

Modern studies of jury-behaviour have found that juries find a story more credible when it maps on to a story-pattern familiar from earlier narratives, whether fictional or not; these days those patterns are more likely to come from television crime-series than from Homer, Virgil, or Thucydides, but the insight remains suggestive for ancient historical narratives. A story is simply more believable if it has a familiar shape; this also suits historiographic theorising about the value of ‘narrative codes’ in historical explanation, thus offering an important way in which historical explanation differs from scientific explanation. This paper begins by discussing ways in which intertextuality can be interpreted as a persuasive technique; but it can extend to ways in which it serves as a short-cut, where for instance an evocation of Herodotus’ Salamis can allow an imperial author an economical method of conveying the texture of the battle of Actium. Herodotus too had various techniques for elevating the events of 490 to 480 to ‘heroic’ status, and Homeric allusion is one of these.

Herodotus’ Homeric touches allow a different approach as well. For example, Herodotus’ Thermopylae narrative or account of Atys’ death do not merely ‘evoke’ Homeric or tragic intertexts, but also draw attention to differences or developments that carry interpretative importance. That suggests insight for Thucydides too, and the paper here addresses points made recently by Rood and Kallet suggesting echoes of the Persian and the Trojan Wars respectively. The paper will also consider the echoes of the Seven against Thebes (play, myth, or both?) in Xenophon’s account of the seizure of the Cadmeia in 378.

Finally, Plutarch. Modern scholarship has emphasised the importance of *synkrisis*, where themes of the second *Life* of a pair pick up and build on those of the first, often with the sorts of subtle and suggestive variation that is in point in intertextuality. The same is true of narrative echoes and mirrorings across different pairs, for instance the recollections of *Romulus* and the *Gracchi* in the death of Caesar, suggesting how the earlier figures unleashed forces that would eventually destroy the free state, but would also bring down Caesar himself, the man who had exploited them most successfully. Do those count as intratextual or intertextual? Does self-citation work in a different way from intertextual suggestion, an issue that arises in poetry too for instance with Virgil’s allusions to *Eclogues* and *Georgics* in *Aeneid*? Similarities and differences will be traced with those cases that are uncompromisingly intertextual: cases for analysis include the echoes of the *Anabasis* in the account of Antony’s Parthian expedition, and of Thucydides’ and Plato’s treatments of Pericles not merely in *Pericles* but also in *Theseus* (so again a hint of a founder sowing seeds of destruction as well as of greatness). Some of these cases (esp. *Pericles* and *Themistocles–Camillus*) will also allow development of the idea of interpretative *dialogue* with earlier

authors, where Plutarch's ways of signposting such dialogues, often by apparently unnecessary citation, will be discussed.