, showing figures set on different levels in the field.²⁵ However, this approach is unique within the group: the majority of these vases display a single-frieze composition of traditional type, enlivened by various plane lines, which do not yield different levels.²⁶ Another peculiar characteristic of these vases is that some figures appear to be partially hidden by rocky formations.²⁷ This has been associated with a formal solution employed by Mikon in the Stoa Poikile.²⁸ In fact, a passage by Zenobius (4.28), a Greek sophist of the second century AD, recounts that, within a battle scene, Mikon showed only the helmet and one of the eyes of the soldier Boutes, while the rest of the body was concealed by a rock placed in front of him. Features such as the figures' disposition on different planes, animated by rocky ground lines disengaged from the picture's base line, or a greater sense of depth achieved through their partial concealment would indicate a new, Classical way of shaping the space in a more realistic and complex manner.²⁹

But are these spatial experiments uniquely conceivable as a reaction to large-scale painting executed after 480? It seems that only Dyfri Williams has attempted to question this assumption.³⁰ Changing perspective, he examined two Late Archaic black-figure lekythoi illustrating similar developments. On the first (ca. 500), an arrangement on different ground planes is evidenced by Heracles standing on top of a rock, with a dog below.³¹ This solution provides a simpler, but fairly accurate comparison for the rocky formations on the Niobid krater. Similarly, the atmospheric rendering of Nyx and Eos vanishing through the mist and leaving room for Helios' chariot, which literally rises from the lower frame of the vase, points to a new experimentalism in compositional terms. A lekythos (500–490) in Palermo depicts satyrs and maenads flanking

24 For the term, cf. Plantzos 2018: 115. The most extensive treatment of this group is Robertson 1975: 253–270.

25 Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. MNC 511 (Denoyelle 1997; Boardman 2005; BAPD 206954).

26 Cf. Robertson 1975: 258; Boardman 2005: 64.

27 See in particular the Amazon near the left handle of a krater by the Painter of the Woolly Satyrs, New York, MET, inv. 07.286.84 (BAPD 207099).

28 See, for example, Robertson 1975: 257–258; Denoyelle 1997: 16; Boardman 2005: 64; Stansbury-O'Donnell 2014: 151.

29 Cf. Stewart 2008: 79–80.

30 Williams 1991a.

31 New York, MET, inv. 41.162.29 (Cohen 2006: 206–208, no. 55; BAPD 305499).

a colossal mask of Dionysos.³² Surprisingly, the painter placed the maenads above the satyrs, breaking the traditional *isokephalia* and seeking to suggest the depth of space. Since he limited himself to only two examples, I believe that Williams' approach can be pushed further. Indeed, between 510 and 480 we witness an expansion of the figurative space according to the three axes of the Cartesian system (Fig. 10.1).³³ For example, on a loutrophoros (ca. 490) by the Sappho Painter, the choice to portray only the upper torso of two men engaged in burying a coffin vertically splits the scene between what is visible above the ground and the space inside the grave, hidden from view. Although this improvement has generally been ascribed to the next generation,³⁴ vase-painters of these decades are nonetheless capable of implying areas beyond the surface of the vase: horizontally, vertically and in depth, through various formal devices that concretize the space inhabited by the figures.

The use of a single ground line is already challenged in the last decade of the sixth century.³⁵ On a hydria (ca. 510) by the Leagros Group, the Ilioupersis is depicted combining the belly and shoulder of the vase into a single scene.³⁶ In the foreground, some soldiers and women, arranged at two different heights within the walls of the city, fight and grieve, respectively. Depicting a group of women bathing inside what looks like a sea grotto, an amphora (ca. 510) by the Priam Painter is primarily striking for the four different ground lines employed (Fig. 10.2).³⁷ Located on the right side, one of these corresponds to a rocky surface that liberates the figures from the picture's base line. It is not a simple, single rock, but a duplication of the base line, which shows how painters were increasingly attempting to articulate a space that was unbound by the limits of the vases' surface.

32 Palermo, Museo Archeologico Regionale, inv. 2023 (BAPD 11021).

33 Athens, NAM, inv. 450 (BAPD 480). Two other indicative examples are: (horizontal) the detail of the cave in which Hermes has hidden Apollo's cattle on a kylix by the Brygos Painter (Princeton, inv. Y1990-2; 490-480; BAPD 9045774); (depth) the back view of a reclining symposiast on a kylix by Epiktetos (London, BM, inv. 1843.1103.9; 510-500; BAPD 200460). For a thorough discussion of this last formal solution, see Williams 1991b: 292.

34 Robertson 1992: 133: 'The essential character of archaic drawing [...] is that the illusory world is kept entirely in the surface plane. The figures are flat; that is, their solidity is only implied, not represented by modelling; and there is no attempt to suggest the space in which they move'.

35 Contrary to what is stated by Robertson (1975: 253).

36 Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. 1700 (BAPD 302022).

37 Rome, Villa Giulia, inv. 106463 (Hurwit 1991: 40-42, fig. 5; BAPD 351080).



FIGURE 10.1 Funerary interment. Attic black-figure loutrophoros by the Sappho Painter, ca. 490 BCE. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. A 450
 THE RIGHTS ON THE DEPICTED MONUMENT BELONG TO THE HELLENIC
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Even the use of rocky elements becomes increasingly sophisticated, both in terms of composition and the concealment of figures. On an early lekythos (ca. 480) by the Group of the Bowdoin Painter, the ground level is split through the use of an articulated rocky formation: while the hunter runs along the base line level, the dog and its prey climb up.³⁸ If we compare the same hare-hunting scene developed on a single ground line on a contemporary lekythos (ca. 480) by one of his closest colleagues, the Athena Painter, it is possible to appreciate not only the gap between the two works, but also the coexistence within the Athenian Kerameikos of more 'traditional' solutions and innovative choices in the productive process.³⁹ The same is true for the work of the

38 Athens, NAM, inv. 1973 (BAPD 208231).

39 New York, MET, inv. 41.162.146 (BAPD 330744). Defining the relationship between these



FIGURE 10.2 Bathing girls. Attic black-figure amphora by the Priam Painter, ca. 510BCE. Rome, Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, inv. 106463
 © MUSEO NAZIONALE ETRUSCO DI VILLA GIULIA. ARCHIVIO FOTOGRAFICO. PHOTO BY MAURO BENEDETTI

Kleophrades Painter, in which the concealment of figures through landscape elements becomes increasingly daring in this period. His representation of the fighting between Theseus and Skiron is illustrative: while on a kylix (ca. 500) in Paris, the latter is shown in the foreground, according to the scheme witnessed up to that time; in another example (ca. 480) exhibited at Bologna, Skiron is placed behind the rock in such a way that his torso is entirely concealed.⁴⁰

The pieces discussed above thus indicate that an increasing use of different ground lines, leading to the frequent abandonment of *isokephalia*; a 'landscape-like' conception of space disengaged from the picture base line and increasingly complex attempts at concealment occur before or around 480. Although the vases of the next generation testify to a greater complexity in the use of these features, it does not seem to be correct to assume that they appear after 480 as

painters has been quite complex (see Kurtz 1975: 15–17, 104–111, 120–122): however, I follow Beazley in distinguishing between the two personalities. This seems to be supported by the different systems of renderings shown by the two mentioned lekythoi.

40 Paris, Cabinet des Medailles, inv. 647 (BAPD 201752); Bologna, inv. G 818 (BAPD 201755).

a reflection of large-scale painting, to which, moreover, these novelties are not credited by the literary sources.

Two other stylistic features traced back to the influence of large-scale painting are figures' attempting foreshortenings, and three-quarter views. Although such a change has been described as undramatic by Boardman,⁴¹ the assumption that Early Classical vases show a much more developed use of these visual devices has been reiterated for decades in the scholarly literature.⁴² Some vases depicting centauromachies are emblematic in this respect. A psykter (ca. 480) recently attributed to the Painter of Goluchow 37 has been described by Robertson as 'full of most violent action, with complicated poses and three-quartering'.⁴³ He thus suggested that 'whoever drew it was surely copying a big wall-painting'.⁴⁴ Although in this case a precise model has not been suggested, in other instances the Centauromachy painted inside the Theseion, most likely after the transferral of the hero's bones from Skyros in 476/475, has been called into question.⁴⁵ Even though the description of Pausanias makes no mention of the use of these stylistic solutions,⁴⁶ the dramatically foreshortened centaur on a well-known krater (ca. 450) by the Painter of the Woolly Satyrs is considered by Barron and Woodford as related to this painting.⁴⁷ However, several lesser-known Late Archaic vases should lead us to downplay the impact of these innovations. A cup (ca. 500) attributed by Pinney to the first phase of the Berlin Painter testifies to the use of more complex poses than the profile view attested up to that point for depicting centaurs, probably as a consequence of the high number of figures depicted, but at the same time the limited space available on the outer walls of the kylix (Fig. 10.3).⁴⁸ The equine bodies on the sides are daringly seen from behind and a twist is imparted to the human trunk. The depth of space is further enhanced by the overlapping of the two centaurs in the centre of the composition, where, moreover, the one in the foreground is foreshortened. Whether these formal solutions were also employed

41 Boardman 1989: 12.

42 At least, since Richter 1958: 90. For other references, see n. 9.

43 Roma, Villa Giulia, inv. 35389 (BAPD 2352). For a recent discussion of this piece, see Guy 2017: 198–199, figs. 8–9.

44 Robertson 1975: 241; 1992: 134. But cf. also Woodford 1974: 164; Buschor 1978: 138.

45 On the Theseion, see Di Cesare 2015: 96–105, with previous bibliography. Kopanias 2006 argues instead for a dating of the paintings after 469/468.

46 Cf. Boardman 1989: 12.

47 Barron 1972: 30; Woodford 1974: 163. For the role played by this Centauromachy in the dissemination of a new iconographic scheme among 470–460 vase-painting, see Castriota 1992: 34–43; Di Cesare 2015: 103–104.

48 Basel, inv. BS 489 (Pinney 1981: 147–148; BAPD 217401).

by large-scale painting is impossible to say with certainty. But if we adopt a workshop perspective, it is relevant to stress the interconnectedness between the Painter of Goluchow 37 and the Painter of the Woolly Satyrs, on one side, and the Berlin Painter on the other, as pointed out in the recent catalogue edited by Padgett.⁴⁹ It is therefore likely that these formal devices constitute not a novelty, but a choice in line with the production of the previous generation. Evidence that the Basel cup is not an isolated trailblazer is shown by a fragment painted by Onesimos (500–490).⁵⁰ On this piece, we see a Greek spearing a centaur who has fallen to the ground. Even if the legs are drawn in profile, the view from behind and the foreshortening of the back, also considering the unusual placement, testify to an unprecedented interest in giving solidity to figures. The same is true for the three-quartering of the faces: several examples foreshadow later adoptions of this formal device.⁵¹ Therefore, no actual break in the use of foreshortening and three-quarter faces is detectable; workshop practices rather than the influence of large-scale painting were likely responsible for their spread. Even if certain solutions can be impressive, such as the rendering of a horse riding out of the picture on a krater (460–450) in New York, these *schēmata* can in fact be traced back to developments in vase-painting over nearly half a century, ultimately warning us against establishing easy connections with large-scale painting and suggesting that we adopt a more gradualist approach.⁵²

There are two important technical innovations. The first is the abandoning of the relief line in defining the figures' outline. Dyfri Williams notes that the high relief line is first replaced by a flatter contour in the mature works of the Pistoxenos Painter, the Penthesilea Painter and their companions.⁵³ He suggests that the driving force behind this change is to be found on the white-ground cups made by the same painters after 480, where the relief gives way to a soft brown, dilute glaze line, both for contours and for interior details. This

49 Guy 2017: 189–192; Williams 2017: 158.

50 Malibu, Getty Villa, inv. 86.AE.311 (BAPD 16551).

51 See, e.g., a kylix by the Foundry Painter depicting a Centauromachy (Munich, inv. 2640; BAPD 204363). The three-quarter view of the helmeted warrior, as depicted here, is a motif on which the painters of the early fifth century experimented widely: cf. a lekythos and a kylix by Douris (Buitron-Oliver 1995: 74–75, nos. 32, 46, pls. 21, 30), or a lekythos by the Painter of Goluchow 37 in Cleveland (Guy 2017: 190, fig. 2).

52 New York, MET, inv. 07.286.86 (BAPD 207122), connected by Stansbury-O'Donnell (2014: 151) to Mikon's Amazonomachy. But cf. the horse on a kylix by the Eleusis Painter, painted fifty years before, employing the same scheme: Boston, MFA, inv. 10.196 (BAPD 203234).

53 Williams 1991a: 112–113. Cf. also Kunisch 1994: 89. For a recent evaluation of relief and contour lines through technical analyses, see Artal-Isbrand, Klausmeyer 2013.



FIGURE 10.3 Centauromachy. Attic red-figure kylix by the Berlin Painter, ca. 500 BCE. Basel, Antikensammlung, inv. BS 489

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development, Williams says, may well point to the influence of free painting on a neutral ground. However, I suggest that this innovation is likely due to developments within early fifth century red-figure vase-painting. While Late Archaic white-ground vases retain the use of the relief line, several works by the Berlin Painter show a gradual departure from this technical device. Donna Kurtz, in fact, stated that ‘most areas with figure-decoration are defined by the “contour band”—the broad stroke of black which merges with the glossy black surface of the vase—without the addition of the “relief line” which gives clarity’.⁵⁴ Even in a work as meticulous as his namepiece (500–490), the outline of several anatomical parts is rendered through a flat, wide contour line.⁵⁵ Another good illustration is the Panathenaic amphora (500–490) in Munich, where a wide, flatter band contours the upper half of Perseus (Fig. 10.4).⁵⁶ This treatment, applied to the body in a quite unsystematic way, seems to make its debut on those vases displaying the characteristic ‘spotlighted’ figures isolated

54 Kurtz 1983: 20, but cf. also Beazley 1911: 288.

55 Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. F 2160 (BAPD 201809). See in particular the inner section of the ankles or the face of the satyr, and the arms of Hermes on the main side, or the satyr’s left leg on the B-side.

56 Munich, “Antikensammlungen,” inv. 2312 (BAPD 201820).



FIGURE 10.4 Perseus running. Attic red-figure amphora by the Berlin Painter, 500–490 BCE. Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. 2312
STATE COLLECTION OF ANTIQUITIES AND GLYPTOTHEK MUNICH /
PHOTO: ARCHAIOPTIX. CC BY-SA 4.0

against the glossy black of the background. Slightly later, it is also applied to other pieces with more complex figurative scenes, where we can find figures entirely outlined by the contour band.⁵⁷ Although a comprehensive analysis of red-figure vases from this point of view has not yet been performed, it is likely that spotlighted figures, particularly beloved by the Berlin Painter, made the application of the relief line unnecessary. These figures are already fully highlighted and the outer contour of the vessel becomes, in effect, the frame of the figural representation.⁵⁸ Rather than suggesting a direct progression from white-ground vases to red-figure examples, the archaeological evidence appears to indicate the reverse. This complicates the argument that large-scale painting alone influenced the abandonment of the relief line after 480, leaving open the possibility that both wall painting and red-figure vase production played a role in this transition.

Another technical transition that has been interpreted as a moment of convergence between the two media is the introduction of a certain polychromy

57 Cf., e.g., the stamnos with Achilles brought to Chiron: Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. G 186 (BAPD 201959).

58 Cf. Neer 2002: 69.

on white-ground vases after 480.⁵⁹ Scholarship has been rather vague concerning the interpretation of this change. The majority of attention has been paid to passages by Pliny and Cicero enumerating artists working in accordance with a four-colour palette, and specifically to the fact that Cicero's list begins with Polygnotos.⁶⁰ But even if scholars are not unanimous in considering large-scale painting as the driving force, the association of technique and aesthetics between white-ground vases and this other medium is often assumed.⁶¹ However, caution is needed here as well: relying on two Roman authors is a thin basis on which to build suppositions about artistic trends in the fifth century. One must first look at the internal development within the craft. A four-colour palette can first be observed on some white-ground kylikes produced in the workshop of Euphronios during the first two decades of the fifth century.⁶² The interior decoration involves the use, albeit still limited, of red, yellow, white and black—the same colours mentioned by Pliny to define the range of the *tetrachromatist* painters.⁶³ Moreover, these pigments are often diluted and mixed to produce shading effects, as, for instance, on a tree trunk painted by the Panaitios Painter (500–490), where yellow-orange brushstrokes alternate with brown, darker touches.⁶⁴ In other cases, varying hues of colour are used to distinguish different parts of the garments, as in the case of the cup (ca. 490) with Athena holding a phiale by Onesimos, in which red has been mixed with lighter and darker tones to define the peplos' body, folds and hems (Fig. 10.5).⁶⁵ These 'experimental' specimens were dedicated on the Acropolis, a context in which craftsmen competed with each other through display pieces, signatures and dedications, as Monica De Cesare has shown.⁶⁶ It is therefore possible that Euphronios himself was behind this change, experimenting with new aesthetic effects to elevate his workshop's profile and, if the Acropolis cups were not dedicated by the craftsmen themselves, to provide Athenian customers with a distinctive product. Furthermore, this would make it possible to explain the popularity of this choice in post-480 production as the result of a transmission within a single workshop, since the Pistoxenos and Penthesilea

59 Walter-Karydi 2002: 76–77. Cf. also Arias 1963: 225–226; Moon 1979: 194–196, on the Penthesilea Painter.

60 Plin. *HN* 35.50; Cic. *Brut.* 18.70. For a thorough analysis of these literary sources, an essential reference is Bruno 1977: 53–66.

61 See Mertens 2006: 189–190; Plantzos 2018: 128.

62 Wehgartner 1983: 16–20; 2002: 91–92.

63 Plin. *HN* 35.50.

64 Athens, Akropolis Museum, inv. 433 (Wehgartner 1983: 52, no. 5; BAPD 7602).

65 Athens, NAM, from the Acropolis, inv. 434 (Wehgartner 1983: 52–53, no. 6; BAPD 203225).

66 De Cesare 2017.



FIGURE 10.5 Athena holding a phiale. Attic white-ground cup by Onesimos, ca. 490 BCE, from the Akropolis. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. 433
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Painters, who largely employed this technique, were active in the same *ergastērion* as Euphronios.⁶⁷ These Early Classical painters then most likely adopted and improved the decorative technique shown in these first examples.

Moving on to iconographic questions, a significant caesura identified by scholars relates to the depiction of emotions.⁶⁸ In the words of Pollitt, ‘the art of the Early Classical period differs from that of the Archaic in exploring emotions and changing states of mind, particularly in a dramatic context’.⁶⁹ This far-reaching characterization is frequently related to what literary sources tell us about Polygnotos’ work. Pliny, in fact, states that he introduced the depiction of open mouths showing teeth and varied facial expressions from the rigidity that had previously existed.⁷⁰ As already pointed out, the first feature is actually well attested in vase-painting prior to 480.⁷¹ But scholars have gone further and looked for evidence of Pliny’s second characteristic in Early Classical

67 Williams 2017: 164–165. Consider in particular the two white-ground cups by the Pistoxenos Painter (one of which was dedicated on the Acropolis) bearing the signature of Euphronios as potter: Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. F 2282 (BAPD 21324); Athens, NAM, inv. 439 (BAPD 211325). On Euphronios’ activity as potter, see Williams 1990.

68 See n. 12.

69 Pollitt 1972: 15, 43–45.

70 Plin. *HN* 35.58.

71 See, e.g., Stansbury-O’Donnell 2014: 147; Plantzos 2018: 118.

vase-painting. Focusing on the Trojans depicted on a cup (470–460) by the Penthesilea Painter, Stansbury-O'Donnell suggested that 'the arching eyebrow and treatment of the forehead and lines around the mouth show a greater sense of facial movement that reminds us of Polygnotan painting'.⁷² However, the characterization of the face in order to display effort or feelings is not unknown in Late Archaic vase-painting. On a tondo (ca. 500) painted by Epiktetos, Sisyphus' thick, arched eyebrow and the deep folds on his forehead, cheek and around his mouth neatly express his struggle.⁷³ On a contemporary kylix (500–490) signed by Douris, the concave eyebrow, combined with the open mouth and the falling petasos, indicates the fear of a warrior hastily defending himself.⁷⁴ In addition to the use of detail lines, O'Donnell suggests that Polygnotos achieved greater animation of the face through 'a profile rendering of the eye, giving the figure a directional gaze that allowed interaction'.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, painters abandoned the rigidity of the Archaic eye before 480 by reducing the pupil to a single dot, increasing its mobility and dilating the contour of the sclera. This transitional stage between the Archaic and the Classical eye is particularly evident on the famous amphora by the Kleophrades Painter showing a *kōmos*, a Dionysian procession performed by revellers, or by the God himself in the company of his entourage.⁷⁶ While some figures retain the traditional outline (e.g., Dionysos), the gaze of the satyrs and some maenads clearly follows the body movement and thus exhibits a new liveliness. It still does not correspond to the rendering of the Classical eye,⁷⁷ but the attempt to convey the expressiveness of the figures in a more natural way is clear.

Literary sources, such as Aristotle and Aelian, inform us that Polygnotos was skilled in depicting character and feeling, *ēthos* and *pathos*.⁷⁸ This novel dedication to body language, gesture and facial expressions is often considered indicative of the new Classical sensibility.⁷⁹ Dealing again with the mourn-

72 Ferrara, inv. T.18C (BAPD 211599), on which see Stansbury-O'Donnell 2014: 152.

73 Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. G 16 (Paleothodoros 2004: 152, no. 41; BAPD 200364).

74 Boston, MFA, inv. 00.338 (BAPD 205048). Cf. Buitron-Oliver 1995: 11.

75 Stansbury-O'Donnell 2014: 147.

76 Munich, inv. 2344 (BAPD 201659). Within the painter's corpus, the same can be seen on the 'Hydria Vivenzio' (Naples, MAN, inv. 81699; BAPD 201724): compare Cassandra's pupil directed towards Ajax's sword and the strictly frontal eyes of the Trojan women behind Athena's statue, probably chosen to better convey a gaze lost in the void. See also the early pelike by the Berlin Painter with the murder of Aigisthos (Vienna, inv. IV 3725; BAPD 201917): while Orestes retains the 'Archaic' eye, the former's pupil goes upwards and gives the figure a strongly pathetic expression.

77 On which see Richter 1958: 91–92.

78 Arist. *Pol.* 1450a.27–29; Ael. *VH* 4.3.

79 See nn. 6 and 12.

ing Trojans depicted by the Penthesilea Painter, Robertson saw a reflection of Polygnotos' work in the splendid rendering of their inner emotions.⁸⁰ This, indeed, cannot be ruled out, especially bearing in mind the representation of the Ilioupersis painted at Delphi. However, some iconographies developed during the first decades of the fifth century rely strongly on pathos as well. A striking example of this is a group of vases depicting the embassy to Achilles, when the Achaeans try to persuade the hero to return to battle after his argument with Agamemnon.⁸¹ On a krater by the Eucharides Painter (ca. 500), Achilles is represented through the traditional gesture of grieving.⁸² The pathos is particularly heightened by the depiction of the hero denying any kind of interaction with the companions, instead remaining in silence, immobile, completely enveloped in his himation. It is further enhanced by the contrast between the Myrmidon's body and that of Odysseus, seated in front of him and leaning back with his hands wrapped around his raised knee. Fondness for the representation of emotions and attitudes is accompanied in this scene by a marked interest in stillness. This 'taste for stillness', as it is called in literature, is particularly evident from Pausanias' description of Polygnotos' works.⁸³ The statuesque figures are not shown in the climax of the action, but in a calm atmosphere of stasis.⁸⁴ The B side of the Niobid Painter's eponymous krater is often brought into comparison to illustrate this new approach.⁸⁵ However, iconographies such as that of the embassy should lead us to question this unequivocal correlation. An aryballos (ca. 480) painted almost twenty years earlier seems to provide a useful comparanda for the attitudes of the figures on the Niobid Painter's krater, who are not engaged in any kind of specific action (Fig. 10.6).⁸⁶ In the early fifth century, this taste also emerges in relation to iconographies characterized by a long-lasting tradition. The well-known skyphos with Priam's embassy in Vienna, painted by the Brygos Painter around 490, does not show, as in previous examples, the King of Troy running with the arms outstretched toward Achilles, but rather slowly striding towards him.⁸⁷ Also contributing to this sense of order is the paratactic effect achieved by the procession of the attendants, a feature introduced here for the first time.

80 Robertson 1975: 263. For the kylix, see n. 72.

81 On this iconography, see Langridge-Noti 2009; Giuliani 2013: 195–205.

82 Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. G 163 (BAPD 202217).

83 Paus. 9.4.2; 10.25–31.

84 Cf. Stewart 2021: 215; La Torre 2022: 90, 92.

85 For the krater, see n. 25. For the association of this new taste with large-scale painting, see n. 13.

86 Berlin, inv. F 2326 (BAPD 210079).

87 Vienna, inv. 3710 (BAPD 204068). Cf. Sparkes 2006: 11–12.



FIGURE 10.6
 Embassy to Achilles.
 Attic red-figure
 aryballos by the
 Clinic Painter,
 ca. 480 BCE. Berlin,
 Antikensammlung,
 inv. F 2326
 STAATLICHE
 MUSEEN ZU BER-
 LIN, ANTIKEN-
 SAMMLUNG /
 PHOTO: JOHANNES
 LAURENTIUS. CC
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This new sensibility in terms of composition and the figures' attitude should prompt us to question another point. Many Early Classical vase-paintings shun direct action and emphasize the reflexive moment before or after it. Regarding the former, Stewart rightly points out that its appeal lies in the fact that the viewer knows more than the characters depicted: as in drama, it usually presents the suspenseful moment of decision before action (*krisis*).⁸⁸ Although it is said that this type of dramatic device was pioneered by Exekias and Euthymides, scholars have linked this more general trend to Polygnotos' iconographic choices.⁸⁹ However, should we really assume that besides Exekias and Euthymides, no other vase-painters who employ such a choice can be detected? For example, Douris' lekythos (500–490) in Palermo and Myson's renowned Croesus amphora (500–490) portray the suspenseful moment alluding to the climax of the action.⁹⁰ On the first, Agamemnon slowly leads Iphigenia to sacrifice. The only feature that hints at this is the sword already drawn, far from the maiden's sight. Her demeanour and, above all, the *anakalypsis* gesture, suggest

88 Stewart 2008: 101–103.

89 Besides Stewart 2008, see nn. 13 and 79.

90 Palermo, inv. 1886 (BAPD 205315); Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. G 197 (BAPD 202176).

that she believes that she is going to marry Achilles. Therefore, she is unaware of the danger ahead. King Croesus is equally unmindful of the unexpected rain that will extinguish the fire on the pyre. I agree with Steinhart that this is the most suspenseful moment a painter can choose: the king is waiting for the flames, while offering a libation to the gods.⁹¹ In both scenes, the dramatic effect is precisely increased by the fact that ‘we are in the know, but they are not’.⁹² Some paintings by Polygnotos, such as Odysseus having slayed the suitors located in the Temple of Athena Areia at Plataea or the Ilioupersis in Delphi, where the Trojans have already been defeated and Troy taken, are emblematic in focusing on the moment after the main action.⁹³ Some early fifth-century vase-paintings seem to adopt the same strategy. An early stamnos (ca. 490) by the Berlin Painter is unique in showing Peleus not raping Thetis, but having just tamed her.⁹⁴ This choice is similar to that made by the Niobid Painter thirty years later. On a pelike (ca. 460), the rape of Amymone is already accomplished by Poseidon: they are not running, but calmly standing in front of each other.⁹⁵ Exekias and Euthymides’ examples are therefore not isolated, and these late Archaic cases point to greater gradualism in the diffusion of this iconographic choice.

After examining some cases in greater detail, I propose we broaden our focus to address one final point. The pictorial cycles displayed in the Stoa Poikile and the Theseion are unanimously placed in connection with celebration of the victory in the Persian Wars. The mythological themes depicted, such as the Ilioupersis, the Amazonomachy and the Centauromachy, assume the status of paradigms against which the contemporary events can be compared.⁹⁶ Such a political reading of the images has been applied to other media, in particular to vase-painting, which would testify to a particular spread of these scenes after 480, not least because of the influence exerted by these cycles.⁹⁷ However, a statistical analysis disproves a more widespread diffusion of these themes in Early Classical vase-painting (Fig. 10.7). From a strictly quantitative point of view, after 475 we indeed witness a decrease in the occurrences of these iconographies, rather drastic for the Amazonomachy and Centauromachy, and more

91 Steinhart 2009: 11.

92 Stewart 2008: 101.

93 For Plataea, see Paus. 9.4.1–2.

94 Palermo, inv. 1501 (BAPD 201958).

95 Basel, market (Simon 1982: 147–148, pl. 40: ‘... it is desirable to remark on the fact that on the Basel pelike the relationship between Amymone and Poseidon is not one of flight and pursuit, as is usual in similar scenes of early classical art, but of tranquil dialogue’).

96 E.g., Castriota 2005: 90; Stansbury-O’Donnell 2005: 78; La Torre 2022: 91.

97 See n. 14.

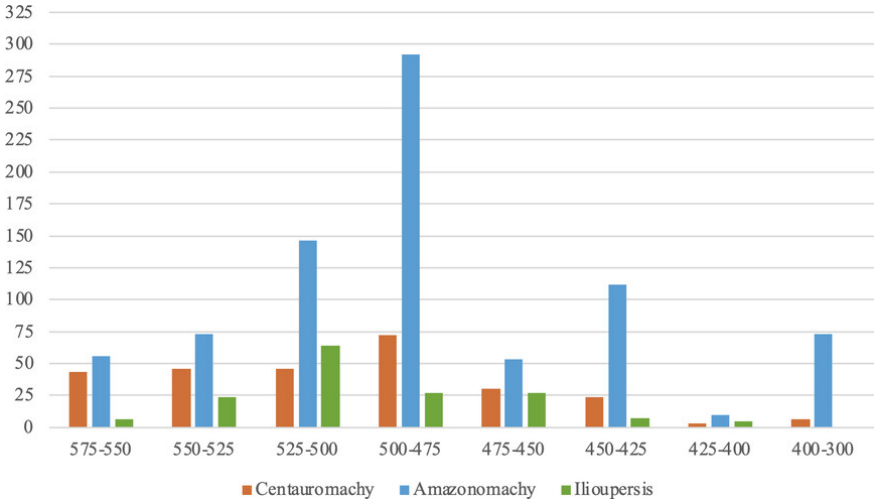


FIGURE 10.7 Occurrences of Centauromachy, Amazonomachy, and Iliouperisis in Attic vase-painting. Sources: BAPD (Centauromachy); Stewart 1995 (Amazonomachy); ABV, ARV², Beazley 1971 (Iliouperisis). The chronology is approximate and primarily follows Beazley’s arrangement. It should be noted that the Herakleian Centauromachy (total: 53) and Amazonomachy (total: 218) are included. However, this inclusion does not affect the overall trend.

subtle for the Iliouperisis. We must also consider that, with the sole exception of the first quarter of the century, no drop in overall output compared to other phases is attested between 475 and 450. Therefore, these statistics seem to show how the influence of large-scale painting was in no way generalized, and furthermore how slippery it could be to associate certain myths characterized by a long-standing iconographic tradition with political events.

Contrary to what is frequently stated, the alleged revolution in wall or panel painting after 480 does not correspond to a revolution in vase-painting. It is likely that a small group of vases, among which the eponymous vase of the Niobid Painter stands, directly reflect choices in large scale-painting. This chapter does not question this point. Rather, it aims to show that achievements usually linked to developments in other media are better interpreted as an evolution of choices and experiments pursued by the previous generation of vase-painters (510–480). A deeper investigation of the archaeological evidence does not support a scenario in which large-scale painting promoted the diffusion of iconographic, formal, and technical innovations. This analysis thus suggests that we should employ greater caution in establishing a hierarchy between such different media, especially considering the disparity in the sources available to us: while large-scale painting is virtually entirely lost and known only through literary accounts, very few passages shed light on the activity within the Ker-

ameikos, and the archaeological evidence remains our main authority for outlining its development.

3 Shifting Scale: Ancient Perspectives on Large-Scale Painting after 480

The analysis proposed here has shown how difficult it is to identify caesuras in Greek art periodization by predominantly relying on the impact of certain historical events or the information provided by literary sources. Our narration of 480 and the following decades, known as the Severe Style Period, in which a far-reaching change encompassed all the arts, also affected our reading of the literary sources. In fact, the literary sources themselves do not seem to regard developments in large-scale painting in the second quarter of the fifth century as ground-breaking. For example, Pliny provides no aesthetical judgment of Polygnotos' art. Followed by Plutarch and Harpocration, he states that Polygnotos was celebrated in Athens for having painted the Stoa Poikile for free. He only adds that his fame extended throughout Greece, since the Amphictyony awarded him free hospitality, probably while working in the sanctuary at Delphi.⁹⁸ As Tanner points out, Polygnotos was celebrated for these actions not as a painter, or for the high quality of his paintings, but for being a public benefactor.⁹⁹ By contrast, Pliny mentions later painters and emphasizes their radical contribution to the evolution of pictorial art. For example, he refers to the Athenian Apollodoros as the 'first who bestowed true glory on the brush' and the one 'who opened the gates of art'.¹⁰⁰ Apelles, instead, 'excelled all painters who came before or after him'.¹⁰¹ No comparable evaluation is awarded to Polygnotos' art. The opinions of Quintilian and Cicero are not so far from this picture. Even if Quintilian declares Polygnotos *clarus* and his work worthy of admiration, his activity is also regarded as the 'infancy of the future art', and he judges as pretentious those who prefer his paintings—described as *prope rudia*, almost rude—to the greatest of the later masters.¹⁰² Cicero attempts to trace the development of sculpture from its beginnings, still far from representing *veritas*, to the more successful achievements of more

98 Plin. *HN* 35.42, 59; Plut. *Cim.* 4; Harp. s.v. Πολύγνωτος.

99 Tanner 2006: 158.

100 Plin. *HN* 35.60–61.

101 Plin. *HN* 35.79.

102 Quint. *Inst.* 12.10.3; cf. Roscino 2010: 73–74, on this passage.

recent generations.¹⁰³ The same approach is adopted to assess painting: while Polygnotos and three other *tetrachromatist* painters belonged to a first stage, personalities such as Aetion, Nikomachos, Protogenes, and Apelles brought the art to perfection.¹⁰⁴ Once again, this account does not support interpreting Polygnotos' work as a sharp caesura; rather, it positions him as one—though certainly not the foremost—among the many painters who shaped the discipline. Cicero's words are also extremely valuable for another reason: artistic evolution is described as a gradual development, both in sculpture and painting. The same seems to transpire from Pliny's perspective. Even if he appears very keen to identify *prōtoi heurētai*, he nonetheless emphasizes in various passages how the inventions by certain painters were employed more extensively, or improved by later artists. This is the case with the linear method invented by Philokles or Ekphantos, whose first extensive use was made by Aridikos and Telephanes, or with Eumaros' achievements, further developed by Kimon of Kleonai.¹⁰⁵

4 Conclusion

Just as the ancient authors do not delineate a change of pace for large-scale painting after 480, so the ceramic evidence bears witness to a gradual and lengthy transition between the Archaic and Classical periods. Outlining this transition, however, is more complicated than has been imagined thus far, and surely deserves further investigation. The word 'gradual' is not the same as 'linear': a conception that, following Winckelmann's biological approach, envisages an art in progress, aimed at the gradual conquest of ever more perfect forms of expression. Nor does it mean indulging in the formalist paradigm of *euchrony*, disengaged from the multiple factors that can interact within the same historical context.¹⁰⁶ Graduality implies phenomena such as delay, innovation and, above all, a dialectical coexistence between these poles. This can be detected on multiple levels. For instance, among painters interacting in the same working environment but offering different products, as in the case of

103 Cic. *Brut.* 70.

104 Cf. Bruno 1977: 66, on this passage.

105 Plin. *HN* 35.16, 55–56.

106 Into which would fall, according to Stewart (2021: 221–224), recent attempts to approach the transition between the Archaic and Classical ages more gradually. For the opposition between *anachronistic* and *euchronic* approaches in art history, see Didi-Huberman 2000, esp. 9–22.

the hare-hunting scene depicted on the lekythoi, or within the corpus of a single painter, as we have seen, for example, in relation to the Kleophrades Painter. Another enlightening example in this latter sense is the evolution of the drapery's rendering by Douris during his career (ca. 500–470/465), divided by Buitron-Oliver into five phases (Fig. 10.8). Even if we see a rather regular development from a certain 'decorativism' to simpler forms, several phases testify to a coexistence of stylistic features. Some examples from the third phase show a rigidity of the folds that seems to contradict the dynamism achieved in the previous phase, and instead recall the beginning of his career. Similarly, the middle phase testifies, on the one hand, to the abandonment of a certain exuberance through the sole use of vertical lines to depict the folds, but on the other maintains the edge's partitioning through closely spaced triangles.¹⁰⁷ Innovation often stems from specific technical requirements, such as the available surface or the interaction between figures and the background, and is conveyed through workshop practices or, more specifically, through the interaction between workshops—a phenomenon that deserves more attention when discussing issues of periodization. At other times, certain innovations may be dictated by the context for which the vases were intended and by the competition between craftsmen, as in the case of the white-ground cups dedicated on the Acropolis. Alternatively, iconographic changes may be more generally shaped by profound shifts in sensibility, the causes of which we are not always able to pinpoint, but are nevertheless crucial to understanding the complex messages that images are able to convey. To place the vase-painters' experiments in subordination to those achieved by large-scale painters could thus result in flattening the liveliness of a history that is indeed gradual, yet incredibly dynamic, almost conflictual, one in which the agency of the individual interacts with the more collective mechanisms within and between workshops. In Attic vase-painting, the threshold of 480 thus assumes the connotation of a modern, 'artificial' creation, conveying a 'passive' revolution that we want to see, but which most likely did not take place in ancient times.

107 Already partially observed by Arias 1963: 255.



FIGURE 10.8 Evolution of drapery's rendering by Douris (starting from the left, upper row). Early Period: Attic red-figure kylix signed by Douris, ca. 500 BCE. Wien, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. 3694; Transitional Period I: Attic red-figure kantharos signed by Douris, 500–490 BCE. Brussels, Musée Art et Histoire, inv. A.718; Transitional Period II: Attic red-figure kylix signed by Douris, 490–480 BCE. Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. G 116; Middle Period: Attic red-figure kylix signed by Douris, 480–470 BCE. London, British Museum, inv. 1843.1103.13; Late Period: Attic red-figure kylix by Douris, 470–465 BCE. Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. F 2288

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Phokaean Electrum Coinage and Klazomenian Red-Figure Decoration

Or, the Dangers of Overreliance on Athenian Chronologies in Asia Minor

Anja Slawisch

1 Introduction¹

Questioning the reliability and usefulness of chronological anchors challenges the very foundations of classical archaeology. Archaeological evidence remains essential for the investigation and ultimately reconstruction of ancient societies especially when contemporary written sources are scarce. Yet, the chronological framework on which classical archaeologists depend is often circular, because it correlates to reconstructed dates for historical events transmitted through (non-contemporaneous) written sources with artifacts and monuments. This approach poses two separate, yet entwined questions: first, how reliable are our historic anchor dates, and second, how confident are we about assigning archaeological artefacts and contexts into the chronological units deriving from this approach? An awareness of both problems remains crucial for any serious investigations of the classical past. However, in the context of this chapter we can only tackle one of them and thus for simplicity will, following the *communis opinio*, assume that the absolute dates for the historical events of the first half of the fifth century are more or less accurate.

The chronological anchor of 480, the year when the Athenian Acropolis was sacked by the Persian army, marked first a devastating defeat at home, but also quick subsequent victories by Greek forces. It also became a scholarly watershed for dividing the old Archaic style from the new Classical style in art history: for a long time, archaeologists relied on the assumption that the so-called *Perserschutt* found on the slopes of the Acropolis and in some of the wells on the Athenian Agora provided a secure *terminus ante quem* for dating these deposits. However, these contexts turned out to be much more complex in their composition, both stratigraphically and in terms of object biographies, and thus are

1 All dates are BCE unless otherwise stated. I would like to express my gratitude to the organizers and participants of this conference whose insightful papers and lively discussions I enjoyed very much.

much less reliable than previously assumed.² The second and third quarter of the fifth century sees Athens rapidly ascending to power—politically, economically and culturally—with an unprecedented cultural production, including an enormous output of coinage, publication of decrees on stone, as well as flourishing craftsmanship as seen in the re-erection of the temples and public buildings on the Acropolis and elsewhere in Athens and Attika.³ Some of the monumental buildings and associated sculptures can indeed be firmly dated based on the city's financial documentation.⁴ It is against this Athenian background that modern scholars measure the achievements of other Greek cities around the Mediterranean during that period.

In this context, it is important to note that the trauma of defeat and in some cases destruction at the hands of the Persian army affected not only Athens but the wider Eastern Mediterranean as well. Besides the year 480,⁵ scholars of Ionia in the fifth century organize their materials around another watershed, the defeat of the Ionian Revolt at the battle of Lade, and the reported destruction of the city of Miletus in 494. The major difference is that Miletus and several other Ionian settlements did not recover as visibly as Athens during the fifth century and interpretation of the available evidence from the post-destruction period has traditionally been a challenge. There are now two schools of thought: some scholars emphasize the lack of evidence from Ionia after 494, the disruption of daily life, and economic depression, while others highlight continuity and an almost immediate recovery.⁶ Notably, both sides build their arguments using the same set of archaeological and written evidence. Regarding written evidence, there are almost no texts that can confidentially be dated into the first half of the fifth century, so historical discussions tend to depend on later sources to reconstruct this period.⁷

In this chapter, I explore two case studies where a revision of watersheds, such as 480, would have a radical destabilising effect on our archaeological interpretations: the electrum coinage of Phokaia and the Klazomenian sarco-

2 Lindenlauf 1997; Steskal 2004; Stewart 2008a; Barringer 2020. On the wells from the Athenian Agora cf. Laughy and van den Eijnde, Matter and Retroff and Lynch in this volume.

3 Ober 2015 and on the archaeological remains see Hurwit 1999 and Meyer 2017: 432–435 with bibliography.

4 <https://www.atticinscriptions.com> (accessed 6 February 2025).

5 The year 480 is used as a watershed for stylistic dating in Ionia (see below). In addition, the Battle of Mycale in 479 is often perceived as a (historical) caesura in South Ionia.

6 Cook, J.M. 1961; Osborne 1999. For a detailed discussion see Slawisch, forthcoming.

7 For a recent example see Nudell 2023. Nudell's treatment of the archaeological evidence unfortunately relies too much on literature published in English, for example a student textbook (Greaves 2010) and seems unaware of recent developments in the field.

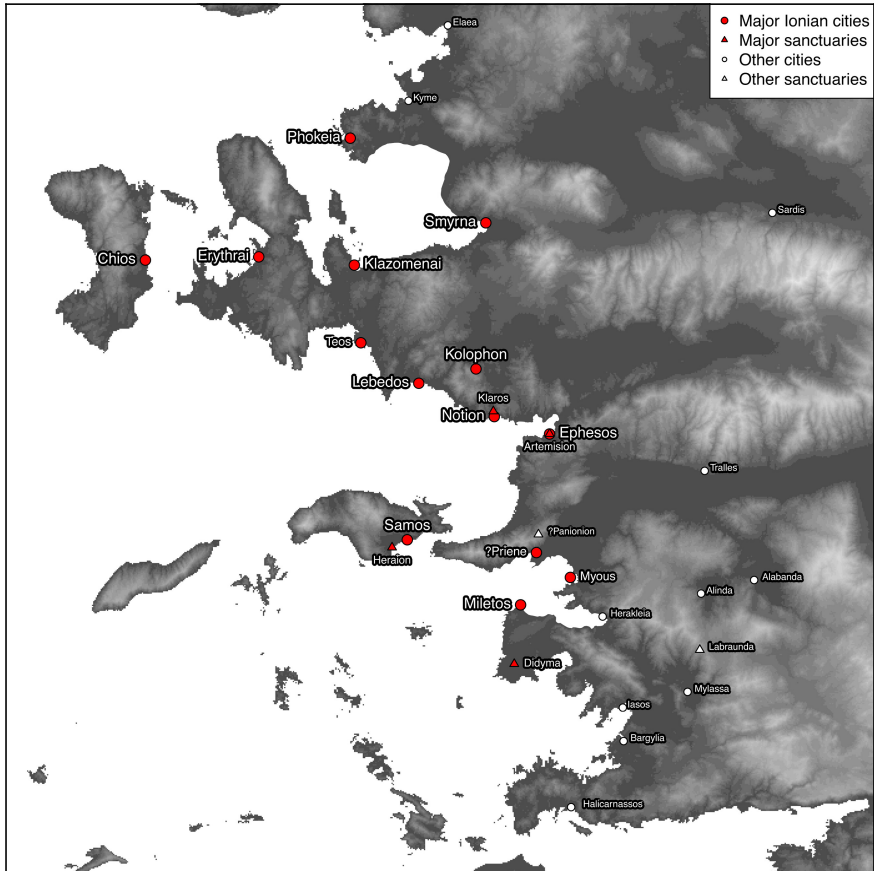


FIGURE 11.1 Map of Ionia showing major poleis and sanctuaries
 © TOBY C. WILKINSON. CC BY 4.0

phagi (Fig. 11.1). Both sets of materials originate in Ionia, even if the finds themselves were distributed further afield. Ionian archaeological contexts remain heavily dependent—or as I am going to argue *over*-dependent—on Athenian chronotype markers and art historical chronologies, especially for the early fifth century.⁸ Moreover, an assumption that certain artistic innovations emerged in Athens only after the 480 watershed has closed Ionian archaeology to many alternative and quite reasonable scenarios in the region's cultural history. The decision of whether or not a particular artefact can be assigned to before or after a particular watershed ultimately opens up scope both for a fresh view of the region and for trends taking place across wider Mediterranean networks.

8 This is, of course, a much wider problem. For example, when dating archaeological con-

2 The Electrum Coinage from Phokaia

From ancient written sources, Phokaia is known for its long-distance trade and overseas contacts during the seventh and sixth centuries, as well as for its foundations of settlements such as Massalia. For most of this period, Phokaia paid tribute to the Lydian kings, until around the middle of the sixth century when the city was, according to Herodotus (1.162), besieged by the Persian general Harpargos.⁹ Herodotus also reports that during this time, parts of the citizenry left Phokaia to settle in Magna Graecia (1.152; 1.164–165). This piece of information is often used to explain why Phokaia contributed only three ships to the Battle of Lade. However, the commander-in-chief of the Ionian fleet during the final battle was a certain Dionysios from Phokaia which could be read as a clear commitment from the part of the Phokaians (Hdt. 6.11–12; 6.17). The next we learn from Thucydides and epigraphical sources is that the city was a member of the Delian League, paying between one and a half and three talents tribute in its local currency.¹⁰

Archaeological research at Phokaia started with Felix Sartiaux in 1913, 1914 and 1920, was taken up again between 1952 and 1957 and then in intervals until 1970 by Ekrem Akurgal. Since 1989 fieldwork has restarted under the direction of Ömer Özyiğit.¹¹ Major results include the identification of the Archaic settlement and its fortification walls with a length of at least five kilometres, probably as long as eight kilometres on the mainland. If we assume the enclosed area to have been fully occupied, this would make Phokaia one of the largest cities of Archaic Ionia. Another important find was the uncovering of the Temple of Athena, a *peripteros* built in the sixth century and apparently in use until it collapsed as the result of an earthquake during the last quarter of the second century.¹² But so far, very little in terms of archaeological contexts or finds (for example pottery) dating to the fifth century has been published. Thus, the development of the city during that century is not well understood.¹³ The

texts to the Archaic period in Asia Minor and elsewhere in the Mediterranean, archaeologists similarly rely on imported (Euboean, Corinthian, Attic) pottery, a method that comes with the caveat that the duration of their circulation cannot be determined.

9 Bodenstedt 1981: 19–27; Graf 1985: 402–403. Hdt. 1.162–163; the first to be attacked and the first to use warships.

10 ATL 1: 436–437; Rubinstein 2004: 1090; Thuc. 4. 52. Athens, however, did not take the Phokaiian coins at 28 drachmas, but rather at a rate of 27 drachmas ([Dem.] 34.23).

11 The history of research is summarised in Özyiğit 2011. Since spring 2020, excavations have been continuing under the aegis of the Izmir Museum Directorate.

12 Özyiğit 2020. On the date of destruction Özyiğit 2020: 401–402.

13 It remains unclear whether this knowledge gap is the result of a lack of publications,

largest assemblage of published evidence for the fifth century remains the city's electrum coinage.¹⁴

Friedrich Bodenstedt was the first who recorded and classified the electrum coinage from Phokaia (as well as Mytilene). He assumed a largely uninterrupted emission from around 625/600 to 325.¹⁵ For the beginning of the series, he used the then widely accepted date for the so-called 'foundation deposit' from the Artemision in Ephesus (*IGCH* 1153 and 1154) which contained two 1/48 staters with a seal's head from Phokaia, and for its end the introduction of coins with the image of Alexander III.¹⁶ The coins themselves are exceptional in more than one aspect: except for what Bodenstedt calls the E-series and alloy period I (Phokaia, Em 1–20¹⁷), for which a variety of denominations are attested, all other coins (Phokaia, Em 21–112) were issued exclusively in one denomination, *hektai* measured at ca. 2.6 g, which is a sixth of a Phokaian stater. All were made from electrum, a man-made alloy from gold, silver, and copper. They display constantly changing obverse types but remained identifiable by the depiction of a seal (*φώκη* in Greek, a pun on the issuing polis).¹⁸ The seal features as the only image on the earliest issues; on the later ones it was added as a small image to the obverse.¹⁹ Bodenstedt used a wide range of methods to identify alloy contents and minting technology.²⁰ This allowed him to distinguish all preserved coins from Phokaia for the first time and to categorise them into three minting (or alloy) periods (I, II, and III), during which the gold content was reduced

or indeed a significant gap in the material evidence over the duration of the fifth century. Published are exclusively examples of Athenian pottery (cf. Tuna-Nörling 2002 and Slawisch 2013 with bibliography). Beside the Archaic architectural fragments from the Temple of Athena only archaic pottery has been published (*Özyiğit* 2020: pl. 739–773). This makes it altogether difficult to substantiate cult continuity beyond the Archaic period in this area.

- 14 In addition to electrum coinage, Phokaia also issued a substantial amount of silver coinage from the second half of the sixth century onwards (cf. Balcer 1970; van Alfen 2018 with bibliography) and there is evidence for die links between the two as well as stylistic links to silver coins emitted in Massalia (cf. Cahn 1998; Furtwängler 1978: 134, Group F).
- 15 Cf. Bodenstedt 1977/78b: 147; Bodenstedt 1976a: 17–19.
- 16 Bodenstedt 1981: 50. The Artemision hoard is now dated to 640 BCE, which consequently shifts the beginning of the Phokaian electrum coinage upwards. On this see Kerschner and Konuk 2020: esp. 97 no. 20 (seal's head facing left, 1/48 stater in Phokaian standard) and 106 no. 81 (seal's head facing left, 1/48 stater).
- 17 On this see Bodenstedt 1981: 104–128.
- 18 Interpreting imagery from series with multiple obverse types poses an additional challenge because it calls the importance or rather symbolic value of individual pieces into question, at least with regards to the one city that issues the coins. Another example for a series with multiple obverse types is Cyzicus (see De Callataÿ 2020).
- 19 Cf. Bodenstedt 1976a: 15.
- 20 On this in detail, see Bodenstedt 1976a; Bodenstedt 1976b.

and silver and copper increased over time.²¹ Secondly, he also indicated three groups (group A, B, and C) based on his observation of changing production techniques in particular the contour of the reverse punches. He then linked the two categories by using historical anchor dates.²² To establish an end date for Alloy Period I which more or less aligns with the end of Group A, he assumed a correlation between the coinage output in Phokaia and the end of Polycrates' reign and thus the end of Samian maritime supremacy in this part of the Mediterranean in 522.²³ From the beginning of Alloy Period II and Group B onwards, the coinage from Phokaia and Mytilene shows close adherences to equal weight and alloy composition, an observation that led Bodenstedt and others to suppose that both cities issued their coins jointly between ca. 500 and 330 in what is now known as cooperative coinage. Following this idea, Bodenstedt distributed the remaining coins in a way that reflects emission for every other year.²⁴ The existence of such a contract between the two cities is supported by an inscription dated to the early fourth century found on the island of Lesbos.²⁵ The surviving text contains a treaty between Phokaia and Mytilene and regulates the annually changing minting of electrum coins, τὸ χρύσιον, and penalizes the contamination of the alloy by responsible officials. At the transition from Alloy Period II to Alloy Period III, Bodenstedt observed another reduction in the gold content of the Phokaian and Mytilenian electrum *hektai*, which he associates with the upcoming tribute payments for the Delian League starting from its foundation in 477. From period III onwards, no further deterioration of the alloy can be detected. The same anchor date is used for the beginning

21 On a recent metal analysis of electrum *hektai* from Phokaia and Mytilene, see Gitler et al. 2020: esp. 408–409. Increasing the copper content could visually hide the reduction of gold content and thus might not have been immediately noticeable by customers. This has already been noted by Bodenstedt.

22 Bodenstedt 1976a: 26–27, 40 and corrections in Bodenstedt 1981: 47–48. He suggests the following chronology: Alloy Period I: ca. 600–522, Alloy Period II: ca. 521–478 and Alloy period III: ca. 477–326, and Group A: ca. 600–530/525, Group B: ca. 525–325, Group C: ca. 475–325.

23 Bodenstedt 1976a: 48; Bodenstedt 1981: 8, 22.

24 Bodenstedt 1976a: 86–87; van Alfen 2018: 342.

25 *IG XII*, 2.1. On the inscription, see Mackil and van Alfen 2006: 210–219. Bodenstedt (1981: 30) suggests a connection with the sea battle at Cnidus in 394, but Heiserer (1984), Bresson (2009), and Psoma (2020: 71–72) favour a date in the second half of the fifth century. It should be noted that the inscription does not make any reference to an earlier contract between Phokaia and Mytilene. However, other numismatic evidence suggests that monetary cooperation or coordination was more common than previously assumed. Cf. Balcer 1970 on monetary cooperation between Phokaia and nearby Teos and van Alfen 2014 on potential monetary coordination between Phokaia and Velia.

of group C, when he observes another change in production technique. The ordering of the material *within* all of these groups is based on the style of the images. For the years 535–327, Bodenstedt distinguishes a total of 26 ‘master’ hands whose creative periods, apart from a few gaps or overlaps, stretch over the entire period.²⁶ Here, he refers to the watershed of 480 as the start date of the Athenian ‘Severe Style’, instead of incorporating material and visual styles created by contemporary Ionians, in particular north Ionian craftsmen in the same way he did for late archaic coins.

In sum, the arrangement of the electrum coinage from Phokaia in the fifth century relies on two chronological anchors assumed to provide a reliable dating mechanism: the foundation of the Delian League and a stylistic change in the way the human body and face are depicted.

3 What Is the Evidence for This?

Herodotus reports that Samos, Chios, Lesbos and other islands were admitted to the Delian alliance when it was founded (Hdt. 9.106), but he does not mention Phokaia or any other of the cities on the mainland of Asia Minor. Bodenstedt’s assumption that Phokaia also joined the league as early as 477 is perhaps not impossible, but not based on any explicit written evidence and is therefore a deduction *ex silentio*.²⁷

The second anchor is equally difficult to verify, but the implied assumption of an *ad hoc* change of style in Athens in 480, and shortly after on the coinage of Phokaia (and Mytilene), is a very unlikely scenario because of the way ideas and technological knowledge are created and transmitted.²⁸ I have argued elsewhere that the stylistic features traditionally identified as Classical, or more precisely the ‘Severe Style’, can be detected much earlier in Ionia during the period we would traditionally call late Archaic²⁹ Without diving into much detail here on the stylistic development in Ionia, it is without question that we have ample evidence for a thriving artistic industry during the late sixth to the early fifth century and that there is no reason to assume that new stylistic

26 Bodenstedt 1977/1978a; Bodenstedt 1977/1978b; Bodenstedt 1981: 52.

27 Bodenstedt 1981: 23.

28 Cf. Slawisch 2019: 145–146 with bibliography; Barringer 2020; Stewart remains the most vocal proponent of a sudden appearance of the Severe Style. On this, see Stewart 2008: 601 and Stewart 2017. For a rejection of the idea of an *ad hoc* development see both Adornato 2019 and Slawisch 2019.

29 Slawisch 2019.

developments within the oeuvre of Ionian craftsmen were directly copied from Athenian counterparts.³⁰

If we abandon the year 480 as a chronological anchor, what effect would such a 'de-watershedification' have on our dating of the Phokaian coinage? Not all types of imagery on coinage are equally suitable for a stylistic analysis, since, for example, objects or animals seem to change at a slower pace than the depiction of the human head.³¹ I will therefore concentrate on emissions with warrior heads for which Bodenstedt suggested dates between ca. 500 to ca. 450. These include Phokaia (Ph) Em 30 and 41 dated to ca. 518–490 and attributed by Bodenstedt to the 'Master of the slanting eyes' and Ph/Em 50 dated to ca. 478 and attributed to the 'Master of the two latest warrior heads' whose work falls into the period of transition from Alloy Period II to III.

Examples of the supposedly earlier group are a warrior head wearing a so-called crested 'Ionian' helmet (Ph/Em 30, Fig. 11.2) and the head of Athena wearing a so-called 'Corinthian' helmet (Ph/Em 41).³² Both faces show the characteristic slanted eyelids that are open towards the bridge of the nose.³³ The warriors on Ph/Em 50 wear crested Ionian helmets.³⁴ Regardless of their assigned dates, all of the Ionian helmets are decorated with wine tendrils. But the eyelids on Ph/Em 50 are slightly rounder showing that the stonemason was aware of the actual position of the eyeball when depicting the heads in profile, a feature that is characteristic for the early years of the Severe Style. For the date of the issue of this coin, Bodenstedt was thus left with a very small window. In terms of alloy composition, Ph/Em 50 belongs to Alloy Period II (before the foundation of the Delian League) but in terms of style they could, according to his assumption of the start of the Severe Style, only be shortly after 480.³⁵

A comparison with, for example, representations of warrior heads in Ionian sculpture and on Klazomenian sarcophagi shows that Bodenstedt's stylistic

30 For an overview over the development of Archaic and Classical sculpture in Ionia, see Slawisch and Sichelschmidt 2022.

31 Fischer-Bossert (2019/2020: 55–56) highlights the difficulties of stylistically classifying coin images. Emission of coinage follows different timetables and responds to different needs than objects of art. On the design and execution of coin and gem artists during the late Archaic and Classical periods, see Berthold 2013.

32 On this emission see Bodenstedt 1981: 136–137 with pl. 4,9 and 45. This type of helmet can be distinguished by the movable cheek flaps, the absence of the nose guard and the spur on the elongated formed calotte. On the Ionian helmet and its derivation from the Urartian helmet, see Held 1999.

33 Cf. Bodenstedt 1977/1978b: 154.

34 On this emission see Bodenstedt 1981: 141–142 with pl. 5,8 and 46. Bodenstedt (1977/1978b: 155) erroneously describes one of the helmets as a 'clumsy-looking Corinthian helmet'.

35 Cf. Bodenstedt 1977/1978b: 155 with pl. 42, 11.12 and pl. 43, 2, 3.



FIGURE 11.2
Warrior head with so-called
“Ionian” helmet. Rev. Irregular
square incuse, Electrum hekte,
Dm 11 mm (max.), 2.547 g, British
Museum 1845,1217.186, Bodenstedt
1981: 129. Ph/Em 30.8
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ISH MUSEUM. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

sequence is far from robust. The best parallel is an over life-size marble statue of a warrior wearing an Ionian helmet and a cuirass that was found in the Samian Heraion (Fig. 11.3). The sculpture has protruding eyes with slightly slanted fine eyelids. The helmet shows the same decoration with tendrils as seen on the coinage from Phokaia. The sculpture is dated to ca. 530.³⁶ Similar depictions of warriors with Ionian helmets decorated with tendrils can be found on Klazomenian sarcophagi attributed to the Borelli Painter (Fig. 11.4) and the Hanover Painter. Both are commonly dated to the last third or last quarter of the sixth century.³⁷ Both types of evidence show that the image of warriors wearing Ionian helmets was widely known in Ionia. They were used to emphasise aristocratic lifestyle and military values.³⁸ The slight stylistic differences between the two sets of coins from Phokaia reflect different masters, as Bodenstedt rightly observes, but this does not necessarily mean a difference in chronology, especially because both sets have matching alloy compositions. Here, the anchor date of 480 for the supposedly later exemplars creates an artificial gap.³⁹

The next master identified by Bodenstedt is the ‘Satyr and Midas master’, whom he dates to the period between 465 and 446 (Ph Em. 65–68).⁴⁰ This artist’s oeuvre includes: (1) a depiction of Silenus *en face* or rather an attenuated three-quarter view, which means that the head is turned only very slightly to

36 The date is based on stylistic comparisons. Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung Berlin Sk 1752 and Sk 1844. Cf. Freyer-Schauenburg 1974: 184–185 no. 103 pl. 77. For an image of the sculpture and comparisons that support the suggested date see arachne.dainst.org/entity/1120990 by Sabine Neumann (last accessed 06.02.2025).

37 Cf. Cook 1981: B.8 pl. 6–7 (London, British Museum 1886,0326.1 joins with Istanbul 1427); Cook 1981: C.4 pl. 14.1 (Hanover 1897.12). On the relationship between the Borelli and the Hanover painter, see Zeren-Hasdağlı 2018: 387–389.

38 See, for example, Fransen 2011: 105–112.

39 For series Ph/Em. 51–64, dated to 477 to 464, no particular master could be identified.

40 Bodenstedt 1977/1978b, 156 with pl. 44, 1–4. Characteristic for this master who worked for both, Mytilene and Phokaia, is the way in which he depicts the animal ears with a button-like thickening under the auricle.



FIGURE 11.3 Front- and side view of a warrior statue wearing a so-called “Ionian” helmet. Marble, Samos, Heraion. H. 86 cm; W. max 53 cm; H. of head 35 cm
 © STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, ANTIKENSAMMLUNG / ARCHIV,
 INVENTARNUMMER: SK 1752 [ANT. 6076]

the side (Fig. 11.5),⁴¹ and (2) two types of representation of king Midas, recognizable by his donkey ears, in profile facing left (Fig. 11.6).⁴² One explanation for the occurrence of Silenus and Midas with ass ears is that it directly reflects a stage performance, comparable to an attested early fourth century production of Aristophanes’ *Plutus* (ca. 388).⁴³ In this play a certain Carion claims that by capturing Plutos everyone will become a Midas, provided they grow

41 Bodenstedt 1981: 148. 316, no Ph/Em 67, pl. 7.3, 47.

42 Bodenstedt 1981: 147–148. 316. Ph/Em. 66, Ph/Em. 68 with pl. 7.2; 7.4 and 47.

43 Susanne Berndt has interpreted the ass ears as a metaphor for Persian spies (because spies were also called the ‘king’s ears’). See Berndt 2018: 59–60. It is indeed tempting to interpret the choice of image here as anti-Persian propaganda.



FIGURE 11.4 Fragment of Klazomenian sarcophagus, attributed to the Borelli Painter, H: 45 cm, British Museum 1886,0326.1, Cook 1981: B.8 pl. 6–7

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FIGURE 11.5
Head of bearded satyr (Silenus?).
Rev. Irregular four-part incuse
square. Electrum hekte, Dm
11 mm, 2.540 g, British Museum
1951,1007.5, Bodenstedt 1981: 148.
Ph/Em 67
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FIGURE 11.6
Head of bearded man (Midas?).
Rev. Irregular four-part incuse
square. Electrum hekte, Dm
10 mm, 2.534 g, British Museum
RPK, p121A.3.Coo, Bodenstedt 1981:
147. Ph/Em 66.1
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ass's ears.⁴⁴ Stylistic characteristics visible on both Midas and Silenus are the wide-open eyes with clearly differentiated upper and lower eyelids and the full, protruding cheeks. The treatment of hair is, however, slightly different between them: Silenus' beard is shaped in voluminous curls, while Midas' beard is overall more compact, but has a more fine-grained internal structure. In addition, on some coins Midas' hair is arranged in individual curls above the forehead. Margaret Miller has compared the depictions on the *hektai* from Phokaia with existing examples on Athenian red-figure pottery. Here the first representations of Midas with donkey ears appear around the middle of the fifth century, for example on the name piece, a stamnos by the Midas Painter (ca. 440, Fig. 11.7) or a bell-krater attributed to the Polygnotos group (ca. 450–420).⁴⁵

Given the different design possibilities in the round of the coin in comparison to the scenic depiction of the story on Attic vase paintings one has to be careful to parallel both appearances in art. For the coin, the ass's ears are essential for the identification of Midas, while on late sixth-century Athenian pottery Midas appears with human ears identifiable either through an inscription or a composition that would always include Silenus.⁴⁶ The depictions of Midas with ass ears on Athenian pottery start around the middle of the fifth

44 Aristophanes *Ploutos* 286–287; cf. Roller 1983: 302.

45 Miller 1988. For the full range of representations of Midas, see Miller 1997.

46 Brommer 1941.



FIGURE 11.7 Silenos led before Midas. Stamnos by the Midas Painter. H: 38.10 cm, British Museum 1851,0416.9

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FIGURE 11.8

Head of Satyr (Silenos?) en face.

Rev. Four-part incuse square. Elec-

trum hekte, Dm 10 mm, 2.592 g,

BM 1841,0928.13, Bodenstedt 1981:

138. Ph/Em 43.4

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century but, as Margaret Miller already observed, the entire composition with the king sitting on a throne follows an entirely new iconographic source which, according to her, echoes Achaemenid imperial iconography.⁴⁷ The main difference between the depictions on Athenian red-figured vessels and our electrum coins is Midas' headgear. This, on the contrary, might suggest separate visual traditions in Ionia and Athens. Similarly, there is a depiction of Silenus *en face* (Fig. 11.8) from Alloy Period II and dated by Bodenstedt to around 490.⁴⁸ Given the increased eagerness to experiment with *en face* representations on Attic pottery and Klazomenian sarcophagi, this issue could well be chronologically older than currently assumed.⁴⁹

As these examples show, the internal chronology for the electrum *hektai* from Phokaia (and for that matter Mytilene) is far from secure. Furthermore, if we uncritically follow Bodenstedt's classification and chronology, Phokaia appears as an exceptional case amongst other Ionian cities, since all other Ionian cities seem to have discontinued their coin output at some point over the course of the fifth century.⁵⁰

Dating the electrum coinage from Phokaia via stylistic comparison raises an important question about the directionality of artistic transmission. Where did the inspiration of particular motifs or styles come from? As we have just seen, while the warrior emissions from Phokaia are traditionally dated accord-

47 Miller 1988.

48 Bodenstedt notes that Kurt Regling in his 'Die antike Münze als Kunstwerk' published in 1924 (*non vidi*) assigned the coin to the Severe Style. Cf. Bodenstedt 1981: 55. Ph/Em 43 with pl. 4.11 and 45.

49 See for example the hoplite in Cook 1981: C.4 pl. 14.1 (Hanover 1897.12). When painters start to experiment with the depiction of frontal faces from ca. 570 onwards, they display a preference for Dionysus, Gorgo, Medusa or Silenus (see Hedreen 2017: 163–165 with bibliography in n. 18 on frontal silens).

50 On Ionian electrum emissions, see Wartenberg 2022: 315. On silver coinage issued by Ionian allies of Athens during the second half of the fifth century, see Kallet and Kroll 2020: 62–64.

ing to the assumed date for the emergence of the Severe Style in Athens, the Midas and Silenus images are linked to Athenian black and red-figured pottery. Indeed, when it comes to dating objects and monuments in Asia Minor from the late Archaic period onwards, scholars regularly look first to parallels from Athens or the Greek mainland as default sources. The abundance of material in combination with the efflorescence of the region after 480 and for most of the fifth century seems to justify such an approach. When Miletus and other Greek cities of Asia Minor were liberated after the battle of Mycale in 479 and subsequently joined the Delian League it seemed obvious that they followed the same cultural trajectory as Athens, and thus, 480 became a one-way *post quem* watershed for the contextual and stylistic dating of *all* archaeological objects. With the acceptance of an apparent artistic directionality for the period of direct Athenian supremacy in the second and third quarter of the fifth century, it seemed only natural to assume similar modes of transmission for the preceding decades of cultural production.⁵¹

One group of material evidence from Ionia that exemplifies the problems connected with this approach, and to which we now turn, are the so-called Klazomenian sarcophagi, named after the ancient city in which they were first found.

4 The Klazomenian Sarcophagi

Like Phokaia, the ancient city of Klazomenai (modern İskele, the port of Urla) seems to have flourished economically and culturally for the most part of the Archaic period, at least according to the archaeological evidence.⁵² Contemporary written sources for the seventh and sixth centuries are non-existent, but the later fifth-century historian Herodotus mentions, for example, a treasury of the Klazomenians at Delphi (1.51.2), their foundation of Abdera in Thrace (1.168.1), and military conflicts such as the failed attack by the Lydian king

51 Another example that exemplifies the problems with this method particularly well are the discussions surrounding the date of and interpretation of marble reliefs on the so-called Polyxena Sarcophagus from Çanakkale. Discovered in the mound of Kızöldün near Daskyleion, it displays stylistic parallels with the oeuvre of Athenian vase painters such as Euphronios. This has led many scholars to advocate solely the transfer of iconographic models from Athens to Ionia. Francis Croissant (2015) and recently Carola Reinsberg (2022: 65) persuasively place the monument firmly within the stylistic domain of north Ionia, i.e. with close parallels to vase painting and sculpture from Klazomenai and Phokaia and thus before or contemporary with Euphronios.

52 Ersoy 2007.

Alyattes and Otanes' march against Klazomenai during the time of the Ionian Revolt (1.16.2; 5.123). Pausanias, who wrote in the second century CE, informs us that the Klazomenians had left their mainland settlement for the nearby island because of their fear of the Persians (7.3.9). While this may well be a late legend, archaeological finds from the island support frequentation in particular during the fifth century when comparable evidence is missing from the mainland.⁵³

More recent scholarly interest in the region started as early as the seventeenth century, but increased significantly following the discovery of several elaborately painted clay sarcophagi by local farmers in the late nineteenth century. Formal excavations on the mainland and nearby Karantina Island started with Oikonomos, Ephor for Asia Minor in 1921 and 1922. During these campaigns, more than 70 clay sarcophagi were unearthed on the mainland.⁵⁴ However, longer-term and systematic archaeological fieldwork only started in the early 1980s under the directorship of Güven Bakır who concentrated on identifying and understanding the outline and function of the archaic settlement and adjacent burial grounds. He was succeeded by Yaşar Ersoy in 2007. These excavations confirmed a tangible disruption of settlement activities on the mainland during the Late Archaic period and frequentation of nearby Karantina island during the fifth century, as implied by Pausanias.⁵⁵ Furthermore, they revealed and documented numerous exemplars of painted clay sarcophagi but only few of these have been fully published to date.

The immediate attention garnered by the first sarcophagi among antiquarians and scholars worldwide is due to their elaborate painted decorations and their enormous size and weight. Exact dimensions vary, but typically these items measure around 1.80 by 0.80 m and weigh in the region of 450 kg.⁵⁶ Analysis of the clay on some examples has confirmed that many were made locally in the Klazomenai region but by no means exclusively, even if Klazomenai might have been the major centre of production.⁵⁷ While during the early twen-

53 Cf., e.g., Güngör 2004.

54 Cook 1981: 160–161; Tzannes 2004. Parts of Oikonomos' documentation from these two campaigns, which consists of handwritten notes and sketches of some of the finds, is available online and some of the archaeological objects collected are today stored in the National Museum at Athens (for example the sarcophagus Cook 1981: G30 = Athens 16471). <https://www.archetai.gr/index.php?p=content§ion=1&id=183&lang=#> (22 July 2022).

55 Cf., e.g., Ersoy 2004: 55–60; Güngör 2004: 122; Koparal and İplikçi 2004: 232. Preliminary reports are published in the *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantıları*, all of which are available online: <https://kvmgm.ktb.gov.tr/TR-44760/kazi-sonuclari-toplantilari.html> (14 November 2023).

56 Cook and Dupont 1998: 127.

57 Aslan 2013. However, many others are reported to have come from Teos and Smyrna (each ca. 20 and 30 km away), a limited number from Samos, Pitane, Lesbos and Eph-

tieth century, and again in the 1970s and early 1980s, numerous articles were published on individual pieces, we owe the first comprehensive study of this group of monuments to Robert Cook who assembled, categorized, and illustrated over 160 pieces from archaeological museums worldwide in 1981. This publication triggered an even wider international interest in the topic and might have contributed significantly to the initiation and focus of subsequent excavations in Klazomenai.⁵⁸ However, subsequent archaeological fieldwork clearly indicates that the chronology of the corpus requires substantial revision. Cook created a chronological framework which stretched the maximal period of production over only a hundred years, i.e. from 550 to 450, with the bulk supposedly manufactured within three decades between 500 to 470.⁵⁹ The upper limit for the production of Klazomenian sarcophagi has since been revised based on new find associations, with many scholars now advocating a maximal period of production between ca. 630 to 470/450, which is almost double the time span previously assumed.⁶⁰

From the first scientific treatment, scholars have highlighted both the similarities to images on Attic black- and red-figure pottery and their apparent subordinate quality in artistic execution compared to what Athenian painters were able to achieve.⁶¹ Consequently, when Cook and other scholars after him attempted to date individual examples, they based their chronological classification exclusively on the stylistic comparison with Athenian pottery and the

esus (between ca. 60 and 80 km away) and singular items from Ialysos, Rhodos, Abdera (a settlement founded by Klazomenai and Teos in Thrace) and Akanthos (Chalkidike), up to 300 km away.

58 The Klazomenian sarcophagi are one of the few topics in Greek archaeology on which scholarship has been published in German, French, English, Greek and now increasingly in Turkish, reflecting the ongoing fascination and importance of these monuments.

59 Cook 1981: 142 and 148.

60 On the suggested earlier start date see Bakır et al. 2000: 48; Hürmüzlü 2010. The evidence for the lower limits within the fifth century will be discussed elsewhere.

61 For example, Dennis (1883: 7) concludes that 'The drawing is inferior to the later vases of archaic Greek or attic style'. Johansen (1942: 123) describes Klazomenian painters as occasionally dipping 'into the rich store of motives of Attic vase painting and, more or less freely ..., reproduced Attic originals.' Since then, more Ionian works did come to light which should be included in any such discussion: for example, Johansen (1942: 130) notes, in the context of imagery of Erastes and Eromenoi on the sarcophagus in Berlin Inv. 30030, the lack of a local, Ionian tradition for scenes showing pederasty, but some of the Archaic electrum staters from a Klazomenian coin hoard dated to ca. 580 are showing just that (cf. Furtwängler 1995: M1 and M4 with fig. 1. 2. 4; Işık 1992 published the coin hoard). Cook (1981: 20–21, E3 with pl. 20 and 21) follows Johansen (1942: 126–128) and dates the sarcophagus to 515–510. From his 'history of study' section it is obvious that Cook takes a more cautious stance on the question of Athenian influence (Cook 1981: 155–159).

assumption that the painters of the Klazomenian sarcophagi should always post-date Athenian innovation, often by more than a decade.⁶²

I have already discussed the problem of using the year 480 as a stylistic chronological anchor, and its subsequent use as a dating tool in Ionia in connection with the electrum coinage from Phokaia. The traditional classification of Klazomenian sarcophagi into categories before and after 480 is identical and requires, in my opinion, a systematic revision.⁶³ On the surface, the imagery and painting styles on the sarcophagi indeed exhibit a close resemblance to the Attic black- and red-figured styles, but not in every aspect. As to the technique, the black-figure style differs in the way the interior details are not incised, but rather painted with thin white lines. Unlike the practice on Athenian pottery, the skin of females is not indicated with additional white paint. The Klazomenian red-figure style also differs from Athenian examples in that the recessed surface is not red clay, but a cream-coloured slip that was applied underneath.⁶⁴

The superficial results of both techniques can appear quite similar from a distance, particularly in the way they allow for much more nuanced and detailed drawings of textures and fabrics. In terms of chronology, the Athenian black-figure style emerges indisputably earlier than the Athenian red-figure style. However, there are also several transitional pieces, commonly known as bilingual vases, which provide us with tangible evidence for a period when both techniques were occasionally used together on the same vessel.⁶⁵ Notably such bilingual examples also appear amongst the corpus of Klazomenian sar-

62 Zahn 1898 makes a case for the transfer of ideas in the opposite direction with Klazomenian craftsmen, who had moved to Attica for work, as the major drivers of innovation. His views were rejected by, e.g., Kjelberg (1932: 7–8), Johansen (1942: 141–142).

63 Cook (1974: 60), discusses the possibility that most sarcophagi from Old Smyrna must belong to the more prosperous period before the end of the Ionian Revolt in 494, he also indicates that others 'should hardly be earlier than 480'. An Attic red-figure lekythos found inside a sarcophagus on Rhodes (Cook 1981: 61 H2), which has been dated by Beazley to 470–460, forms another anchor for Cook's chronology in which the upper limit of 470 becomes the watershed (cf. Cook's chapters on the Albertinum Group, the Hopkinson Painter, and other fifth century sarcophagi respectively). Zeren-Hasdağlı (2022: 21–25) continues this tradition by explicitly pointing to 480 as the watershed for the Early Classical style and supposed starting date for the Hopkinson painter (p. 25).

64 Cf. Cook 1981: 110–112 (black-figure), 132 (red-figure). He says (p. 132) that 'it saves trouble to call their technique 'red-figure''. In a later publication he is again more cautious admitting that one might call it 'white-figure' (Cook and Dupont 1998: 126).

65 The Andokides Painter, one of the best-known painters working in both techniques, is sometimes credited with the invention of the red-figure technique in Athens (e.g., Cohen 2008: 19).



FIGURE 11.9

Klazomenian sarcophagus, attributed to the Albertinum Painter, Princeton University Art Museum, 23.2×233.5×136.0×25.0 cm

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cophagi. But, unlike their Athenian counterparts, they have not yet received any serious attention in scholarship. One particularly elaborate example is housed in the Princeton University Art Museum (Fig. 11.9).⁶⁶ The headpiece and upper sides are decorated with chariots, fighting warriors and hunting scenes in the black-figure technique. Klazomenian red-figure technique was used for the decoration of the foot piece which shows a row of three animals, a panther, a boar and a lion and the griffin metopes on either side. The spatial division between the diverging techniques is additionally accentuated by a long, braided band.⁶⁷ There is no mixing of techniques within one particular scene.

Cook attributed the sarcophagus to the 'Albertinum Group' and ascribed a date around 490/480. Nassos Papalexandrou, who in an article published in 2010 presents a careful re-evaluation of the imagery, concludes that 'The Princeton sarcophagus presents a secure *terminus post quem* in the confident familiarity of its painter with red-figure technique', and adds more cautiously that a date around 500, which is slightly earlier than Cook had suggested, might be appropriate.⁶⁸ Notwithstanding the not insignificant technical differences

66 Detailed photos can be found at <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/33395> (last consulted 06.02.2025).

67 For a detailed description of all areas decorated, see Papalexandrou 2010: 5–17.

68 Papalexandrou 2010: 18; Cook 1981: 40. 148 with pl. 15 (Albertinum Group, G15A) and again Cook and Dupont 1998: 126–127.

between the two kinds of red-figure style described above, neither Cook nor Papalexandrou hesitated in assuming that such an innovation must have its roots among Athenian potters and painters. What both authors readily imply is that what we are seeing here can only be thought of as an, admittedly excellent, attempt to imitate the work of Athenian craftsmanship that would have arrived in Klazomenai only with some delay.

5 What Is the Evidence for Such a Scenario?

Tangible contextual evidence that would allow us to securely place individual sarcophagi in time is indeed extremely sparse. For example, from the corpus published by Cook only five are associated with a context and/or other objects.⁶⁹ For the chronology of groups and painters defined by Cook and others we are entirely reliant on how we, as modern scholars, perceive their artistic development, in the case of Ionian potters and painters with the additional caveat that they did not sign their work.⁷⁰ This means that common tools such as prosopography and onomastics to establish potential cross-generational relationships amongst craftsmen and workshops are not available to us.⁷¹ However, a number of observations can be made: firstly, Klazomenian sarcophagi with at least parts of the decoration painted in the Klazomenian red-figure technique are significantly fewer in number than examples decorated in Klazomenian black-figure style.⁷² Secondly, while there is ample evidence for local Ionian pottery decorated in the black-figure technique, we have no evidence to assume that Ionians ever produced *vessels* in red-figure, either in the way painters of Klazomenian sarcophagi did, nor in the technique used by Athenian craftsmen. This is significant, as it differs from other areas outside of Attica, where local red-figured vessels were made.⁷³

69 Cook 1981: 142.

70 Cf. Cook 1981, whose results are based on almost hundred years of previous scholarship. For recent attempts to continue this type of work with an emphasis on understanding workshop collaborations, see Zeren-Hasdağlı 2018 and 2022.

71 The lack of dipinti, or rather labels, also affects our ability to securely identify figures and/or scenes of potentially mythical character. Here scholars rely almost exclusively on Corinthian and/or Athenian counterparts.

72 Cook counted six examples (1981: 132) all of which he assigned to the Albertinum group.

73 On non-Attic red-figure fabrics produced outside Attica, see, e.g., Schierup and Sabetai 2014: 7. The earliest examples from Lucania and Boeotia date to ca. 440 and are thus significantly later than the assumed start date for Athenian red-figure.

Another relevant question is whether Ionian craftsmen had direct access to red-figured pottery from Athens and, if so, whether we are able to determine the chronological parameters for their exposure to this style. Interestingly, while we have abundant evidence for Athenian black-figure pottery arriving in Klazomenai (and elsewhere in Ionia and Asia Minor) during the sixth century, numbers of Athenian imports decline dramatically in the course of the early fifth century. Red-figured pottery from Athens on the other hand occurs from the late Archaic period onwards but only in very small numbers and even less often during the early decades of the fifth century. The latter phenomenon was most likely caused by a disruption of networks and a severely reduced connectivity of Ionian cities in the aftermath of the military defeat and economic turmoil that ended the Ionian Revolt.⁷⁴ Regardless, among the finds unearthed in the sanctuary of Aphrodite on Zeytintepe near Miletus, which archaeologists believe to have been destroyed by the Persian army in 494 and which therefore provides us with a potentially secure *terminus ante quem*, are fragments of Athenian red-figure pottery attributed to Oltos and Epiktetos.⁷⁵ Both belong to the very early representatives of the new style in Athens and are traditionally thought to have been active from ca. 525–520 to 500–490. The precise dating of these vessels is further complicated by the uncertainty regarding start date for the manufacture of Athenian red-figure pottery. That style was long believed to be one of the few fixed dates in Classical Archaeology, but it has recently and with good arguments been called into question, and can perhaps be pushed back by fifteen to twenty years.⁷⁶ If the new dating of Athenian red-figure pottery is correct, the window for the exposure of Klazomenian craftsmen to the new Athenian red-figured style is not only much narrower than previously assumed; it also coincides with the dramatical upheavals in the area during the first decade of the fifth century.

A last point to consider is that of perceived and actual comparability between the emergence of Athenian red figure and Klazomenian red figure. There are images that so closely resemble Athenian ones that an interconnectivity between the two locales and traditions seems indeed the most likely scenario, independent of the direction of travel.⁷⁷ However, as mentioned above, the technical realisation of the same images is very different. In order to prepare the surface of Klazomenian sarcophagi for decoration, a thin layer of fine clay was added on top of the coarse clay of the container. This was

74 Slawisch 2013.

75 Kunisch 2016, e.g., nos. 1537–1540, 1546 (Oltos); 1584 (Epiktetos).

76 Rotroff 2009 and 2020.

77 For a discussion of examples see for example Kirchner 1987.



FIGURE 11.10 Detail of Fig. 11.9, showing Klazomenian 'white-figure'
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 1951. CC BY 4.0

covered with a layer of cream-coloured paint which formed the basis for the figural or ornamental decoration applied over it (Fig. 11.10). There was, in fact, never a true Klazomenian version of Athenian red figure (i.e., the reserving of the red clay surface). It might thus be best to abandon the term altogether; for as soon as scholars describe similarities by using the term 'red-figure', they created a technical connection that is potentially misleading. Over a period of more than 150 years of production, painters of Klazomenian sarcophagi used a huge variety of techniques: reserve technique, black-figure, white-figure (previously labelled red-figure), and contour technique. As soon as we refrain from looking for bilinguals in only black- and white-figure, the corpus of Klazomenian sarcophagi reveals abundant evidence for an eclectic mix of techniques (black-figure and reserve style; white-figure and reserve style; black-figure and white-figure; reserve technique and contour style).⁷⁸ Thus, the painters of Klazomenian sarcophagi seem to have enjoyed mixing different painting styles and mixing formulaic with distinctive local (north Ionian) imagery. We do not understand to what degree these mixed styles reflect chronological differences, artistic differences, regional or imported ideas and innovations, workshop mobility, and consumer choice.⁷⁹

78 Zeren-Hasdağlı (2014: 28–36) provides an overview over the different painting techniques. She uses the term red-figure.

79 To date we know almost nothing about the occupants of the sarcophagi which are traditionally tied to a wealthy (aristocratic) clientele.

6 Conclusion: The Consequences of the Observed Overreliance on Athenian Chronologies on Archaeology of Asia Minor

Both case studies have shown that the overreliance on Athenian chronology and stylistic forerunners not only deprives local and regional craftsmanship outside of Athens of their agency, it also closes down any potential research into alternative routes of transmission. Two factors contributed to this situation. First, Athenian cultural production, such as painted pottery of the Archaic and Classical periods, is comparatively easy to recognize and it evidently spread all around the Mediterranean, thus seemingly allowing us to align contexts that are spatially distant. Secondly, contexts excavated in Athens were long believed to provide a secure anchor date for the year 480. In this context, scholars too readily equated not only comparability with similarity, but also comparability with simultaneity. This, along with the assumption of a directionality—from Athens as the centre to Ionia as a perceived periphery—has led to an almost static classification of non-Athenian materials according to Athenian frameworks. After many decades of archaeological investigations in Ionia, its neighbouring regions and beyond, and given the many advances in the field of archaeological sciences, it should now be possible to look at both categories of objects with fresh eyes and, if required, be prepared to dramatically revise our existing chronologies and watersheds, as well as their interpretative baggage.

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480 BCE as a Marker in Greek Literary History

André Lardinois

1 Introduction¹

In this chapter I intend to question the year 480 as marker of the transition between Archaic and Classical Greek literature.² I will argue that this date makes little sense from a literary point of view and was chosen at least in part on ideological grounds. It was propagated in order to lump together all literature that was produced in Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries, to tie this literature to Athenian political developments, and to proclaim both as the greatest achievements of ancient Greek culture.

A typical overview of ancient Greek literary history, at least before the last two decades, looks like this: it starts around 800 with the Archaic Greek period, which ends around 480. This is followed by the Classical period that lasts till around 330. Subsequently there are two more periods: the Hellenistic period, ending around 30, and the Roman period till ca. 450 CE. These periods are subsequently associated with certain genres, especially in the first two: epic and lyric poetry are assigned to the Archaic period; drama, philosophy, historiography and rhetoric to the Classical period. It is recognized that these genres ‘return’ in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, but in a form that, until quite recently, was considered to be derivative and inferior.³

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2 E.g., Lesky 1971; Beye 1987; Dihle 1991; Saïd, Trédé and Boulluec 1997. All dates are BCE, unless noted otherwise.

3 See Whitmarsh (2004: 10–15) for the cultural and political origin of this prejudice, which he dates to the nineteenth century. One example may suffice: in his introduction to Hellenistic poetry, Alfred Körte (1925: 14) writes that ‘the poetry of the Hellenistic period is no longer the bread of intellectual life [as it was in the Classical period], but a tasty delicacy that enriches the table of life, but is not indispensable on it’ (Nicht mehr das Brot des Geisteslebens ist die Poesie der hellenistischen Zeit, sondern ein schmackhafter Leckerbissen, der die Tafel des Lebens bereichert, aber auf ihr nicht unentbehrlich ist).

The transitions between the four different literary periods are marked by moments in military history (the Persian Wars, the conquests of Alexander the Great, the Roman conquest of Egypt, and the Fall of Rome). The assumption is that these events resulted in significant cultural changes, but this is something to be argued for rather than assumed. As James McGlew observes: 'While the Greeks of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE would certainly agree that the historical moments with which we circumscribe the Classical age (Xerxes' expulsion from mainland Greece and Alexander's death) were monumental in Greek political and military history, they would hardly have extended those dates to Greek culture generally.'⁴ In this chapter I will argue that the Persian Wars had little effect on the development of Greek literature.

This schematization of Greek literary history was achieved through a process that the sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel has identified as 'lumping' and 'splitting'.⁵ He has demonstrated that in processes of both individual and collective memorization it is common to divide historical data into blocks that are clearly marked off from one another. If certain data do not fit in one block, they are moved to another in a process of lumping and splitting. Hugo Koning has successfully applied this concept to the reception and conceptualization of the poets Homer and Hesiod in antiquity.⁶ Sometimes they are lumped together, for example as the two poets who together provided the Greeks with the image of their gods, or they are split as two poets who are radically opposed to one another, for example in their view on war and peace. Data contradicting these demarcations are either ignored or moved from one side to the other.

We see this process of lumping and splitting at work in the schematization of Greek literary history as well. A clear case of lumping and splitting is the assignment of lyric poetry to the Archaic period, which ignores the fact that two of the most famous lyric poets, Pindar and Bacchylides, produced all their poetry in the fifth century and lived till the middle of that century, later than Aeschylus. Yet, they are commonly treated together with the other lyric poets in chapters on Archaic Greek literature.⁷

Another example of lumping and splitting, but now in the opposite direction, is the identification of philosophy with the Classical period, which ignores the fact that philosophy was practiced in Ionia well before 500. Some literary histories distinguish between the so-called Ionian nature philosophers, who are discussed in the chapter on Archaic Greek literature, and the other

4 McGlew 2016: 78.

5 Zerubavel 2003.

6 Koning 2010.

7 This is the case in all literary histories mentioned in n. 2.

presocratic philosophers who are treated together with Plato and Aristotle in the chapter on Classical literature.⁸ However, this division is arbitrary and ignores the fact that many presocratic philosophers, like Parmenides, straddle the divide between the Archaic and Classical Greek periods. 480 is therefore not a logical marker to divide either Greek lyric poetry or presocratic philosophy.

2 The Equation of Classical Greek Literature with Athenian Literature

Why, then, was Greek lyric poetry lumped together with epic poetry in the Archaic Greek period and philosophy with drama and rhetoric in the Classical period? I contend that this categorization relates to the desire to cleanse Classical Greek literature from all non-Athenian elements and to identify this literature closely with Athenian political and military achievements.⁹ Liberal philosophers in the eighteenth century considered the liberty that Athens procured for itself—or even, according to Herodotus (7.139), for Greece as a whole—by defeating the Persians at Marathon and Salamis as its greatest achievement. This in turn was attributed to Athenian democracy triumphing over tyranny.¹⁰ The equation of Classical Greek literature with Athens and the demarcation of the period by the wars that were fought in it are well illustrated by the title given to the chapter on Classical literature in the history of Greek literature edited by Suzanne Saïd, Monique Trédé and Allain Le Boulluec: ‘The Classical age and the glory of Athens: from the Persian Wars till Chaeronea.’¹¹ This chapter discusses Athenian drama, historiography, Socratic philosophy and rhetoric, but leaves out presocratic philosophers like Anaxagoras and Empedocles, both living in the fifth century, as well as Pindar and Bacchylides. They are discussed in the chapter on the Archaic age.

The lyric poetry of Pindar and Bacchylides is problematic for the equation of Classical literature with Athens, not only because these poets lived and worked outside of Athens, but they catered mostly to non-Athenian and non-

8 This is the case in Lesky 1971, Beye 1987, and Dihle 1991.

9 Cf. Beye (1987: 97): ‘The history of ancient Greek literature of the fifth century B.C. is the history of the city of Athens’. On the privileging of Athens over other regions of Greece in the study of Classical Greece, see also the contribution of Anja Slawisch in this volume.

10 See Marchand in this volume; Murray 2024: esp. ch. 4.

11 Saïd, Trédé and Le Boulluec (1997: 109): ‘L’âge classique et l’éclat d’Athènes: des guerres médiques à Chéronée.’

democratic patrons. Therefore, their poetry is considered to be old-fashioned in its outlook, which in turn justifies its inclusion among Archaic Greek literature.¹² This constitutes, of course, a dubious form of circular reasoning: the poetry is Archaic, because non-democratic and (supposedly) conservative, which in turn defines what is Archaic or at least non-Classical. It also ignores the fact that many Greeks lived outside of Athens in city-states lacking democratic constitutions in the Classical period.¹³ Furthermore, Pindar and Bacchylides found patrons in Athens and their poetry was performed there as well.¹⁴ Pindar and Bacchylides are therefore just as representative of Greek literature in the Classical period as Aristophanes or Euripides are.

Just as political historians like to ignore the fact that not all of Greece was democratic in the fifth century, so admirers of Classical Greek literature like to think that it was the direct result of Athenian democracy, which really gained steam after 480, and a reflection of its greatness. So they argue that Greek tragedy is an essentially democratic genre that reflects democratic ideas and values. Josh Ober and Barry Strauss, for example, point out that the protagonists in Attic drama adopt the rhetoric of the Athenian law courts and assembly,¹⁵ Neil Croally claims that Attic tragedy 'was supposed to teach the citizens of fifth-century democratic Athens',¹⁶ while David Rosenbloom maintains that tragedy displays emotions (pity, fear, anger and indignation) that are 'basic to the psychology of democratic citizenship'.¹⁷ Others have argued against this close connection between tragedy and Athenian democracy.¹⁸ The question is not if fifth-century tragedy reflects contemporary issues in Athenian society—of course it did: all literature is a product of its time and place—but rather if these issues are uniquely Athenian or democratic. Did the rhetoric of speakers in the Athenian law courts differ markedly from that of speakers in other Greek cities? Did the lessons taught by tragedy apply to democratic citizens only, and are emotions such as pity, fear, anger and indignation not felt by citizens in non-democratic states outside of Athens as well?

12 E.g., Lesky (1971: 230): 'Ein Dichter wie Pindar musste in der Zeit der Klassik bald als veraltet gelten' (A poet like Pindar soon had to be considered outdated in the Classical period). Cf. Beye (1987: 87): 'Pindar's harsh view of a bleak and indifferent universe was commonplace in the Archaic Age'.

13 Brock and Hodkinson 2002.

14 E.g., Pind. *Pyth.* 7, *Pae.* 5, frs. 75–77 (dithyrambs); Bach. 18 and 19. Isocrates reports that Pindar was even made *proxenos* of the Athenians in recognition of the songs he composed honoring their city (Isoc. 15.166).

15 Ober and Strauss 1990.

16 Croally 2005: 69.

17 Rosenbloom 2012: 270.

18 Griffin 1998 and 1999; Rhodes 2003.

The fact is that Athenian tragedies were performed all over Greece in the fifth and fourth centuries and that they were popular in non-democratic states such as Syracuse under Hieron and Macedon, whose autocratic rulers invited the playwrights to their courts and ordered new plays to be composed for them.¹⁹ A substantial number of plays remained popular and were read and reperformed throughout the Hellenistic kingdoms and during the Roman empire, whose citizens clearly found enough in these plays to appeal to them.²⁰ The link between fifth-century tragedy and Athenian democracy was therefore not so strong that only democratic citizens could appreciate it. The dramatic productions in Athens probably did profit from the wealth that its empire, established after the Persian Wars, brought in, but tragedies and comedies had been performed in Athens and in other cities before these wars already.²¹

The free and critical thinking of philosophy or the probing questions of historiography have been tied to the spirit of Athenian democracy, which provided fertile ground for the development of rhetoric as well.²² However, the origins of Greek philosophy lie in Ionia, which in the sixth century was first partly under Lydian and subsequently under Persian rule. Rhetoric was practiced by non-democratic rulers and democratic ones alike. It later flourished under the Roman empire and the same is true of historiography. The close association of these genres with Athenian democracy is therefore questionable too.

The reason why scholars tend to align Greek Classical literature with Athenian democracy is that both are considered to be the pinnacles of Greek culture, with the one reinforcing the other—hence the idea that with the battle at Chaeronea Greece lost not only its independence, but also its intellectual prowess. In this mode of thinking, it is assumed that Greek culture in general, and Greek literature in particular, experienced a short rise in the Archaic age, enjoyed 150 years of greatness, and then witnessed a long and slow decline. Sometimes this period of literary greatness is shortened even further to just seventy-five years in the fifth century. So Albin Lesky declares in his *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*: “The height of the Athenian classics is bounded by two wars. The Peloponnesian War did not only bring to an end the political power of Athens, but also led to the decline of the inner strength that had marked the age of Pericles. The just war that the Greeks had to fight for their

19 Stewart 2017.

20 Finglass 2015; Panoussi 2005.

21 Pickard-Cambridge 1962: 60–112 and 132–194.

22 Munn 2000: esp. 15–45.

political and spiritual survival [i.e., the Persian Wars], had unleashed this [inner strength] after a period of slow maturation'.²³

The idea that Classical Athens formed the pinnacle of Greek culture also underlies Bruno Snell's idea of the discovery of the mind or the 'Entdeckung des Geistes' in ancient Greece. According to Snell, Homer's view of man is still broken and confused; the individual is revealed in Greek lyric, while logic triumphs over myth in Greek philosophy, but the true sense of what it means to be human, our sense of *humanitas*, was first revealed in Classical Athenian literature: 'The discovery of *humanitas* among the Greeks was not the work of philosophy. In fact, the gracious urbanity of the new concept forms a definite contrast to the cold severity of conceptual thought. It springs from the ideals of the Attic society of the last part of the fifth and the fourth centuries before our era'.²⁴ In this way Classical literature is defined as Athenian literature, which is considered the best.

A clear preference for Classical, Athenian literature can also be detected in the *Cambridge History of Greek Literature*, edited by Pat Easterling and Bernard Knox, which consists of four parts: part one is devoted to Greek epic and lyric poetry, the two genres primarily associated with the Archaic Greek period. Two other parts are devoted to the genres of drama, philosophy, rhetoric and historiography in the Classical period, while only one part is spent on the combined Greek literature of the Hellenistic period and the Roman Empire.²⁵ This division betrays the importance attached by the editors to the literature produced in Athens in the Classical period. It is certainly not justified by the amount of literature that survived from this period, because Archaic and Classical Greek literature together make up only 10% of the Greek literature that has been preserved from Antiquity, the rest dating to the Hellenistic or Roman periods.²⁶

23 Lesky (1971: 279): 'Die hohe Zeit der attischen Klassik ist von zwei Kriegen umschlossen. Der Peloponnesische brachte nicht allein das Ende von Athens Machtstellung, er führte ebenso den Verfall der inneren Kräfte herbei, die das Zeitalter der Perikles trugen. Entbunden aber hatte dies nach seiner Zeit langsamen Reifens der gerechte Kampf, den das griechische Volk um seine politische und geistige Existenz zu führen hatte.'

24 Snell 1953: 252.

25 Easterling and Knox 1985.

26 Netz (2020: 2): 'of the roughly 49 million words of Greek currently on the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG), dated to no later than the end of the fifth century CE, just a little more than 5 million are dated to no later than the fourth century BCE.'

3 Other Approaches to Greek Literary History

Most modern scholars no longer accept Snell's scheme or consider Hellenistic and Greco-Roman literature to be inherently inferior to Classical literature. We therefore see new forms of writing Greek literary history emerge, slowly but gradually, in the last two decades. A good example is Tim Whitmarsh's *Ancient Greek Literature*, who explicitly criticizes the traditional periodization of Greek literature with its emphasis on the Classical period.²⁷ He divides his history into three parts: 'concepts' (what is literature or tradition?) 'contexts' (festival, symposium, theatre, etc.) and 'conflicts' (themes in Greek literature). A year later Richard Rutherford published his *Concise History of Classical Literature*, which devotes separate chapters to epic, drama, rhetoric and the other major genres in both Greek and Latin literature throughout antiquity.²⁸ This avoids the distorting picture of assigning genres to certain time periods and from ranking these periods in terms of excellence or decline. It can trace the development of each genre separately and also do justice to the continued popularity of certain authors, such as Homer, who was probably more widely read and performed in the Hellenistic era than in the age in which the epics were formed.

A precedent for Rutherford's approach is found in antiquity itself. The Roman rhetorician Quintilian provides us with an overview of Greek literature in the tenth book of his *Institutio Oratoria*, in which he divides this literature not by age but by genre.²⁹ In doing so, he does not show a preference for Classical Greek literature or even make a distinction between Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic literature. He starts his account of epic poetry with Homer and Hesiod, but then sings the praise of Panyasis, who composed an epic on Heracles in the fifth century, and of Antimachus, who wrote an epic on the Theban wars around 400. He ends with Apollonius of Rhodes, Aratus, and Theocritus, who lived in the third century. This short overview of Greek epic poets demonstrates how absurd it is to restrict epic poetry to the Archaic age. Among the best lyric poets Quintilian first lists Callimachus and Philetas, both Hellenistic poets. They are followed by Pindar, Stesichorus and Alcaeus, three poets dating to the Classical and Archaic periods. We do not encounter in this overview any of the prejudices against Hellenistic poetry that are so prevalent in nineteenth and twentieth century histories of Greek literature.

To be fair, Quintilian was not trying to write a history of ancient Greek literature to his day, but informing Roman rhetoricians which Greek authors are

²⁷ Whitmarsh 2004: 10–13.

²⁸ Rutherford 2005.

²⁹ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.

worth reading and why. Interestingly, however, he does not privilege Classical or Athenian literature. It is true that Athenian literature of the fifth and fourth centuries was privileged at some point in the Greek educational system, starting around the second century CE. This had to do with an admiration for the achievements of the Athenians in the Classical period and for its language. Greek orators and writers under the Roman empire were expected to communicate in pure Attic Greek as distinguished from the spoken language of their own day, the *koinē*. For this reason they had to familiarize themselves as much as possible with Athenian authors of the Classical period, such as Demosthenes, Plato and Euripides.³⁰ This literature thus became in a sense ‘Classical’ in Antiquity already, but the author who remained the favorite in the educational system and was most admired among Greek readers was the ‘Archaic’ poet Homer.³¹

Another example of a new approach is the *Companion to Greek Literature*, edited by Martin Hose and David Schenker.³² It combines chapters with a chronological overview (Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman period, early Christian) with chapters on the different genres and on different themes (the players, the places, knowledge, aesthetics) and the reception of ancient Greek literature in modern times. The latter has clearly gained in importance in the last decades, witnessing the many companion volumes devoted, wholly or in part, to the reception of ancient Greek authors.³³ The chapters on Greek and Roman literature in the *European Literary History*, edited by Maarten De Pourcq and Sophie Levie,³⁴ are also arranged by theme; they combine Greek and Latin literature and devote considerable attention to the reception of Greek and Latin literature as well.

Nevertheless, the old paradigm and the persistence of the Persian Wars as a marker between Archaic and Classical literature continue to make their presence felt in the introductory chapter of the *Concise History of Classical Literature* as well as in the *Companion to Greek Literature* and the *European Literary History*, mentioned above. Richard Rutherford, for example, in the introduction to his *Concise History of Classical Literature* writes: ‘The authors of *1066 and All That* concluded that in English history only two dates were truly memorable. In describing the Classical world I will allow myself five ... The first is 479 BC, the

30 Whitmarsh 2004: 144–146; Kim 2010.

31 Cf. Kim (2020: 417): ‘No literary, cultural, or political figure loomed larger in the ancient imagination than Homer’. See also Koning 2010: 58–63.

32 Hose and Schenker 2016.

33 E.g., Lauriola 2017; Kennedy 2018; Pache 2020: Part III; Finglass and Kelly 2021: chs. 19–33.

34 De Pourcq and Levie 2018: 13–83.

conclusion of the Persian King Xerxes' unsuccessful invasion of Greece'.³⁵ The other dates are 323 and 31 BCE and 312 and 410 CE, not by chance the traditional dates for the periodization of ancient Greek literature.

4 Towards a New Periodization of Greek Literary History

The problem with the traditional periodization of ancient Greek literature is, as I have argued, that the transitions between the different periods are marked by significant moments in military history, like the Persian Wars, which had little to no effect on literary developments.³⁶ In writing a Greek literary history, it makes more sense to focus on cultural changes that influenced the forms that this literature took, as markers. One of these changes is the transition from a predominantly oral literature, meant to be performed, to a literature that was primarily meant to be read. This change is commonly situated towards the end of the fifth century,³⁷ which makes 400 a more suitable date to mark a break in the early history of Greek literature than 480. The Greeks knew literacy, of course, well before 400, although it is hard to say how many of them did and to what degree.³⁸ Literacy was probably also used, early on, for the composition and preservation of literature, but it took a much longer time for the habit of reading literature to develop. The reason for this is not that people who belonged to the elites could not read, but that almost all literature produced before the end of the fifth century was intended to be enjoyed in performance. This holds true of epic and lyric poetry, but also of drama and rhetoric prior to 400.

The first clear evidence of someone reading a book (not counting several fifth-century vase paintings that show people holding book scrolls), is the figure of the god Dionysos in Aristophanes' play the *Frogs*. In the prologue of this play, Dionysos says that he was reading to himself Euripides' *Andromeda*, when a sudden longing shook his heart: the longing for a tragic poet as good as Eur-

35 Rutherford 2005: 2. Cf. Hose and Schenker 2016: 3; De Pourcq and Levie 2018: 20–21.

36 An exception are the conquests of Alexander, whose aftermath did have a profound effect on Greek literature with the establishment of new literary centers, new genres and the development of a new aesthetics. The Roman conquest of Egypt and the fall of Rome by contrast appear to have had little direct effect on the development of Greek literature.

37 E.g., Kenyon 1951: 22–24; Munn 2000: 296–297; Ford 2003: 19; Hadjimichael 2019: 183; Netz 2020: 234.

38 Graffiti of Attic herdsmen discovered by Langdon (2016) indicate that a certain degree of functional literacy was widespread by the sixth century, but there is a difference between reading and writing short sentences and sitting down to read a literary text.

ipides had been.³⁹ The *Frogs* was produced in 404, just after the death of both Sophocles and Euripides. The passage is evidence that at least by this time tragedies were not only performed, but also being read. Lyric poems were also being read in the Greek educational system of the fifth century, but the main purpose of these exercises appears to have been the reperformance of these songs. This is suggested by the school scenes depicted on fifth-century vases, in which readers of scrolls are often accompanied by lyres.⁴⁰ The first collections of lyric songs with the express purpose of being read are attested in the fourth century.⁴¹ The fourth century is also the time that Marek Węcowski sets for the decline of the traditional Greek *symposion*, in which aristocrats would vie with one another in performing poetry themselves rather than being entertained by professional performers, as they do, for example, in Xenophon's *Symposion*.⁴² Archaeological evidence confirms that changes were made to the way symposia were conducted, starting in the late fifth century BCE. The consumption of food seems to have become more important and with it the role of the host as the provider of food and entertainment.⁴³

We can see a switch from oral performance to texts meant to be read in other genres around 400 as well. In historiography there is the transition from Herodotus' *Histories*, parts of which he appears to have performed before publishing them around 420,⁴⁴ to Thucydides' *Peloponnesian Wars*, which presents itself explicitly as a written text.⁴⁵ Greek philosophy probably did have an early history of written books, although some of it was also performed, such as the poems of Parmenides and Empedocles or the lectures of Socrates and the Sophists.⁴⁶ Still, there is nothing before 400 like the dialogues of Plato, which were intended to be read from their conception.⁴⁷

It is probably no coincidence that we see other important developments in Greek literature around this time as well. Sophocles, who was considered to be

39 Aristoph. *Ran.* 52–54.

40 Cf. Hadjimichael (2019: 191): 'The very fact that book rolls are depicted side by side with lyres suggests more strongly singing than simply reading'. For the depiction of book rolls on Athenian vases, see Immerwahr 1964 and 1973.

41 Ford 2003; Hadjimichael 2019: 171–211.

42 Węcowski 2018.

43 Lynch 2018: 241–245.

44 Thomas 2000: 257–269 with earlier references.

45 E.g., Th. 2.70.4, 2.103.2, 3.25.2. Here we find the recurring formula 'Thucydides has written (ξυνέγραψεν) this'. If Thucydides' history was read aloud, it was probably in small groups of interested friends (Morrison 2006: 172–174).

46 Kahn 2003.

47 Yunis 2003.

the last of the three great tragedians, died in 404 and judging from the *Rhesus*, our only tragic play preserved from the fourth century, a new type of tragedy emerged after this.⁴⁸ The same is true of comedy, which changed from old-style comedy with its political content to middle and new comedy. If we use 400 rather than 480 as the cut-off point between earlier and later Greek literature, we do not have to split and lump Greek lyric poetry: all nine poets who later formed the canon of Greek lyric poetry, including Pindar and Bacchylides, predate 400.⁴⁹ This year is also a natural cut-off point in Greek philosophy: it signals the transition from presocratic philosophy to the philosophy that was produced after the death of Socrates in 399. I therefore would argue that, if one wishes to mark a caesura between early and later Greek literature, 400 provides a better date than 480.

5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that 480 or, more broadly, the time of Persian Wars, is not a useful date to mark a transition in Greek literary history. Important genres such as epic, lyric and philosophy straddle this date without notable changes in their development. Even drama existed well before 480, though none of the tragedies and comedies produced before this time have survived. The main reason why 480 has been used as a starting point for a new period in Greek literary history and to close it around 330 appears to have been the desire to separate the literature produced in Athens in this period from the rest of Greek literature. To accomplish this, certain interventions in the data must be made, such as the lumping of Pindar and Bacchylides with the Archaic lyric poets and the splitting of Ionian natural philosophy from later presocratic philosophy or the assignment of presocratic philosophy in its entirety to the Archaic age.

The demarcation of this period between 480 and 330 was also made in order to create a narrative of 'Aufstieg und Niedergang' (rise and fall). Greek literature prior to 480 is said to be 'Archaic': it prepares the way for the height of Greek literature in the so-called Classical period, even though the Greeks themselves recognized Homer as their greatest poet. The Classical period is further identified with Athenian democracy, despite the fact that many Greeks lived in city-states that lacked democratic constitutions. Still, they listened to and read much of the same literature as the Athenians did in this period. The two

48 Csapo et al. 2014; Mattison 2015.

49 On the origin of the canon of the nine lyric poets, see Hadjimichael 2019.

ages that follow, the Hellenistic and Roman, were considered periods of decline and literary histories generally devote considerably less space to the literature produced in these times than to that of the Classical period.

Some literary histories, ancient and modern, are not arranged chronologically, but by genre or themes. They avoid assigning genres to certain time periods, as we find in some of the chronological histories, and can trace developments in Greek literary history without preferring one period over another. At the same time, this type of literary history, which traces certain themes and discusses each genre separately, is less well suited to identify more fundamental changes running through the different genres concurrently. One of these changes, which I discussed above, is the transition from oral literature to literature intended to be read around 400. Another could be the rise of prose, which came to dominate Greek literature in the Roman period.⁵⁰ Yet, none of these changes have anything to do with the year 480. There is therefore no justification for using this date as a marker to classify ancient Greek literature.

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50 König 2009: 11–25.

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This non-exhaustive index includes references to places, persons, and concepts. In the present volume, Greek names and toponyms are given in transliteration, except where a different form (usually the Latinized form) is more familiar in English (e.g., Socrates, Themistocles). For regions and ancient authors, Latinized spellings are generally used (e.g., Arcadia, Dionysius). The entries Athens, Greece, and Persian Wars have not been included.

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In 480 BCE, during their invasion of Greece, the Persians began the destruction of Athens. How has this event shaped our understanding of Greek history? This interdisciplinary volume investigates the commemoration of the attack in Antiquity and how it became anchored in modern scholarship as a watershed dividing Archaic and Classical Greece. Drawing on ancient literature, material culture, including deposits in the Athenian Agora, and reception history, the book explores if and how the destruction of Athens stimulated cultural innovation. By investigating the significance of 480 BCE as a historical anchor for the scholarship on ancient Greece, the volume reopens the discussion on the periodization of Archaic and Classical Greece.

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