

Herodotus *Amphiktyonis*: Medism in the Thermopylae Narrative

Ian Oliver—University of Colorado Boulder—April 2018

1. Lucian, *Herodotus*. I.

ἐνίστανται οὖν Ὀλύμπια τὰ μεγάλα, καὶ ὁ Ἡρόδοτος τοῦτ' ἐκεῖνο ἤκειν οἱ νομίσας τὸν καιρὸν, οὗ μάλιστα ἐγλίχετο, πλήθουσας τηρήσας τὴν πανήγυριν, ἀπανταχόθεν ἤδη τῶν ἀρίστων συνειλεγμένων, παρελθὼν ἐς τὸν ὀπισθόδομον οὐ θεατὴν, ἀλλ' ἀγωνιστὴν παρεῖχεν ἑαυτὸν Ὀλυμπίων ἄδων τὰς ιστορίας καὶ κηλῶν τοὺς παρόντας...

The great Olympic Games were being held, and Herodotus, thinking that this was his chance, did not hesitate at all, but when he observed the festival at its fullest, with every city having sent their best citizens, he appeared in the temple chamber, not as a spectator, but as a competitor in his own right, performing his *Histories* and enchanting his audience...

2. Plato, *Hipp. Min.* 363c-d.

καὶ γὰρ ἄν δεινὰ ποιίην, ὦ Εὐδিকে, εἰ Ὀλυμπίαζε μὲν εἰς τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων πανήγυριν, ὅταν τὰ Ὀλύμπια ᾗ, ἀεὶ ἐπανιῶν οἴκοθεν ἐξ Ἡλίδος εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν παρέχῃ ἑμαυτὸν καὶ λέγοντα ὅτι ἄν τις βούληται ὦν ἄν μοι εἰς ἐπίδειξιν παρεσκευασμένον ᾗ, καὶ ἀποκρινόμενον τῷ βουλομένῳ ὅτι ἄν τις ἐρωτᾷ, νῦν δὲ τὴν Σωκράτους ἐρώτησιν φύγοιμι.

Why, Eudicus, it would be strange conduct on my part, if I, who always go up to Olympia to the festival of the Greeks from my home at Elis, and entering the sacred precinct, offer to speak on anything that anyone chooses of those subjects which I prepared for exhibition, and to answer any questions that anyone asks—should now avoid being questioned by Socrates. (tr. Fowler)

3. Herodotus' use of the Grandiose Past: Geography (e.g., 7.193), Lineage (e.g., 7.204), Religious Observance (e.g., 7.189), and Literary Allusion (e.g., 7.225)

4. Pindar, *Pythians* 2.52-56

ἐμὲ δὲ χρεῶν
φεύγειν δάκος ἀδινὸν κακαγοριᾶν.
εἶδον γὰρ ἐκάς ἐὼν τὰ πόλλ' ἐν ἀμαχανία
ψογερὸν Ἀρχίλοχον βαρυλόγοις ἔχθεσιν
παινόμενον· τὸ πλουτεῖν δὲ σὺν τύχῃ
πότμου σοφίας ἄριστον. (*Pythian* 2.52-56)

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But I must
flee the persistent bite of censure,
for standing at a far remove I have seen
Archilochus the blamer often in straits as he fed on
dire words of hatred. And possessing wealth that is
granted by destiny is the best object of **wisdom**. (tr. Race)

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5. The Members of the Delphic/Pythian Amphictyony (a.k.a. *Pytagoroi*): The Delphians (7.178); The Phocians (7.218.3); The Thessalians, Perrhaebians, Aenianians, and Dolopians (7.172-74, 185); The Defenders—Sparta, Boeotia, Locris, Phocis, and Athens (7.202-203); Local Geography—Malis (the Trachinian Rocks, 7.198.1), Magnesia (the Ovens of Pelion, 7.188.3), and Achaean Phthiotia (the Grove of Halos, 7.197).

6. The Abandonment of Locris and Phocis (7.207)

τοῖσι μὲν νῦν ἄλλοισι Πελοποννησίοισι ἐδόκεε ἐλθοῦσι ἐς Πελοπόννησον τὸν Ἴσθμὸν ἔχειν ἐν φυλακῇ· ... Φωκέων καὶ Λοκρῶν περισπερχθέντων τῇ γνώμῃ ταύτῃ.

At this point, the other Peloponnesians considered it best to go to the Peloponnesus and to defend the Isthmus ... At this suggestion, the Phocians and Locrians grew furious.

7. The Phocians' Courageous Failure (7.218)

Οἱ δὲ Φωκῆες ὡς ἐβάλλοντο τοῖσι τοξεύμασι πολλοῖσι τε καὶ πυκνοῖσι, οἴχοντο φεύγοντες ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους τὸν κόρυμβον, ἐπιστάμενοι ὡς ἐπὶ σφέας ὀρμήθησαν ἀρχὴν, καὶ παρεσκευάδατο ὡς ἀπολεόμενοι.

The Phocians, as they suffered under many dense arrows, retreated to the peak of the mountain, believing that the Persians had set out against them from the first, and they prepared to die.

8. Praise for the Delphians (7.178.2)

Δελφοὶ δὲ δεξάμενοι τὸ μαντήιον πρῶτα μὲν Ἑλλήνων τοῖσι βουλομένοισι εἶναι ἐλευθέροισι ἐξήγγειλαν τὰ χρησθέντα αὐτοῖσι, καὶ σφι δεινῶς καταρρωδέουσι τὸν βάρβαρον ἐξαγγείλαντες χάριν ἀθάνατον κατέθεντο.

As soon as the Delphians received the prophecy, they sent the message to the Greeks who were fighting for their freedom—even though they were deathly afraid of the barbarians. For this act, the Greeks extolled the courage of the Delphians and promised their eternal gratitude.

9. Thessalian ἀναγκαίης (7.172)

Θεσσαλοὶ δὲ ὑπὸ ἀναγκαίης τὸ πρῶτον ἐμήδισαν...

The Thessalians first medized under the compulsion of necessity...

10. Persian v. Thessalian Horses (7.196)

ἐν Θεσσαλίῃ μὲν ἄμιλλαν ποιησάμενος ἵππων, τῶν ἑωυτοῦ ἀποπειρώμενος καὶ τῆς Θεσσαλικῆς ἵππου, πυθόμενος ὡς ἀρίστη εἶη τῶν ἐν Ἑλλάσῃ· ἐνθα δὴ αἱ Ἑλληνίδες ἵπποι ἐλείποντο πολλόν.

In Thessaly [Xerxes] held a contest of horses, testing both his own horse and the Thessalian horse, which he had heard were the best in Greece. The Greek horses were left far behind.

11. The Thebans fail to die with the Spartans (7.233)

Οὐ μέντοι τά γε πάντα εὐτύχησαν· ὡς γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἔλαβον οἱ βάρβαροι ἐλθόντας, τοὺς μὲν τινὰς καὶ ἀπέκτειναν προσιόντας, τοὺς δὲ πλείονας αὐτῶν κελεύσαντος Ξέρξεω ἔστιξαν στίγματα βασιλῆα, ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ Λεοντιάδεω...

But not everything turned out in their favor. For when the barbarians got hold of them, they executed some and—on Xerxes' orders—they branded the rest with the sign of the king, beginning with their general, Leontiades...

12. The Thessalian Speech (7.172)

«Ἄνδρες Ἑλληνες, δεῖ φυλάσσεσθαι τὴν ἐσβολὴν τὴν Ὀλυμπικὴν, ἵνα Θεσσαλίη τε καὶ ἡ σύμπασα Ἑλλάς ἐν σκέπῃ τοῦ πολέμου ᾗ. ἡμεῖς μὲν νυν ἔτοιμοί εἰμεν συμφυλάσσειν, πέμπειν δὲ χρὴ καὶ ὑμέας στρατιὴν πολλήν· ὡς εἰ μὴ πέμψετε, ἐπίστασθε ἡμέας ὁμολογήσειν τῷ Πέρσῃ· οὐ γάρ τοι προκατημένους τοσοῦτο πρὸ τῆς ἄλλης Ἑλλάδος μόνους πρὸ ὑμέων δεῖ ἀπολέσθαι. Βοηθέειν δὲ οὐ βουλόμενοι ἀναγκαίην ἡμῖν οὐδεμίαν οἷοί τέ ἐστε προσφέρειν· οὐδαμὰ γὰρ ἀδυνασίης ἀνάγκη κρέσσων ἔφυ· ἡμεῖς δὲ πειρησόμεθα αὐτοῖσι τινὰ σωτηρίην μηχανώμενοι.»

“Greek men, we all must defend the pass at Olympia to shelter Thessaly and all of Greece from war. We Thessalians are ready to stand guard alongside you, but you too must send a great force. For if you do not send it, know that we will come to terms with the Persian. For it isn't right that we be destroyed for all of Greece simply because our lands are first in line. If you will not send help, there is nothing you can do to constrain us, for no necessity can prevail over lack of ability. As for us, we will attempt to find some means of deliverance for ourselves.”