

Pericles' Consolation and Solon's Happiest Life  
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This paper proposes a new interpretation of the consolation to the sons, brothers, and parents of the fallen in Thucydides' funeral oration (2.44.1). The consolation has been viewed as distinct from the rest of the oration (Eide 1981, 42), but I show that this passage is an integral part of Pericles' speech by exploring the importance of verbal and thematic links with the story of Solon and Croesus in Herodotus. Previous scholars have noted similarities in vocabulary and thought between Thucydides 2.44.1 and Herodotus 1.30-33 (Gomme 1959, 140-141; Edmunds 1975, 68-70), but I explore these allusions in greater depth and argue that they function on two levels. First, Pericles recalls the words of Solon, his venerable predecessor as a democratic leader, in order to show that the Periclean conception of Athens surpasses and yet contains a traditional view of the city. Solon tells Croesus that "man is entirely chance" (Herodotus 1.32.4), but Pericles claims that the Athenians show the "supremacy of the action of intelligence" (Parry 1988, 159). Pericles, although he denies Solon's contention that humans cannot master chance, still uses the elder statesman's ideas about happiness to console the parents of the fallen. This borrowing is especially appropriate, since Solon names Tellus, an Athenian who died fighting for his city, as the happiest person he knows. Yet even when the allusions to Solon are most clear, Pericles uses novel syntax and terminology that mimic the combination of old and new present in his formulation of Athens. Second, Thucydides alludes to Herodotus in order to highlight ideological differences between himself and the earlier historian. In Herodotus, the advice given by Solon has no effect on Croesus until he suffers great misfortune at the hands of Cyrus. This suggests the "popular" type of *logos/ergon* antithesis (Parry 1988, 19), since the advice (*logos*) is unable to persuade Croesus without the misfortune (*ergon*). Thucydides, on the other hand, conducts a complex exploration of the relationship between *logos* and *ergon* throughout his work, and Pericles even implies in the funeral oration that the Athenians have bridged the gap between the two (Parry 1988, 163). Thus the allusion to Herodotus here is also meant to suggest to the reader that Thucydides has a different approach from his predecessor to the human condition and the writing of history.

Select Bibliography

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