

The *Phocaeen* Narrative in Herodotus' *Histories*: Colonization and Athenian Analogy

The *Histories* is a long and winding narrative that, in part, recalls the events of the Persian War, but also presents a geographic and ethnographic discourse on the Greek world. Within this intricate system, the colonial narrative is a fascinating subject. Herodotus uses this type of story with great effect in his *Histories*, embedding them in various places to comment on and critique themes of particular significance to his narrative, such as the dangers involved in greed and cultural expansionism and the critical importance of properly interpreting divine will (Kindt, 2016). Scholars have dedicated a great deal of time to considering these foundation stories, especially the Cyrenaean narrative (4.145-167), and their work has furthered our understanding of the *Histories* and this distinct form of folklore (Giangiulio, 2001; Calame, 2014).

Building upon available scholarship, this presentation focuses on the Phocaeen narrative (1.163-8), a dense and symbolically loaded, though often overlooked, story. It argues that Herodotus crafts the Phocaeen narrative to demonstrate the dangers of colonization and expansionism and to resonate with Athenian behavior in order to act as a warning against the contemporary actions of the polity.

First, a brief close reading of several important passages within the *logos* demonstrates that the story conforms to the common structure of colonial narratives and illustrates the consequences of expansionist behavior in the *Histories* (Malkin, 2009). Herodotus recalls the early accomplishments of the Phocaeans (1.163) and their abandonment of their own *polis* in order to avoid a life of servitude under the Persians (1.164). These initial moments encourage readers to ascribe an exceptional civic character to the Phocaeen people. However, this perception quickly shifts as the narrative turns to provide a litany of the failures of the polity

following their departure from Ionia: half of their population breaks an oath and returns to the *polis*; the others settle in Corsica where they turn to piracy, abuse neighboring polities, and provoke an attack from the Etruscans and Carthaginians in which their fleet is largely destroyed (1.165-6). Herodotus then reveals that the Phocaeans had misinterpreted a Pythian oracle at the outset of their expedition (1.167). In describing this breakdown, the presentation juxtaposes Phocaeon history before and after their expedition in order to show the deleterious consequences that Herodotus associates with colonization.

Next, this presentation explores the similarities between the actions of the Phocaeans and the Athenians within the *Histories*. Both populations were famed seafarers, both abandoned their homeland to avoid subjugation, and both eventually succumbed to the desire for expansionism (Ward, 2008). However, the singular difference is that where the Phocaeans had already suffered misfortunes for their behavior prior to the writing of the narrative, the Athenians had not (Morel, 2006). Thus, Herodotus links the practice and results of colonization with the past and future of Athens with all of the connotations that these colonial narratives carry with them. With his description of the decline of Phocaea, he warns against the repetition of old mistakes, to not pursue reckless expansion and not abuse your neighbors. Through this discussion, this presentation shows that the Phocaeon narrative not only portrays the act of colonization as an objectionable venture, but also possesses implications for our interpretation of the narrative's disposition towards Athens.

This talk is adapted from a section of my Master's thesis, titled "Colonizing the Histories: Foundation Stories and the Herodotean Narrative," completed at the University of Georgia in 2017.

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