

Herodotus reports that before the battle of Plataea the Athenians and the Tegeans engage in a debate (9.26-28.1). The assembled Spartan army acts as judge in the debate, listening as both the Tegeans (9.26) and the Athenians (9.27) stake their claim to the command of the allied Greek army's left wing. As proof of their worthiness for command, the Athenians cite several achievements from their past: the help they gave to the Heracleidae against Eurystheus, their burial of the Seven Against Thebes, their repulse of the Amazons, their fighting in the Trojan War, and lastly, their victory at Marathon, in which the Athenians claim to have fought "alone of Greeks" (*mounoi Hellēnōn*) against the Persians (9.27.5). Scholars have long recognized that this claim regarding Marathon, along with each of the other achievements mentioned by the Athenians (except for Troy), is a common *topos* found in Athenian funeral orations (*epitaphioi logoi*) (Jacoby 1913, 464; 1956, 275; Moles, 37). In this paper, I argue that Herodotus contrasts the epitaphic version of Marathon with his own narrative of the battle (6.102-17), in which the Athenians, far from fighting "alone," receive prominent aid from the Plataeans.

That Thucydides, at any rate, is critical of the self-interested versions of history found in *epitaphioi* is not a new idea to scholars. Contrasting Lysias' (2.49-53) rousing account of the Corinthian defeat by an Athenian force with Thucydides' own grim treatment of the same event (1.105.3-106), Thomas (228-29; 235) concludes that Thucydides is consciously writing his account of the Corinthian "disaster" (1.106.2) in response to the white-washed epitaphic version of the battle. Indeed, Loraux (290) writes: "Thucydides challenges the *topoi* of the [funeral] oration, and [with his *History*] . . . intended to put an end to the narcissism of all previous Athenian histories of Athens." Herodotus, however, receives little credit from scholars for his critical stance regarding *epitaphioi*, although it is similar to Thucydides'.

In fact, Herodotus carefully guides readers to criticize the epitaphic version of Marathon put forth by the Athenian speakers at Plataea. He establishes links between the Athenians' words in 9.27.4-5 and Herodotus' own words as narrator in 1.5.3-4. Both passages are informed by similar language and modes of thought (cf. Flower and Marincola, 156), and they both mark a transition in their respective accounts. Just as the Athenians discuss four "ancient" achievements and then their more "recent" achievement at Marathon, so in the prologue to the *Histories* (1.1-5.2) Herodotus relates the four mythic accounts of the origins of East-West enmity ascribed to Persian and Phoenician *logioi* and then moves on to the more recent career of Croesus. Herodotus could expect his Greek readers to draw upon their intimate knowledge of the myths that suffused their culture and to recognize that the Persians and Phoenicians had reshaped the mythic stories to portray their eastern forebears in a better light (cf. Dewald 1999, 225-26; 2002, 270). Similarly, Herodotus can expect his readers to use the knowledge they have gained from reading his narrative of Marathon (6.102-17) and to reject the Athenians' claim to have fought "alone" in the battle (9.27.5). In the process, readers will both confirm the veracity of Herodotus' own account of Marathon and contrast his apparent lack of bias with the self-interested epitaphic tradition that omitted the Plataeans' role in the battle for the purpose of increasing the prestige of Athens.