

and not his soul – as fit subject for debate, inviting his readers, even from the highest councils of Roman power, to become his literary critics, just as in his previous book he had invited them to be his social critics. Well before he proclaims himself *Romanus Callimachus* in Book 3, he adds to the elegiac repertoire, among new considerations of the *amator*, the newer figure of the *poeta*, who will dominate some of the most important pieces of Book 2²⁵).

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PLUTARCH AND HERODOTUS – THE BEETLE IN THE ROSE

In surveying the sources of Plutarch's education and learning, K. Ziegler observed that Plutarch was quite familiar with Herodotus' *History*, and quoted it more often in his *Moralia* than in his *Vitae*¹). Certainly Plutarch's knowledge of and interest in the *History* is well illustrated by *De Herodoti malignitate* (Mor. 854D – 874 C), a treatise sometimes denied authenticity because of its very negative assessment of Herodotus, and the belief that Plutarch was a kind and good-natured thinker incapable of such an hostile critique. The current consensus, however, is that *De Herodoti malignitate* is genuine²), and like Plutarch's other polemical works, e.g.

1) See K. Ziegler, *Plutarchos von Chaironeia*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart 1964) 286 = RE s.v. *Plutarchos*, XXI (1951) 923–24. Plutarch does not refer to Herodotus' work by title though at *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* 1093B he mentions 'Ἡροδότου τὰ Ἑλληνικά which probably means something like Herodotus' "history of Greek affairs." The extant manuscripts of Herodotus' work all begin with the phrase 'Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέως ἱστορίας ἀπόδειξις ἥδε which serves much the same function as a modern title, and which Plutarch cites at *De exilio* 604F.

2) See G. Lachenaud's recent discussion of the treatise's authenticity in *Plutarque Oeuvres Morales*, XII, ed. M. Cuvigny and G. Lachenaud (Paris 1981) 114–117.

Adversus Colotem, or *De Stoicorum repugnantibus*, shows how capable he was of harsh and biased criticism. Attempts, moreover, to regard *De Herodoti malignitate* as a youthful essay seem unconvincing: its chronology cannot be fixed with certainty, and even if it were early, not much would thereby be shown about Plutarch's overall attitude toward Herodotus³). In the present study an attempt is made to provide a comprehensive account of Plutarch's many references to Herodotus with special attention to the following: a) Plutarch's reports about Herodotus' life; b) his knowledge and use of the *History*, including the accuracy of his quotations; c) Plutarch's general assessment of Herodotus, and his own views on historical writing; and d) Plutarch's place among ancient critics of Herodotus.

A. Plutarch on Herodotus' Life

Apart from the *History* itself the extant sources for Herodotus' life are the *Suda*, and various ancient authors, including Plutarch who preserves some biographical information⁴). At *De Her. malign.* 868A he remarks that "though some regard him as a citizen of Thurii, his attachment is really to the Halicarnassians," and when quoting the initial words of the *History* at *De exilio* 604F, Plutarch reports: "The statement 'this is the setting forth (ἀπόδειξις τότε or ἦδε) of the researches (ἱστορίας) of Herodotus of Halicarnassus' is altered by many (πολλοὶ μεταγράφουσιν) to read 'Herodotus of Thurii,' as the author migrated to Thurii and joined in the settlement of that colony"⁵).

In the extant manuscripts of the *History* Herodotus calls himself "the Halicarnassian", but from the *De exilio* report, it is clear

3) See Ziegler, Plutarchos 234 = RE XXI, col. 872, and Lachenaud, Plutarche 128–129, Ziegler and Lachenaud are much inclined to consider *De Herodoti malignitate* a work of Plutarch's maturity. An allusion to a planned *Life of Leonidas* at 866B suggests that Plutarch had already begun writing the *Vitae*.

4) For a brief discussion of Herodotus' life and the ancient sources for it, see W. Schmid, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, Pt. I, 6th ed. (Munich 1912) 459–462. For a much more extensive account of Herodotus' life based on the ancient sources, see F. Jacoby, *Herodotos* in RE suppl. II (Stuttgart 1913) cols. 205–247.

5) Unless otherwise indicated all translations of Plutarch's writings are from the Loeb Classical Library. Thurii was founded by Pericles ca. 443 B.C., and nothing need have prevented a citizen of Halicarnassus from taking part in the colonization of Thurii.

that some ancient copies had “the Thurian”⁶). Perhaps trying to reconcile these two readings, Plutarch regarded “Herodotus of Thuri” as a μεταγραφή or “re-writing” (cf. Strabo XIV 2.16), though he himself accepted the biographical tradition which placed Herodotus’ origin in Halicarnassus. This latter tradition became popular in the early Roman empire, and Plutarch’s acceptance of it is not unique⁷). Plutarch nowhere explains why Herodotus migrated to Thuri, but given the paucity of other ancient evidence, his silence is understandable. From the *History* and other sources, Plutarch knew that Herodotus traveled about the Mediterranean world, and that Athens was one of the places he visited. Thus, according to Plutarch, Herodotus became Athens’ encomiast, and regarded its citizens as “saviours of Hellas” (σωτήρας τῆς Ἑλλάδος *De Her. malign.* 864A) in the Persian wars. But Plutarch makes this observation to Herodotus’ detriment: he praised the Athenians only to find fault with other Hellenes (*De Her. malign.* 864A–B). Plutarch was not alone in reproaching Herodotus’ praise of Athens, and according to F. Jacoby, “das ganze Altertum hat dem H. Parteilichkeit für Athen vorgeworfen”⁸). At *De Her. malign.* 862A–B, Plutarch tells the story (without giving it full credence) of how Herodotus received a gift of ten talents from the Athenians for flattering them. Plutarch adds that he took this story from Diyllus, an Athenian and “no mean historian” (οὐ τῶν παροημελημένων ἐν ἱστορίᾳ⁹). According to Plutarch, Herodotus also tried unsuccessfully to lecture to the Thebans for a fee, and at *De Her. malign.* 864D, he cites Aristophanes the Boeo-

6) See the discussion in Jacoby, RE suppl. II, cols. 205–209.

7) Ibid. cols. 209–213.

8) Ibid. col. 241.

9) On Diyllus’ report, see *ibid.* cols. 226–229. Jacoby regards the report that Herodotus received ten talents from the Athenians “von höherem Wert,” but he states that the reason given by Plutarch for the gift, namely, his flattery of Athens, was most likely not in Diyllus’ account. Plutarch is eager, of course, to report the διαβολή that Herodotus received the sum for his praise of Athens. See 7.139 where he praises the Athenians as “saviours of Hellas.” It is possible that some of the extensive criticism of Herodotus’ partiality for Athens was literary-biographical fabrication based on passages such as 7.139. The story of Aristophanes the Boeotian at *De Her. malign.* 864D (see also Jacoby, *ibid.* col. 241) may have also been inspired by Herodotus’ bad treatment of the Thebans. The tendency of ancient biographers to take information from the works of their subjects, and the fictional nature of some biographical reports, has received extensive treatment in the last two decades. See, for example, J. Fairweather, *Fiction in the Biographies of Ancient Writers*, Ancient Society 5 (1974) 234–255, and M. R. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (Baltimore 1981).

tian as his source, remarking that no other evidence corroborates Aristophanes' report except for Herodotus' own charges against the Thebans which show his "hatred and bitterness" toward them¹⁰).

Lastly, Plutarch reports in *An seni respublica gerenda sit* (785B) that at the age of fifty-five, Sophocles composed an epigram for Herodotus, a report which strongly suggests a friendship between them, and has led some scholars to see allusions to Herodotus' work in Sophocles' plays, e.g. Oed. Col. 337-41 to Hdt. 2.35, and Electr. 417-423 to Hdt. 1.108. Indeed, on the basis of Plutarch's report and Sophocles' knowledge of Herodotus' work, W. Schmid concluded that the dramatist and historian had a spiritual kinship¹¹).

B. Plutarch's Knowledge of the 'History'

From the previous discussion, it is clear that Plutarch is a source for and had an interest in Herodotus' life, even if some of his reports were attempts to discredit the Halicarnassian. Plutarch's main attention, however, was given to the *History*, and that he had an extensive and detailed knowledge of this work is shown by his many quotations from and references to it in the *Moralia* and *Vitae*, especially in the biographies of Solon, Themistocles, and Aristides¹²). Despite its negativity, the *De Herodoti malignitate* is probably the best evidence that Plutarch knew the *History* in its entirety. Each of the nine books, with the exception of Bk. IV¹³), receives attention beginning with Io's abduction (865E-857A; see Hdt. 1.1-5), and ending with the traitorous absence of troops from some Hellenic cities at the battle of Plataea (872F; see Hdt. 9.85). As G. Lachenaud observed, "le commentaire de Plutarque donne l'impression d'une suite de notes prises

10) Aristophanes is also quoted at 866F-867A, where he, along with Nicanor of Colophon, opposes Herodotus' account that Leontidas was the Theban commander at Thermopylae, and that Thebans deserting to the Persians were branded on Xerxes' orders.

11) See Schmid, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, 461 and 312, and Jacoby, *RE* col. 233, who sees absolutely no reason to doubt the authenticity of the epigram.

12) See the extensive list of passages where Herodotus is cited in W. C. Helmbold and E. N. O'Neil, *Plutarch's Quotations* (Baltimore 1959) 34-37.

13) Bk. IV is not cited by Plutarch. See Lachenaud, *Plutarque* 113.

au fil d'une lecture cursive de l'historien"¹⁴). And yet *De Herodoti malignitate* and other works of Plutarch show more than a "cursory reading" of Herodotus. For example, Plutarch quotes Herodotus throughout *De Herodoti malignitate*, e.g. at 856F, 857B, 858A, 859F, 860E, 862C, 863C, 871C–D, and 871F. At *Apophthegmata Laconica* 224A (a work attributed with some justification to Plutarch)¹⁵), he draws from Hdt. 3.148 partly word for word, and tells the story of Maeandrius' flight to, and subsequent expulsion from Sparta. At *De Pythiae oraculis* 408A, Plutarch quotes the oracle given to Battus which is almost identical with that in Hdt. 4.157¹⁶). At *Lacaenarum Apophthegmata* 240D, the account of Gorgo, daughter of the Spartan king Cleomenes, is similar in phrasing and telling to Herodotus' narrative (5.48–51). Herodotus is thrice quoted briefly in *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* at 1098A, 1103A, and 1106F–1107A: in the first passage, only Herodotus' ἐξείργομαι γνώμην is given (Hdt. 7.139); at 1103A one line of the Delphic oracle's response to Lyncurgus is cited: Ζηνὶ φίλος καὶ πᾶσιν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσι, perhaps taken from Herodotus (1.65). At 1106F Herodotus is specifically quoted: ὁ θεὸς γλυκὴν γεύσας τὸν αἰῶνα φθονερός ἐν αὐτῷ ὄν φαίνεται (Hdt. 7.61 where Herodotus wrote εὐρίσκειται ἐών). At *De garrulitate* 512E, Herodotus' direct citation of the Pythian priestess: κωφοῦ συνήμι καὶ οὐ φωνεῦντος ἀκούω is given by Plutarch in reference to Apollo as καὶ κωφοῦ ξυνήησι καὶ οὐ λαλέοντος ἀκούει. At *De recta ratione audiendi* 37D and *Coniugalia praecepta* 139c there are references to Herodotus 1.8 introduced by φησιν and εἶπεν respectively. Neither is a precise rendering of Herodotus' ἅμα δὲ κιθῶνι ἐκδυομένῳ συνεκδύεται καὶ τὴν αἰδῶ, though the citation at 37D comes closest to what Herodotus wrote: ἅμα τῷ κιθῶνι συνεκδύεσθαι τὴν αἰδῶ. Another "Floskel" or fine saying of Herodotus taken from 2.171, εὐστομα κείσθω, is used by Plutarch at *De defectu oraculorum* 417C, *De exilio* 607C, and *Quaestiones convivales* 636E with καθ' Ἡρόδοτον as acknowledgment¹⁷). In the *Themistocles*, Plutarch makes several references to

14) Ibid. 113.

15) On the authenticity and problems connected with this and *Lacaenarum Apophthegmata*, see Ziegler, Plutarchos 228–230 = RE XXI, cols. 865–867. Both works form a unity despite their character "als bloße, ungesichtete, nicht irgendwie durchgearbeitete Materialsammlung," and though probably not published by Plutarch himself, belong to his *Nachlaß*.

16) The text of Plutarch has οἴσθας ἄρειον instead of οἴδας ἄμεινον in Herodotus.

17) See C. Theander, Plutarch und die Geschichte (Lund 1951) 45, who

Herodotus, one of which at 21.1 (122c) is regarded by F. Frost as “a *locus classicus* of misquotation,” and “convincing proof that Plutarch often remembered his Herodotus as disconnected anecdotes, and not as a connected historical narrative”¹⁸). Frost’s judgement seems harsh, for despite Plutarch’s “Herodotus says”, and a mistaken chronology about Themistocles’ demand for money from the Andrians, the whole passage reads as a summary of what Herodotus wrote, and one in which Herodotus’ ἀναγκαίην and ἀμυχανίην are rendered βίαν and ἀπορίαν respectively. The meaning of these terms is basically the same, and Plutarch is, according to Frost, “obviously quoting from memory”¹⁹).

Frost’s remarks about Plutarch’s use of Herodotus in *Themistocles* also suggest the likelihood that many of Plutarch’s quotations in other works were made from memory. As C. Theander wrote: “sicherlich hat Plutarch diese Zitate (many of those cited above) ganz wie die platonischen bloss aus dem Gedächtnis geschöpft, ohne die herodoteische Stelle nachzuschlagen”²⁰).

But when it came to the numerous quotations from Herodotus’ *History* in *De Herodoti malignitate*, some of which are fairly long and almost exact, e.g. at 857B, 869D–F, or 871D, Theander observed that these were not made from Plutarch’s memory (“dass er hier nach dem Gedächtnis zitiert hat, ist natürlich ausgeschlossen”)²¹). Many quotations in *De Herodoti malignitate* are accurate, though some seem to be paraphrases, e.g. at 869A, or false quotations and references, e.g. at 856F where Plutarch claims that Herodotus “says himself that Aristomenes was carried off by the Spartans”²²), or at 858F–859A where there seems to be an inaccurate summary and combination of lines from Herodotus (1.143.3 and 146.2–3)²³).

It needs to be emphasized, of course, that a work such as the

1951) 45, who notes that Plutarch uses either “einzelne Floskeln” or “ganze Episoden” taken from Herodotus “um die Darstellung zu beleben”.

18) F. Frost, *Plutarch’s Themistocles. A Historical Commentary* (Princeton 1980) 180.

19) *Ibid.* 181.

20) Theander, *Plutarch und die Geschichte* 46.

21) *Ibid.* 47–48.

22) Aristomenes is not mentioned by Herodotus, and the story of his capture is found only in later writers.

23) L. Pearson in his LCL translation of the treatise refers to the passage as “an unskillful (or deliberately misleading) summary and combination of two sentences in Herodotus.” *Plutarch’s Moralia. XI* Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1970) 35 n.e.

History, given its length, the unwieldiness of papyrus rolls, and Herodotus' tendency to digress, would not be easy for an ancient writer such as Plutarch to cite from directly. In a detailed discussion of Plutarch's method of work in some of the Roman *Lives*, C. B. R. Pelling made a distinction between texts Plutarch used "open in front of him", and those cited from memory²⁴). In writing portions of his *Caesar*, for example, Plutarch probably had Asinius Pollio's *Historiae* before him, whereas in composing portions of the *Crassus*, Plutarch relied on his memory. Exactly how Plutarch used Herodotus in writing his works, including the *De Herodoti malignitate* is a matter for conjecture, but in the case of the latter treatise, there is no good reason to doubt that he had the *History* before him when composing. That he always verified a passage of this memorable work by consulting his papyrus rolls seems unlikely in view of the paraphrases and inaccurate quotations noted above.

In brief, there is no doubt that Plutarch knew Herodotus' *History* well, and often quoted it accurately. He probably had papyrus rolls of this work before him when writing *De Herodoti malignitate*, but given the physical difficulties of using these rolls he may not always have taken the trouble to consult the *History* directly. There is even less reason to believe that he would have consulted the *History* for the various quotations scattered in other works of the *Moralia*. Here he may well have relied on his memory, or even on his "notebooks" (ὑπομνήματα) containing excerpts from his reading of the *History*²⁵). These excerpts may not always

24) See C. B. R. Pelling, *Plutarch's Method of Work in the Roman Lives*, JHS 99 (1979) 74–96, esp. 91 ff. Pelling rightly stresses the problems of working with papyrus rolls, and refers to the studies of Birt, *Das antike Buchwesen* (1882) and Schubart, *Das Buch bei den Griechen und Römern* (1962).

25) On Plutarch's "notebooks" see H. Martin, Jr., *Plutarch's Citation of Empedocles at Amatorius 756D*, GRBS 10 (1969) 69–70, and K. Ziegler, *Plutarchos 151 = RE XXI, col. 787* who believed that the "notebooks" (ὑπομνήματα) were "nicht nur Auszüge aus Quellenschriften, sondern mindestens in gleichem Maße auch *Niederschriften eigener Gedankengänge...*" (italics mine). More recently, Pelling, JHS 99 (1979) 94–95, has also examined Plutarch's likely use of notes, and the term ὑπόμνημα. According to Pelling, Plutarch's taking of preliminary notes when reading a source or sources, would be followed by the production of ὑπομνήματα (or a ὑπόμνημα). This "draft" would be followed, in turn, by the writing of his finished version. Pelling's remarks seem meant to apply mainly to a few Roman *Lives*, but a similar procedure might have been used in composing some of the *Moralia* where on once choosing his topic, e.g. on exile, Plutarch took preliminary notes from various sources, followed them with a rough draft, and then with his final version.

have been exact quotations, but paraphrases which reproduced the basic sense of passages from Herodotus²⁶). In any case, excerpts are used in a different context and for different reasons than in the original, and Plutarch clearly used the *History* for his own literary purposes.

Frost's previous remark about Plutarch's remembrance of Herodotus' *History* as "disconnected anecdotes" is worth further attention. C. Theander also noted that Plutarch interspersed many of his works not only with quotes from Herodotus, but with "ganze Episoden, bzw. Anspielungen auf solche"²⁷). For example, at *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* 50F, Plutarch briefly relates the incident in Hdt. 3.78 of Gobryas' and Darius' struggle with a fleeing Magian in a dark room; at 58E and 69E–F, he refers to Solon's famous encounter with Croesus (cf. *Solon* 27 (93b) and 28 (94d) respectively), and probably draws from Hdt. 1.30–33 and 1.86. At *De fraterno amore* 479B–C he mentions "that Arcadian prophet" (Hegesistratus of Elis) who made a wooden foot for himself (see Hdt. 9.37); also in the same work at 490A, Plutarch relates the story of Cambyses' being frightened by a dream (Hdt. 3.30), and later (at 481E) he refers to the Persian woman who declared that she could get other children, but not another brother (cf. Hdt. 3.119). At *Quaest. conviv.* 792A Theon mentions Herodotus' report about Egyptian abstinence from beans (Hdt. 2.37); at *De def. orac.* 436A, there is reference to the "bowl-holder" (ὑποκορητηρίδιον) at Delphi (see Hdt. 1.25). The famous tale of Cleobis and Biton (Hdt. 1.31) is alluded to at *Consolatio ad Apollonium* 108E (even if this work is not genuine, Plutarch knew the story: see *Quomodo adulator* 58F)²⁸). The story of Candaules and Gyges (Hdt. 1.8) was well-known to Plutarch: he quotes Herodotus at 37C–D and at 139E about women taking off their modesty with their vesture; and at *Quaest. conviv.* 622F Plutarch's grandfather, Lamprias, refers briefly to Candaules. Battus, King of Libya, is twice referred to by Plutarch in *De Pythiae oraculis* at 405B–C and 408A (cf. Hdt. 4.155–157; see also *Mulierum virtutes* 206D where there is mention of Battus' son, Arcesilaus; cf. Hdt. 4.160). At *Septem sapientium convivium* 163F the tale of Cypselus

26) On the technique of excerpting and on ancient writer's working methods, see J. Meier, *Diogenes Laertius and His Hellenistic Background*, *Hermes Einzelschriften* 40 (Wiesbaden 1978) esp. 16–19.

27) Theander, *Plutarch und die Geschichte* 45.

28) See Ziegler, *Plutarchos* 161–164 RE XXI, cols. 797–800 for a discussion of the treatise's authenticity.

who as an infant saved his life by smiling at his would-be assassins, is probably taken from Hdt. 5.92. These and other examples, are evidence that Plutarch often remembered Herodotus' *History* as anecdotes. But in *De Herodoti malignitate* Herodotus' complete work, starting with Io and Helen, and ending with the battle of Plataea, provides the framework for Plutarch's essay which shows that he knew the *History* as a connected historical narrative.

C. Plutarch's Assessment of Herodotus

From the many quotations and anecdotes cited by Plutarch, it seems clear that he admired Herodotus' "schriftstellerische Kunst". Indeed, at *Non posse* 1093B in a discussion of the intellectual life or pleasures of the mind, he writes:

"But when the story and the telling (ἱστορία καὶ διήγησις) involves no harm or pain, and to its theme of splendid and great actions it adds the power and charm of eloquence, or when Greek history (τὰ Ἑλληνικά) is told by Herodotus and Persian by Xenophon, or as with Eudoxus' *Description of the World*, Aristotle's *Foundations and Constitutions of Cities*, or Aristoxenus' *Lives*, the joy it gives is not only great and abundant, but untainted as well and attended with no regrets."

Despite this brief praise of Herodotus, Plutarch remained critical of the *History* in his *Moralia* and *Vitae*. It is worth noting some examples given by G. Lachenaud²⁹): at *De esu carniū* 998A, Plutarch writes about Herodotus' account of the "Black Coats" (Μελάγγλαινοι, Hdt. 4.20) without giving it credence. At *Mulierum virtutes* 245F, Herodotus is corrected for recording that the Argives had their women mate with slaves in order to make up for the scarcity of men (see Hdt. 6.83 where Herodotus does not quite assert this)³⁰). At *Coniugalia praecepta* 139C Plutarch believes that Herodotus was wrong (οὐκ ὀρθῶς εἶπεν) in saying a woman lays aside her modesty with her vesture (Hdt. 1.8; see 37C where the same quotation appears without disapproval in a simile about young men who put aside modesty).

In the *Vitae* where there are fewer explicit references to

29) Lachenaud, Plutarque 118–120.

30) P. Stadter, *Plutarch's Historical Methods. An Analysis of the Mulierum Virtutes* (Cambridge, Mass. 1965) 136–137, notes that in the *Mulierum virtutes* a number of stories from Herodotus are expanded and corrected, but without the harsh criticism of *De Herodoti malignitate*, and only here at 245F is Herodotus criticized by name.

Herodotus, Plutarch also diverges from him. At *Aristides* 16.1 (328a) for example, Plutarch mentions Aristides and Pausanias when referring to Herodotus (9.46), but Herodotus mentions only Pausanias and the “Athenian generals”. At *Aristides* 19.5 (330e), he takes issue with Herodotus’ account of the Hellenes who engaged the Persians at Marathon (at *De Her. malign.* 872C, Plutarch is even more upset with Herodotus’ estimate of the Persians killed in this battle). Sometimes Plutarch seems inconsistent in his use of Herodotus. For example, at *Themistocles* 7.6 (115c; see Hdt. 8.4–5) Plutarch refers, without comment, to Herodotus’ story (ὡς Ἡρόδοτος ἰστόρηκε) about the Euboeans sending large sums of money to Themistocles who then gave it to Eurybiades³¹). Plutarch also adds details not mentioned by Herodotus, and at *De Her. malign.* 876C he disapproves of Herodotus’ account, accusing him of representing Themistocles’ success as “the fruit of bribery and deceit” (δωροδοκίας καὶ κλοπῆς ἔργον)³²).

After these brief observations on passages in the *Moralia* and *Vitae* where Plutarch appears ambivalent toward Herodotus, it is now appropriate to examine reasons for his inconsistent assessments of the *History*, and especially for his polemical *De Herodoti malignitate*. From *Non posse suaviter vivi* (1093B), cited above, it is clear that Plutarch respected Herodotus as a writer who had the “power and charm of eloquence.” Even at the start of *De Herodoti malignitate* (854E) Plutarch acknowledges the style (λέξις) of the *History* (“so simple and effortless,” ὡς ἀφελῆς καὶ δίχα πόνου)³³), while calling attention to its deceptiveness and warning that it obscures the author’s “malice” (κακοήθεια)³⁴). It is the charm

31) In a work not cited by Frost in his *Plutarch’s Themistocles*, H. Martin Jr. examines ways in which Herodotus (and Thucydides) contributed to Plutarch’s portrayal of Themistocles’ character. In particular, Themistocles’ intelligence and φιλοτιμία (this quality is found in nascent form in Herodotus 8.124–25) have been influenced by Herodotus’ account. Yet Plutarch’s attitude is based partly on his own impressions of Themistocles’ character, and, according to Martin, this is the reason why he ignores the Herodotean hearsay making Mnesiphilus the real source for Themistocles’ brilliant strategem (8.57–58). See H. Martin Jr., *The Character of Plutarch’s Themistocles*, TAPA 92 (1961) 326–339. In summary, Martin argues that Plutarch “consistently revised and reinterpreted the original Herodotean and Thucydidean ideas in the light of his general concept of Themistocles’ character, a concept which had evolved from a comprehensive study of all the source material and was consistent with his own ethical theory” (337–38).

32) On the passage in *Themistocles*, see Frost, *Plutarch’s Themistocles* 106.

33) See Lachenaud, *Plutarque* 238–239 who notes that Plutarch often expresses his preference for the simple and austere.

34) The term κακοήθεια has been examined in detail by J. W. Boake,

(χάρις) and persuasiveness of the *History* which conceal the work's absurdities, and the character of its author. At the end of *De Herodoti malignitate* (874B), Plutarch writes:

“We must admit that Herodotus is an artist (γροαφικὸς ἀνὴρ), that his history makes good reading, and that there is charm (χάρις) and skill (δεξιότης) and grace (ἰδέα) in his narrative, and that he has told his story “as a bard tells a tale,” I mean not “with knowledge and wisdom,” but “with musical clear-flowing words.” To be sure, these writings charm (κηλεῖ), and attract everyone, but we must be on our guard against his slanders and ugly lies which, like the rose beetle, lurk beneath a smooth and soft exterior, we must not be tricked into accepting unworthy and false notions about the greatest and best cities and men of Greece.”

In short, Plutarch is convinced that malice, like a beetle in the rose lurks in Herodotus' *History*, hidden by the author's attractive or entertaining style.

Near the beginning of *De Herodoti malignitate*, Plutarch outlines characteristics of an author's malice (855B f.), well summarized by D. A. Russell: the malicious writer uses (1) “needlessly pejorative terms”; (2) gives irrelevant and discreditable facts even when creditable ones are available; (3) “damns with faint praise”; (4) chooses the less creditable of alternative accounts; (5) assigns less reputable motives when others are possible; (6) disparages achievements, either assigning them to luck, or minimizing their importance; (7) denounces a “discreditable version, but records it all the same”; (8) mixes praise and blame so “as to cast doubt even on the praise”³⁵. Calling attention to these characteristics in another author was a rhetorical technique (“innuendo and disparagement”), and part of ancient historiography. But, according to Russell, Plutarch often “opposes and refutes” this malicious tendency in the “controversies and *problemata*” included in his *Vi-*

Plutarch's Historical Judgement with Special Reference to the *De Herodoti Malignitate*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Univ. of Toronto, 1975, 109–113. Though Plutarch's understanding of the term reflects that of Aristotle, viz. looking at everything in a bad light (see *Rhet.* 1389b 20–21), it involves deception, insincerity, slander and deliberate falsification of facts.

35) D. A. Russell, *Plutarch* (London 1972) 61. C. B. R. Pelling, *Truth and Fiction in Plutarch's Lives*, in: *Antonine Literature*, ed. D. A. Russell (Oxford 1990) 19–52, has shown that Plutarch is not always observant of these principles in some of the *Lives*. The *Cato minor* and *Antony*, for example, flout the *De malignitate* principles, but then “the *Lives* are sometimes a little removed from historiography, sometimes closer; and the *De malignitate* was giving precepts for historians,” 35.

*tae*³⁶). For Russell, Plutarch's views on how to write history are found in *Cimon* 2.4–5:

“Since it is difficult, or rather perhaps impossible to display a man's life as pure and blameless, we should fill out the truth to give a likeness where the good points lie, but regard the errors and follies with which emotion or political necessity sullies a career as deficiencies in some virtue rather than displays of viciousness, and therefore not make any special effort to draw attention to them in record. Our attitude should be one of modest shame on behalf of human nature, which never produces unmixed good or a character of undisputed excellence” (Russell's translation).

In ‘*Plutarch's Lives*’, A. Wardman also looked closely at *De Herodoti malignitate* in order to understand Plutarch, and noted that some characteristics of malice given in *De Herodoti malignitate*, e.g. the use of “harsh or unkind words” (cf. Russell's “pejorative terms”) are sometimes found in Plutarch's own portrayals of persons in the *Vitae*, e.g. Cleon in the *Nicias* or Pericles in the *Pericles*³⁷). Yet Wardman believed that there is no inconsistency of attitude between *De Herodoti malignitate* and the *Vitae*: “there is a similar determination to set greatness up and let it stand without feet of clay”³⁸). Unlike the “surreptitious malice” which Plutarch saw in Herodotus' *History*, his own critique of individuals in the *Vitae* “is always explicit and nearly always temperate...” Summing up Plutarch's views, Wardman writes: “... malice is to the writer or biographer what envy is to the contemporaries of a hero, the posthumous form of the same disease”³⁹).

Wardman's remarks, like those of Russell, are incisive, but they do not fully explain Plutarch's negative attitude towards Herodotus. As J. Boake observed, the roots of *De Herodoti malignitate* are found in Plutarch's views on “education” (παιδεία) and “imitation” (μίμησις), views often shaped by Plutarch's Platonic convictions⁴⁰). Like poets, actors, artisans, and others who engage in “imitation”, historians were generally not well regarded by Plutarch. In *De gloria Atheniensium*, probably a youthful declamation⁴¹), Plutarch casts doubt on writers of history. For example,

36) Russell, Plutarch 61.

37) A. Wardman, *Plutarch's Lives* (London 1974) 191–92.

38) *Ibid.* 192.

39) *Ibid.* 195.

40) See Plutarch's *Historical Judgement*, especially 124–137.

41) For Ziegler the “pueriles Machwerk” was probably written in “noch sehr jugendlichem Alter” (Plutarchos 90 = RE XXI, col. 726). The sentiments expressed are not, however, retracted in Plutarch's later writings. See also Wardman, *Plutarch's Lives* 25.

at 345C he asserts: “if you take away the men of action (τοὺς πράττοντας), you will have no men of letters (τοὺς γράφοντας)”. Shortly thereafter at 345D, he remarks that if one omits the deeds of great individuals recorded by Thucydides, this historian is no longer on “the list of writers”. Historians depend on outstanding individuals and events for their writings, and without these, they have no material⁴²). In still another depreciation of historians, Plutarch likens them to goatherds or shepherds who view battles at a distance, report these to their villages or towns, and expect the same honors given to those who fought in the battles (347D):

“And indeed the compilers of history (οἱ συγγράφοντες) are, as it were reporters of great exploits who are gifted with the faculty of felicitous speech, and active success in their writing through the beauty and force of their narration; and to them those who first encountered and recorded the events are indebted for a pleasing retelling of them. We may be sure that such writers are lauded also merely through being remembered and read because of the men who won success; for the words do not create the deeds, but because of the deeds they are also deemed worthy of being read.” (347D–E)

For Plutarch, good Platonist that he was, epic and dramatic poetry, and other forms of “imitation,” including historical writing, had strong psychological effects, and could be used for educational purposes, especially for the moral improvement of individuals. Historical writing can help, for example, in understanding character, and in *Nicias* 1,4–5 (523f–524a) Plutarch announces that he will supplement the accounts of Thucydides and Philistus “not massing together useless material of research (τὴν ἄχρηστον ἀθροΐζων ἱστορίαν), but handing on such as furthers the appreciation of character and temperament (κατανόησιν ἤθους καὶ τρόπου).” At *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat* 26A, he makes similar claims for poetry which is an “imitation of characters and lives (μίμησις ἠθῶν καὶ βίων), and of men who are not perfect or flawless in all respects,” but pervaded by emotions, false opinions, and sundry forms of ignorance, who yet through inborn goodness (εὐφυσίαν) change their ways for the better.” As has often been noticed, Plutarch wrote his own *Vitae* for the purpose of offering moral lessons to his readers, and he emphasizes the notion of imitation in the preface to *Pericles* (1–2, 152d ff.): we must “bring our minds to spectacles that tempt them to their own proper good

42) In a valuable critique of my study, C. B. R. Pelling commented that the contrary topos, viz. heroic individuals also stand in need of great writers to praise them and preserve their place in history, is somewhat rare. See the prefaces of Sallust, Cicero’s *Pro Archia* or the elegists, e.g. Prop. 3.1.

by way of enjoyment. We find this in the actions of virtue⁴³). These actions produce admiration and enthusiasm which result in imitation. But the pleasure or delight in seeing sculpture or reading lyric poetry does not, according to Plutarch, bring about imitation. Virtue, however, “instantly produces by her actions a frame of mind in which the deed is admired and the doer rivalled at one and the same moment . . . Nobility (τὸ καλόν; perhaps ‘moral beauty’) exercises an active attraction and immediately creates an active impulse, but producing a settled moral choice (προαίρεσις) from the simple historical knowledge of the action. This is why I have made up my mind to spend my time writing biographies . . .”⁴⁴).

Plutarch’s views on imitation and pleasure have relevance for understanding *De Herodoti malignitate*. Pleasure itself is not opposed by Plutarch since he recognizes its value and importance in education and many other human endeavors. At *An seni respublica gerenda sit* 786B he claims, for example, that public life offers the greatest pleasures, perhaps like those enjoyed by the gods. The pleasures of the mind, e.g. the study of geometry, astronomy, and harmonics, are also approved by him; even reading the histories of Herodotus and Xenophon is a pleasant pastime (see *Non posse suaviter vivi* 1093B–D). Excessive pleasure, however, is to be avoided, and so one must not over-indulge in learning, for a desire to know everything indicates that self-control has been lost and rationality overcome (*Non posse suaviter vivi* 1093A–B). In brief, poetry and other literature may be enjoyed in moderation, and though pleasure is not the primary purpose of historical writing, it helps to convey the content. Hence, at *Mulierum virtutes* 243A where Plutarch addresses Clea, his priestess friend at Delphi, he remarks that while the work’s historical exposition (τὸ ἱστορικὸν ἀποδεικτόν) is not intended for pleasure (τὸ τέμπον), pleasure is not necessarily harmful and even helps the exposition: it is an ἀποδείξιως συνεργός.

But pleasure and charm (χάρις) in literary compositions can be dangerous, and obscure what is edifying and noble. As noted earlier in this study, the charm of Herodotus’ *History* is especially dangerous since it has the power of poetry: Herodotus narrates his story “‘as a bard tells a tale,’ I mean not ‘with knowledge and wisdom,’ but with ‘musical over-flowing words’” (874B). According to L. Pearson, Plutarch thus “grants to Herodotus the virtues

43) D. A. Russell’s translation, Plutarch 101.

44) Ibid.

of a lying poet, but not those of an historian”⁴⁵). Indeed, the *History* has often been viewed in connection with epic poetry, and already in antiquity, Herodotus was regarded as Homer’s imitator when, for example, the author of *On the Sublime* refers to him as ὀμηρικώτατος⁴⁶). As Boake observed⁴⁷), there are similarities between Plutarch’s views in *De Herodoti malignitate* where Herodotus is “a bard telling a tale” (874B), and *De poetis audiendis* where Plutarch is concerned with poetry as a means to educating the young and training them to recognize the false and fabulous in poetry, and not to be misled into approving vicious sentiments because of their artistic presentation. In both works there is reference to concealment: Herodotus’ malice is cloaked by his literary charm, a charm dangerous to someone unaware of it; in poetry there is also concealment, though often of things helpful and profitable (ὠφέλιμα καὶ χροήσιμα, 28E). In both treatises, Plutarch uses similes from the natural world: Herodotus’ “malice” is hidden like a beetle in the rose, by the author’s style; poetry’s value is also hidden by style (λέξις) which, like luxuriant foliage, conceals the vine’s fruit (*De poetis audiendis* 28E). Hence, according to Boake, *De Herodoti malignitate* warns against the “bad in literature” while *De poetis audiendis* “recommends the good”⁴⁸).

Perhaps realizing that such a judgment about Plutarch seems simplistic, Boake also called attention to Plato’s likely influence on Plutarch’s attitude to Herodotus⁴⁹). For example, when Plutarch asserts that Herodotus’ pleasurable narrative “bewitches” (κηλεῖ) readers to form false beliefs about the heroic cities and men of Hellas (874 B–C), it is likely that Plutarch thinks of Plato’s remarks at Resp. 413c about people who acquire false opinions when “bewitched” by pleasure (ὕφ’ ἡδονῆς κηληθέντες), and about poetry’s “great bewitchment” (μεγάλη κήλησις) which makes poets seem more knowledgeable than they are. That Plutarch composed *De Herodoti malignitate* under Platonic influence is made explicit near the treatise’s beginning where he refers to Plato: “not only is it the height of injustice (as Plato puts it) ‘to seem just when one is

45) Plutarch’s *Moralia*, XI (1970) 129 n.c.

46) [Longinus] *Subl.* 13.3. Dionysius of Halicarnassus Ep. Pomp. 3 regarded Herodotus as an emulator (ζηλωτής) of Homer. For a recent brief assessment of Homer’s influence on Herodotus, see C. W. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley 1983) 31–32.

47) See Boake, *Plutarch’s Historical Judgement* 274.

48) *Ibid.* 275.

49) *Ibid.* 275–276.

not so,' but it is an act of supreme malice to put on a false show of good humour and frankness which baffles detection" (854F; see Resp. 361a). Lachenaud also noted Plato's influence when he wrote: "le lecteur n'est donc pas surpris de voir la *κακοήθεια* d' Hérodote qualifiée d' *ἄκρα* et mis en parallèle avec l' *ἔσχατη ἀδικία* dont il est question dans la *République* (361d)"⁵⁰.

So far it is clear that Plutarch's Platonic beliefs often influenced his assessments of Herodotus' *History*. But what sense can be made of *De Herodoti malignitate* itself? Is it, for example, an essay on historiography, and what accounts for Plutarch's inceptive and seeming failure to give a reasoned evaluation of the *History*? Moreover, what did Plutarch find especially objectionable about the *History*'s content? Questions of form and content often overlap, but in the ensuing discussion, an attempt will be made to keep them more or less separate.

First, as to the form or genre of *De Herodoti malignitate*: Russell's suggestion that it is a "kind of scholarly *controversia*" has been pursued by W. Seavey who in "Judicial Characteristics of Plutarch's *de Herodoti malignitate*" argues quite plausibly that the treatise is an example of judicial rhetoric⁵¹). According to Seavey, the language and techniques of a trial pervade *De Herodoti malignitate*. He cites numerous examples of juridical or legal language, e.g. *διαβολή* (854F, 862A, 865B, 868F), *κατηγορέω* (857A, 870C, 872C, 872F), or *μαρτυρέω* (856E, 858B, 858D-E, 860C). Herodotus is addressed as if he were a defendant (873B), and other historians, e.g. Antenor, Lysanias, Diyllus, are called as witnesses against Herodotus. On the whole, Seavey's study contributes to understanding the form or genre of *De Herodoti malignitate*: it is an example of judicial rhetoric in which Plutarch, using the techniques of legal proceedings, attempts to persuade his readers or "jury" of his charges against Herodotus. At the same time, it can be argued that Plutarch's use of judicial rhetoric is not much more than an extension of the manner in which ancient historians borrowed techniques from, or at least overlapped with forensic practice. Both historians and forensic speakers are concerned with establishing probabilities and testing evidence, and these concerns are evident in the principles for historiography set forth early on in *De Herodoti malignitate* (855 Bf.). As Pelling has observed,

50) Plutarque 127.

51) Russell, Plutarch 60. Seavey's paper was delivered at the American Philological Association, Baltimore, January 1989.

Plutarch's rhetorical expertise helps his "critical alertness to the truth," and rhetoric's influence on *De Herodoti malignitate* and ancient historiography itself, is important for understanding Plutarch⁵²).

Moreover, Seavey's remarks concern mainly the genre of Plutarch's work, and do not explain why Plutarch was especially hostile toward Herodotus, or the specific reasons for *De Herodoti malignitate*. These are largely found in the treatise itself. For example, quite near the work's beginning (854F), Plutarch states that his principal reason for attacking Herodotus' *History* is its disparaging treatment of the Boeotians and Corinthians. He believes that it is necessary for him to defend his ancestors (πρόγονοι) and in keeping with this defense, Plutarch accuses Herodotus of being φιλοβάβαρος (see 857A ff.). These charges have often been discussed⁵³), but a review of some salient features will help in understanding Plutarch's charge against Herodotus.

There is no doubt that *De Herodoti malignitate* attempts to demonstrate that Herodotus' *History* was unfavorable to the cities and heroes of Hellas during the Persian wars (see 874B–C). Plutarch was especially annoyed by Herodotus' treatment of the Thebans at Thermopylae, and in a long defense of them (864D–865A), Plutarch notes that while Herodotus sympathized with the Thessalians who were forced to medize, he showed little understanding for the Thebans who were subject to the same "necessity." Indeed, necessity (ἀνάγκη) would have also compelled other Greek cities to submit eventually to the Persians. For Plutarch, Theban virtue (ἀρετή) was restricted by circumstances, and yet they (and the Thespians) stayed with Leonidas and the Spartans. According to Plutarch, the Thebans did not accept the great King's terms until Thermopylae was taken, and to emphasize Theban heroism Plutarch considers their achievement a μέγιστον και κάλλιστον ἔργον quite in contrast to Herodotus who reports that the Thebans remained unwilling hostages of Leonidas.

Drawing further attention to Herodotus' personal grievance

52) See Pelling, Truth and Fiction in Plutarch's Lives 19–52. For the view that classical historiography is primarily a rhetorical genre, see A.J. Woodman, Rhetoric in Classical Historiography (London 1988) who notes on 67–68 that the general grounds on which Plutarch criticizes Herodotus are directly comparable to those of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' Letter to Pompey. For Dionysius historiography was a form of epideictic. See 41–42.

53) See, for example, P. Legrand, De la 'malignité' d'Hérodote, in: Mélanges Gustave Glotz (Paris 1932) 538–543.

against the Thebans, Plutarch notes that the historian did not make his slanders convincing, and contradicted himself (865B). As evidence, Plutarch cites two passages from Herodotus' account (7.220 and 222): in the first, Herodotus states that Leonidas ordered the allies to withdraw when he saw their lack of enthusiasm and unwillingness to die; in the second, Leonidas kept the Thebans against their will, as hostages. Plutarch concludes that Herodotus' account is inconsistent: if Leonidas wanted only willing soldiers at Thermopylae, he would not have kept the Thebans with him.

On the whole, Plutarch's somewhat complex repudiation of Herodotus' account of the Thebans at Thermopylae, shows how eager he was to defend his fellow Boeotians. But Plutarch's defense extended beyond the Thebans, for in slandering the "greatest and best cities and men of Greece" (874C), Herodotus had, according to him, shown his fondness for barbarians. That Plutarch considered Herodotus φιλοβάρβαρος⁵⁴) is made clear in various passages of *De Herodoti malignitate*, e.g. at 870A where Plutarch ridicules Herodotus' portrayal of the pro-Persian Artemisia before the battle of Salamis (cf. Hdt. 8.68 and 103). Yet Plutarch himself had an interest in "barbarians," an interest perhaps best shown by his *De Iside et Osiride*. Given his own knowledge of Egyptian beliefs and customs, it is not surprising that Plutarch criticized, for example, Herodotus' claim that the Hellenes borrowed religious processions and festivals from the Egyptians, along with their veneration of the twelve gods and the mysteries of Demeter and Dionysus (see 857 C). Plutarch was also annoyed by Herodotus' attribution of barbarian ancestry to various Hellenes, e.g. Assyrian to Heracles' family, Phoenician to Thales and Aristogeiton, Carian to Isagoras (857 E-F). In short, Plutarch could be interested in barbarians while still thinking that Herodotus was overly "biased" towards them, and thus it would "take many books" to describe all of Herodotus' "lies and fabrications."

There is another likely reason for Plutarch's attack on Herodotus, and that concerns his great reverence for Delphi⁵⁵). Herodotus' account suggests that the shrine was pro-Persian, and certainly gives no credit to the Delphic oracle for the Hellenic

54) The word is first attested in Plutarch. See Boake, *Plutarch's Historical Judgment* 56.

55) See F. A. Brenk, *In Mist Apparelled. Religious Themes in Plutarch's Moralia and Lives* (Leiden 1977) 248-49 who discusses differences between Plutarch's and Herodotus' accounts of Delphi's role in the Persian Wars. Plutarch was, of course, very active at Delphi. See Russell, *Plutarch* 10-17.

victory at Plataea: Herodotus ascribes this to Tisamenus, an Eleian diviner (9. 35–36). But Tisamenus is hardly mentioned by Plutarch in his account of Plataea, and it is the Delphic oracle who tells the Hellenes where the battle is to be fought, and what gods and heroes were to be propitiated in order to assure victory (*Aristides* 11 ff.). As F. Brenk observed, Plutarch had a bias in “his rewriting of the Herodotean history of the activity of the shrine during the Persian War”⁵⁶).

D. Plutarch and Ancient Criticism of Herodotus

There are probably other reasons for Plutarch’s antipathy toward Herodotus, but the previous discussion shows that he was especially annoyed by Herodotus’ pro-barbarian sentiments and unfavorable treatment of Thebes and other Hellenic cities. But was Plutarch’s hostile attitude toward Herodotus unique? Certainly the *De Herodoti malignitate* was composed at a time when there was reaction against Herodotus’ *History*, and evidence of this reaction is found, for example, in a speech included in the works of Dio Chrysostom, and attributed to Favorinus, a friend of Plutarch (Or. 37,7 and 18). In the speech, Herodotus’ greed is emphasized: only after meeting with financial disappointment did he decide to make up unfavorable anecdotes about the Hellenes. Valerius Pollio wrote *On Herodotus’ Thefts*, and Aelius Harpocration composed *On Herodotus’ Lies*. In *How to Write History* Lucian also attacked Herodotus as a perpetrator of lies set forth in fine language. Moreover, as H. Homeyer observed, Plutarch’s polemic was composed at a time when there was not only adverse criticism of Herodotus, but also a renewal of interest in and appreciation for Thucydides⁵⁷). Indeed, from the first century onwards, the influence of Thucydides’ style and thought can be seen on many historians and rhetoricians, e.g. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Josephus, Dio Cassius, Tacitus, Ammianus Marcellinus. And though a writer such as Dionysius sometimes expresses greater admiration for Herodotus than for Thucydides (Ep. Pomp. 3), he could state that Thucydides was the best (κράτιστον) of Greek historians, and

56) Brenk, In Mist Apparelled 248.

57) H. Homeyer, Zu Plutarchs De malignitate Herodoti, *Klio* 49 (1967) 185. See also Schmid, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, 491–93. For a good survey of the importance of both Herodotus and Thucydides in Greek historiography, see A. Momigliano, *Greek Historiography, History and Theory* 17 (1978) 1–28.

hence probably the most truthful, since truth was of primary value (see his Thuc. 2 and 8). On the whole, then, it is not surprising that Plutarch when discussing characteristics of *κακοήθεια* in historical writing, refers to Thucydides as the correct historian who avoids needlessly harsh words, and omits the less creditable version of an event when more than one are available (855 B–C, 855 F)⁵⁸.

But despite the various accusations made against Herodotus in antiquity, the notion that he was a malicious writer is, according to Boake, “uniquely Plutarchean”⁵⁹. Indeed, apart from *De Herodoti malignitate*, the term “malicious” (*κακοήθης*) is used of an historical author only in the *Suda* where it is applied to Theopompus who is contrasted with Ephorus (s.v. Ἐφορος). But Plutarch himself had already used the term of Theopompus in *De Her. malign.* at 855 A where he describes the difference between Herodotus and Theopompus:

“So the malice of Herodotus, no doubt, is of a smoother and softer variety than that of Theopompus, but its effect is more penetrating and more painful – just as winds can create more discomfort by seeping through a narrow crack than when they spend their force out in the open.”

For Plutarch the charge of *κακοήθεια* was a serious one. And though his understanding of the word reflected Aristotle’s definition in the *Rhetoric* (1389b 20): ἔστι γὰρ κακοήθεια τὸ ἐπὶ τὸ χειρόν ὑπολαμβάνειν πάντα (... “looking on the worse side of everything”)⁶⁰, Plutarch also associated *κακοήθεια* with ill-will (*δυσμένεια*), slander (*διαβολή*), and defamation (*βλασφημία*). It is, in fact, like other vices, an affliction or disease of the soul, and can be likened to an ulcer (see *De prof. in virt.* 82B)⁶¹. Other critics may have accused Herodotus of plagiarism, untruthfulness, or unreliability, but for Plutarch Herodotus’ lies were deliberate and malicious, the result of a serious vice, and so the *De Herodoti malignitate* begins and ends with warnings against the character of Herodotus.

58) Plutarch’s admiration for Thucydides is quite evident at *Nicias* 1.1,5, and for a survey of his opinions on Thucydides, see A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides I* (Oxford repr. 1982) 54–84.

59) Boake, *Plutarch’s Historical Judgment* 52.

60) The term first appears in Plato’s *Republic* 348d and 401a. The translation is that of J. H. Freese, Aristotle. *The “Art” of Rhetoric*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass. and London, repr. 1982).

61) I am indebted to Boake’s investigation of Plutarch’s use of the term. See Boake, *Plutarch’s Historical Judgement* 109–113; *κακοήθεια* with *δυσμένεια* at *De recta rat.* aud. 43D; with *διαβολή* at *Alcib.* 12.1; with *βλασφημία* at *Praec. ger. reip.* 825E–F.

E. Conclusion

There is no doubt that Plutarch had a good knowledge of Herodotus' *History*, and often quoted it accurately. Some of his quotations were probably made from memory, but in composing the *De Herodoti malignitate* he most likely had the work before him. Plutarch also took an interest in the life of Herodotus, though his biographical reports are sometimes to the detriment of the historian. Indeed, from the previous study it is clear that Plutarch's negative assessment of Herodotus and his *History* is not confined to *De Herodoti malignitate*, but is found in other works of the *Moralia* as well. He does admire the style of Herodotus, but often disagrees with his reports. It is, of course, the "charm" (χάρις) of the *History* which conceals the absurdities of the work and its author's character. Plutarch seems to be unique in condemning the κακότηεια of Herodotus, but it is well to remember that as a good Platonist, Plutarch was somewhat suspicious of historians who, like actors, artisans, and poets, engage in "imitation." In so far as they contributed to the moral improvement of individuals, well and good. But imitation when practiced by someone motivated by hidden malice can be a very dangerous thing. In Plutarch's estimation, Herodotus is much like an untruthful poet; he is a "bard telling a tale" (874B), whose pleasurable narrative bewitches his reader to form false notions of the heroic cities and men of Hellas (874B–C). In Plutarch the "ancient dispute" between philosophy and poetry (Resp. 607b5) has carried over to historical writing⁶².

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