

Τύχη: Fortune, Fate and Chance in Herodotus and Thucydides
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Man has always wished to be able to explain incomprehensible phenomena and has turned to supernatural entities to elucidate the workings of the world. Divination, such as looking at the entrails of sacrificed animals or scrying into crystal balls to help understand these phenomena, has been long employed by people. Using oracles, such as those employed at Delphi or even the more modern use of Tarot, has been employed to see if the gods favored man's laudable or despicable endeavors. Many natural phenomena were so powerful that certain gods were attributed to these powers, and emotions that often misguided people's activities were also given divine entities which not only ruled these emotions but also explained the vagaries caused by them. These gods were jealous, frivolous, and yet so powerful that they could "bring the lofty low."¹

However, there were often situations that were outside the realms of certain gods that could not be explained by natural phenomena or by the wills or power of men. These most inexplicable of occurrences, these moments that seemingly arbitrarily decided the fortunes of man, were given to the goddess Tyche (Τύχη). She, according to Hesiod, was the offspring of the Ocean and Tethys,² and according to Pindar, a daughter of Zeus the Deliverer.³ Her ability to change the course of history and the fate of man was often cited, and these changes were seemingly on a whim. She lives on today when a person speaks of a change in "fortune" (from the Latin *Fortuna*,) for better or worse, as well as in the sociological theory of indeterminism of Charles Pierce (which he called *tychism*).⁴

The word "τύχη" as "fortune" rather than a cognomen for a pure deity also found its way into common usage in Ancient Greece

and is used extensively in the works of Herodotus and Thucydides. Though at first glance this does not seem to signify a departure from the spirituality of Ancient Greek civilization, the fact that both are more than ready to prove that man's misfortune or good fortune is his own doing denotes a rationalist world-view that other great writers, and even later Greek and Roman historians, do not share and possibly cannot readily comprehend. This absence of Τὸχῆ is not just a novelty brought on by Greek reliance on empiricism; in fact it is an amazing analytical change in cognizance and understanding especially in light of the phenomena that were readily attributed to the Gods in Classical Greece. Even Polybius, the Greek historian of the rise of Rome, writing at a later date still quips that "Fortune has guided almost all the affairs of the world in one direction and has forced them to incline towards one and the same end."⁵ This statement shows the very human need to find a reason for even the inexplicable; it lends logic to an otherwise entropic existence.

It is not that people became more superstitious as time went on, as we have the entire *Theogony* from Hesiod as well as the epics *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* by Homer to show us the esteem given to both gods and heroes by the Ancient Greeks of their time. For later religious devotion, one only has to look at the complaints raised against Pericles during the Athenian plague to see the fervency of the religious citizens in Thucydides' times. Therefore, the general acceptance of religion remained for the most part unchanged in Greece even though sophists and philosophers began to express doubt. Pericles and his favorite, Protagoras were often cited as being irreverent to the gods, and these claims would not have been made if the general population did not hold beliefs in religious traditions.

Each god, given attributes that come from the vagaries of natural phenomena, was also a protector of certain aspects of life. Athena, for example, was the patroness of Athens and the goddess of the

hunt. Zeus, the most powerful of the gods, used a lightning bolt as his weapon of choice. Poseidon ruled over the ocean and earthquakes. Aphrodite was the goddess of love and sexuality, born when Cronos lopped off Ouranos' genitals with a sickle and threw them into the sea.⁶

However, Tyche (*Τύχη*) was a goddess that was given jurisdiction over the destinies and fates of men and nations. She was often represented as a most fickle entity, born of Tethys and Okeanos according to the *Theogony*.⁷ Her whims would either lift a man to fame or destroy the family and nation of a king. She was, in fact, a ready-made scapegoat for the inexplicable events of history; she could be the explanation for unexpected wealth or the decimation of a people by plague. Though these could also be attributed to the *Mοῖραι* (known as the Fates in English), they were mainly attributed to Tyche as a titular deity. She was the goddess that controlled the factors that could exalt men and level nations. She was "less powerful than fate,"⁸ but still a singular force in man's destiny. The fact that she was represented with a cornucopia signifies that her whims were always to the benefit of man.⁹

However, her treatment in Herodotus' *The Histories* and Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian Wars* is amazing in not what is attributed to her but often by what is not attributed to her whims. Though these two historians were active when the Sophists and the philosophers were coming of age and when human reason was to become the basis of understanding, one must remember that the Greeks still had a theology to explain the inexplicable. Plato was trying to define the "good," but Athens still paid heed to oracles and lauded Athena as the patron goddess. Socrates was executed for "neglect of the gods whom the city worships" as well as for "corrupting the young."¹⁰ Therefore, this dichotomy of the Greeks' understanding of natural phenomena as well as causality must be remembered to fully appre-

ciate the amazing advances of both Herodotus and Thucydides. They could have attributed every inexplicable act to the divine, more so to Tyche, but instead they both chose to attribute man's fate to his own character flaws and subsequent actions. God (*Θεοῦ*) occasionally makes an appearance, as in Herodotus' line "Many things make it plain to me that the hand of God is active in human affairs..."¹¹ but this is to describe coincidences that "prove" divine intervention, much akin to divination of animal entrails or deciphering nebulous oracles. He readily cites the timing of certain events to account for God's presence, and it is in retrospect that divine intervention becomes apparent. Herodotus assigns the hand of God to only those coincidences that prove by the order of their inherent forms, and not by the anarchy of the situations, that the supernatural is at work. Tyche, however, would have been more chaotic in deciding the fate of men, armies, and nations.

However, looking at fate (*τύχη* with a small tau) in Herodotus' works is enlightening in its seeming humanism. When he first discusses the origins of the Greeks, he tells us that "nearly all the gods came to Greece from Egypt."¹² He then expands this to say:

But it was only—if I may so put it—the day before yesterday that the Greeks came to know the origin and form of the various gods, and whether or not all of them had always existed; for Homer and Hesiod are the poets who composed theogonies and described the gods for the Greeks, giving them all their appropriate titles, offices and powers, and they lived, as I believe, not more than four hundred years ago.¹³

He also tells us that the word for god, *θεοί*, comes from the Greek word for disposers, as they "dispose" laws and order upon mankind.¹⁴ Therefore, with this devout mindset, to *not* attribute whims and vagaries of history on Tyche shows a very large step being taken

in an empirical understanding of causality in the human experience. He possibly demonstrates the beginnings of a belief-system like Protagoras': "Concerning the gods I am unable to discover whether they exist or not, or what they are like in form; for there are many hindrances to knowledge, the obscurity of the subject and the brevity of human life. . . Man is the measure of all things."¹⁵ Herodotus certainly believes that the gods have their place in dictating the vagaries of man and he is ready to show their favors towards certain endeavors in his history, but they are no longer the dictators of man's fate. As historiographer and historian, Ernst Breisach points out, "Essentially, Herodotus' list of reasons for the war is a list of human motives."¹⁶ This is very different from Polybius' understanding of Tyche; this later historian believed that the Persian Wars were one instance where the horrors of Tyche were suspended.¹⁷ It is the absence of the divine in the affairs of men that makes Herodotus' work so special; he too could have found grounds for Tyche arresting her wrath or spreading good fortune, but he refrains.

The great classicist H. D. F. Kitto describes this by explaining all Greeks' reliance on reason: "The Greek never doubted for a moment that the universe is not capricious; it obeys Law and is therefore capable of explanation. . . Greek tragedy is built on the faith that in human affairs it is Law that reigns, not chance."¹⁸ However, one would have to ask why then Tyche was even a concept for a goddess if not to function as an explanation of the inexplicable. In fact, historian William Smith in *The Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* points out that Tyche was given three tools to symbolize her power: the rudder to direct the lives and fates of man, a ball to demonstrate the whimsical nature and unsteadiness of fate, and the cornucopia to symbolize the possible fruits and benefits that she could bestow on man.¹⁹ Further, one only needs to look at the poetry of Pindar to realize that she was often prayed to, as he says in an ode that "she giveth of this and of that."²⁰

For Herodotus, however, many of the characters in his histories are prone to speak of “τύχη” as luck. When Croesus and Solon speak of happiness and the happiest man, Solon proves that many have been “unlucky” while rich and those with modest means have been much happier.²¹ Here, the fortune that he speaks of is not divine, and neither is the next mention of *τύχη* divine. Instead, when it comes to light that Harpagos failed to kill Astyages’ daughter’s son who will become Cyrus, Astyages mentions that this is a pleasant change in “fortune.”²² Again, Herodotus cunningly avoids suggesting that Tyche herself had a hand in this coincidence that the boy survived. In explaining exactly how the boy survived, by Harpagos giving him to a herdsman who kept Cyrus but put his own stillborn child in the elements instead, he negates Tyche of having any part in Cyrus’ fulfilling Astyages’ dream. He attributes it all to the vagaries of man’s actions, however odd the chance that Harpagos should give the child over to a herdsman whose wife had just borne a stillborn child, and the chance that they would think up such a clever method of unintentional deception, actually would be. He assigns the fact that his surrogate mother’s name was *Κύνω* (meaning “bitch”) as the impetus for the mythological story of Cyrus’ being suckled by hounds to again prove man’s ability to decide his own fate, though again any other Greek may have seen that as Tyche’s helping Cyrus again to achieve political power.²³ However, this reasoning sufficed for Herodotus; he demonstrated that this would be much more plausible than Tyche’s putting the child in the custody of a dog to rear.

But the use of “fortune” here again is also ironic: Astyages speaks of a “change of fortune” in his son’s being alive,²⁴ but then kills Harpagos’ son to use as the main course of the celebratory feast—hence changing Harpagos’ “fortune” for the worse, and consequently and unwittingly changing also his own for the worse as well.

Again, though, Herodotus would allow fate to play a role in the words of his characters: “Son of Cambyses, over thee the gods keep guard, for otherwise thou wouldst never have come to so much good fortune. Do thou therefore take vengeance on Astyages who is thy murderer, for so far as his will is concerned thou art dead, but by the care of the gods and of me thou art still alive...”²⁵ Thus are the words in a letter to Cyrus from Harpagos encouraging him to revolt against the king, Astyages. How the letter arrives to Cyrus Herodotus attributes to Harpagos’ cunning (its being stuffed in a rabbit and transported by a servant dressed as a hunter), and though the letter itself seems to attribute the previous story of Cyrus’ survival to fate or Tyche, we have already seen how Herodotus dispatched with that notion in his narrative. Cyrus’ uprising and his inherent strength of personality are almost implied to be the products of good breeding rather than gifts bestowed upon him by the gods, again a moment of Herodotus’ ascribing outcomes to man’s decisions; even the manner in which he was discovered by Astyages is almost by modern standards “chance.”²⁶ The fact that he acted “kingly” when playing with friends is hardly proof that Cyrus is the king’s son by modern standards, but Greeks often put “truth” to different tests than we would undertake today. As philologist Derek Collins points out in his discussion on Greek magic, “Similarly, causal explanation is not universal: what is an incidental cause for one culture might be an efficient one in another.”²⁷ This, when dealing with Herodotus and his understanding of Tyche or chance, must be remembered and expanded: often the difference between the incidental and efficient cause is not cultural but individual.

It takes Herodotus six books to find another situation where τῶχη fits again, and in book seven Xerxes the Persian king is getting advice from Artabanos about his planned invasion of Greece. Once again, Tyche is not a goddess defining the outcome of a situation,

but rather a concept used in a discussion. Hence, “ἔσσωται δὲ ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης τὸ βούλευμα· ὁ δὲ βουλευσάμενος αἰσχροῶς, εἴ οἱ ἡ τύχη ἐπίσποιτο, εὖρημα εὔρηκε, ἦσσον δὲ οὐδέν οἱ κακῶς βεβούλευται,” is translated by the classicist G. C. Macaulay as “the counsel which has been taken is no less good, though it has been defeated by fortune; while he who took counsel badly at first, if good fortune should go with him has lighted on a prize by chance, but none the less for that his counsel was bad.”²⁸ Here, the Persians, and not the Greeks, are contemplating the dangers of Tyche’s whims, a situation that lends itself to Herodotus’ overall irony. The reader knows that Xerxes is going to lose and the later victories are all attributed to the Greeks’ intelligence and vigilance, even though Herodotus sees some form of divine favor to the Greek endeavors.²⁹ Nonetheless, the good council is apparent to the reader, even though it seems to be Xerxes’ divine folly that he does not heed it. Fate, here, is a literary tool; she has not dictated a success or a failure in this case.

One moment where Tyche is attributed, though she is presented in the Greek more as “luck” than as a divine goddess, is in the case of Artemisia’s strife during the naval assault.³⁰ As Artemisia is being pursued by an Athenian ship, she sinks a Calyndian ship. This, perhaps having been an accident, nonetheless ends her danger as the Athenian believes her to be fighting for Greece. Xerxes and his advisors, seeing her maneuver, believe that she sank an Athenian ship in spite of being under duress. This not only saves her during the battle, but puts her into Xerxes’ favor. This would have to be so random that only Tyche would have a hand in it; Herodotus is not explicit in this attribution, but his talk of “luck” in this case (he uses the lower-case “τύχη” here) certainly betrays her presence in his opinion.

This is in fact the last instance where Tyche is even implied in Herodotus’ history. Again, this is rather surprising considering his

willingness to see divine inspiration in the works of man. As the renowned scholar and historian J. B. Bury points out, Herodotus “did not draw a hard and fast line between the human and the divine.”³¹ However, he was skeptical, and Bury again points out that this was more from the influence of Hecataeus’ work than “to the canons of Ionian science or the influence of Ionian philosophy.”³² Herodotus, being devout in his belief in the gods, still found them to be more *laissez-faire* in their treatment of mankind than many of his contemporaries did. As Bury again elucidates, Herodotus shows us many instances of this type of skepticism, and these are more Ionian subtleties than Sophist influences, though they would have culminated in Sophistry.³³ He is also, as Bury says and as is shown by his writings on Artemisia’s naval prowess, “an expert in the art of not committing himself.”³⁴ However, as the Byzantinist J. A. S. Evans points out in his work *Herodotus*, Herodotus’ relaying of Xerxes dream assigns Xerxes to “. . . tragic destiny; he could not control his fate.”³⁵ This in and of itself shows a determinism that would exclude the influence of Tyche.

Thucydides, on the other hand, was more apt to completely disregard all of the influences of the gods. But he would recognize Tyche as the only external influence on the undertakings of man. However, he believed that Tyche’s influence was not defining; “. . . power might have survived and defied its outrages, had it not been for human mismanagement.”³⁶ He would, however, allow citing “. . . severe earthquakes, droughts causing famines, the plague, and eclipses of the sun as its [the Peloponnesian War] portents.”³⁷ He even acknowledges that the most powerful characters in his history will believe in oracles, gods, and omens, but he, himself, does not show personal approval of this.³⁸ As Breisach says, “Of gods, Thucydides felt, he need not speak.”³⁹

However, Thucydides' characters found a need to speak of the gods, and even the wise Spartan Archidamus, in his long speech in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, cites that chance will play a role in the coming war, but the deciding factor will be who best deals with the incalculable, unforeseen situations.⁴⁰ To undermine the “freaks of chance” (which imply Tyche's presence), the winner of the war will have to be educated in “the severest school.”⁴¹ Tyche will create obstacles in each participant's endeavors throughout the war, but in the end, man will determine his own fate by how he reacts to her whims.

On the other hand, Pericles, the Athenian, shows his Ionian subtlety when speaking again of Tyche. “For sometimes, the course of things is as arbitrary as the plans of man; indeed this is why we usually blame chance for whatever does not happen as we expected,” he states.⁴² In the original Greek, however, this chance again appears as “τύχη.” One can feel Pericles' reference to her caprice as more pronounced as the reader knows what Pericles himself does not: the plague will soon strike him dead, and the war that he is advocating will become the downfall of Athens. As he proclaims to the Athenians only a few paragraphs later, this will be a war of man's ability rather than the whims of Tyche; after all, “did not our fathers resist the Medes. . . more by wisdom than by fortune, more by daring than by strength, did not they beat off the barbarian and advance their affairs to their present height?”⁴³ He proves that Tyche has always wished to supplant man's enterprises, but the Athenians were always able to outsmart her. He wishes to remind the current generation that they should act no differently.

Archidamus reiterates that Tyche will be present in this war and that “the course of the war cannot be foreseen (Διοτι η τύχη τον πολέμον ειναι αδηλος).”⁴⁴ He again, though implies that man is not to falter to Tyche's will, but rather he must rally against it and make

the best of each situation to win the war. Events, according to Archidamus and subsequently Thucydides, are often decided by chance, but outcomes are not.

In the debate between Diodotus and Cleon over the fate of the Mitylenians, Thucydides finds a chance to propound his feelings about Tyche herself. “Fortune (Τύχη), too, powerfully helps the delusion, and by the unexpected aid that she sometimes lends, tempts men to venture with inferior means; and this is especially the case with communities, because the stakes played for are the highest, freedom or empire, and when all are acting together, each man irrationally magnifies his own capacity.”⁴⁵ This betrays how Thucydides sees those who follow Tyche for their own gains; they are usually opportunists of lower intelligence and destined to fail in their pursuits. He finds that “chance . . . simply represents an element which cannot be foretold,”⁴⁶ but to follow Tyche or to use her as an excuse for “their own mental incapacity”⁴⁷ is reprehensible.

When the first boat is sent to Mitylene to kill all the men and enslave the women and children, Diodotus’ call for more leniencies is found to be the more expedient policy. Thucydides points out that the second boat, sent to stop the catastrophe that the first boat is to commit, has the “fortune” (τύχη) of not meeting any winds to impede their progress to the island and also the fortune that those in the first boat were not heading towards this assignment with alacrity. Here, Tyche is implied as being merciful, but again it is the willpower of the men on the second ship, as well as the disdain of the men on the first ship that saves the Mitylenians. Again, the human agent is stronger than the divine, but in this case, Thucydides implies that this is the most fortunate of occurrences.

Demosthenes, in trying to take the Aetolians, is said to have put his trust into the Messenian advice as well as “his fortune” (την τύχη).⁴⁸ Yet, this is again an ironic use of “fortune,” for, as one finds

out in just a few sentences, the best 120 Athenian hoplites meet their demise due to his faith that all will be fine. Again, Thucydides points out that Demosthenes was knowingly lacking in light infantry and dart-men, but moved ahead anyways before Locrian reinforcements arrived, allowing the Aetolians to move up a hill above Aegitium to a strategic advantage.⁴⁹ Therefore, if he had just followed more care in maintaining his forces as well as more prudence in action, Thucydides implies, the massacre would have never happened, and Demosthenes could have returned to Athens with pride.

Demosthenes, in Thucydides work, does get another chance, and again Tyche plays her role at the battle. In one of the few times that Thucydides shows any type of excitement, he writes, “Ἀλλόκοτος μεταβολὴ τύχης!” or “What a bizarre change of Fortune!”⁵⁰ However, the Hellenist Richard Crowley translated it as “a strange reversal of the order of things,” removing the divine from the vagaries of Fortuna from these events.⁵¹ Thucydides finds that chance has placed the Athenians in Lacedaemon fighting off a sea-borne attack from the land. This is truly an odd place for Athens, as it conducts its best warfare at sea. Crowley, however, does not wish to attribute this to the divine. Again, Thucydides gives Tyche her moment in the most glorious of battles. The wording Thucydides again uses implies Tyche’s role but does not state it outright. However, the victory at Sphacteria and Pylos rejuvenated the Athenian spirit, as they had just won a battle against Sparta, a polis that was thought to never surrender, in the most unpredictable conditions imaginable by any Greek. This was enough to allow Thucydides to, for once, imply that chance, or Tyche herself, would play her hand in Athenian fortune.

Yet again talk of fortune manifests with the Spartan’s appeal for negotiations after this battle. Thucydides implies a character-flaw in Athens that comes to more light by Tyche’s hand. The Lacedae-

mons appeal to Athens to not wish for more good fortune based on this one great victory. Rather, the Athenians are begged to act judiciously.⁵² They are reminded that “the prosperity that the city now enjoys, and the accession that it has lately received, must not make you fancy that fortune will be always with you.”⁵³ Yet, the Athenians do show their hubris and request, as they feel that Tyche is with them and that they have a clear upper hand by holding hostages, they want a full surrender from the men on the island as well as Nisaea, Pegae, Troezen, and Achaia. This was to show the character flaw in those who expected Tyche to give more once she gave much, which could also lead, to the Greek mind, to a fall from power. Athens would pay for this.

In Hermocrates’ speech, Tyche is used to discern the difference between success and failure from right and wrong, as he points out that “vengeance is not necessarily successful because wrong has been done, or strength sure because it is confident...”⁵⁴ What the Hellenist Richard Crawley translates as “the incalculable element in the future”⁵⁵ was originally τὸχῆ, a concept that does not lend itself to the rationalism of the nineteenth century. Perhaps that is why this concept is so artfully masked by the translation. But the thought of not being able to account for all future events decided by the whims of Tyche work as a great dissuasion against war for Thucydides as it “frightens us all equally.”⁵⁶

Thucydides, in these examples, demonstrates that there is a force greater than man, but ultimately it shall be man that decides the outcome of his efforts. Man’s plans may be put asunder, but those same plans, if a man be prudent, wise, and resourceful, can be brought back to fruition and his benefit. Tyche, as powerful as she is, must still yield to the plight and *arête* of mankind.

However, in Book Six, Thucydides provides us with an interesting new twist on Tyche. Nicias, whilst debating the wisdom of in-

vading Sicily, gives two speeches to dissuade the Athenians, but accomplishes the opposite.⁵⁷ Yet, in his second speech, Nicias states, “Fearing this, and knowing that we shall have need of much good counsel and more good fortune—a hard matter for mortal men to aspire to—I wish as far as may be to make myself independent of fortune before sailing, and when I do sail, to be as safe as a strong force can make me.”⁵⁸ This implies that Tyche is in fact stronger than man, and therefore Nicias feels the need to be as prepared for her as he can be. He also does not, in this statement, shy away from winning her favor. This becomes important in that the conquest of Sicily is faced with difficulties. It becomes a disaster, and Tyche seems to not have had Athens in her favor during that campaign. This makes Hermocrates’ words all the more harrowing: “Man can control his own desires, but he cannot likewise control circumstances (τύχη).”⁵⁹ This thought of reliance on Tyche for good outcomes is shown in this campaign to be folly; still, the Athenians could not prepare enough it seems to be able to deal with her caprice.

Is it because of Tyche that the Athenians lost the Peloponnesian War? Most likely not, however the inexplicable had to be accounted for. In fact, the use of Tyche as a personification of chance finds itself, ironically, more pervasive in Thucydides’ text than that of Herodotus. Yet Thucydides has the reputation for being the more “rational” of the two historians. Though the references to fate are most often in speeches by the main characters of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides’ own references to chance imply Tyche’s presence enough to prove that this is one force that is stronger than man’s self-determination. However, man has to prepare for her vagaries in order to succeed, which becomes the fatal flaw for the Athenians in Thucydides’ history. Those, Thucydides implies in various speeches by the major players of his history, who prepare for the unforeseen manage better than those who act with hubris or haste.

Historiographically, however, searching for Tyche and her influence can become daunting for the researcher and the historian in search of her influence in the Classical Greek histories of Thucydides and Herodotus.⁶⁰ Herodotus, though devout in his religion, still believed that man was the master of his own fate. Coincidences showed God's favor, but he was not prone, as Polybius would be over two hundred years later, to attribute the fate of man to anything divine. The gods show favor and also are purported to punish the impious by Herodotus' characters, but in the end, his history is a collection of man creating his own fate. Oracles may have figured heavily in his work, but even this leaves nothing to Tyche. However, in his wishing to leave the divine out of his history, Thucydides finds that the absence of the gods in the fate of man ironically requires Tyche's presence.

For Thucydides, Tyche becomes relatively prominent as the other gods fall silent. He finds in her the impetus for man to strive to prepare, learn, and persevere. Battles are won and lost as she changes a participant's "fortune" and many speeches in his work reference Tyche very obviously. Perhaps this is because "Greek religion was largely practical in orientation...therefore accommodative to the diverse rituals and beliefs of various social strata."⁶¹ To the Greek mind, to remove the gods from human endeavors would leave a practical hole in those unexplained events. To fill this, it would be natural for a Greek, and in this case Thucydides, to turn to Tyche to allow for an understanding of the inexplicable rise and fall of man. With this in mind, it becomes no wonder that Tyche is more predominant in Thucydides than in Herodotus: Herodotus allowed for divine explanation, whereas Thucydides would not. But if man could not be fully attributed to his own fate, Thucydides' practicality demanded that a reason be found. Tyche, therefore, became that reason.

Tyche was meant to be rallied against or courted for her favors. She was sometimes the patron of a city, and randomness was her supposed hallmark. She could make a poor man rich or level a powerful city. She was capricious yet generous. However, Tyche was the goddess of fortune and her presence was simultaneously dreaded and hoped-for. But Tyche's appearance in Herodotus and Thucydides betrays something deeper about human nature: Man will always strive to find order in chaos, and a reason behind every coincidence. Tyche, when no other reason could be found, was a perfect goddess to attribute those events to—especially when the other gods in the pantheon of Greek religion were not utilized. For Herodotus and Thucydides, however, man was still the meter by which all other aspects of life were to be measured, and it was man himself who could dictate the outcome of Tyche's fancies.

Notes

¹ Herodotus *The Histories* 7.10.e.

² Hesiod *Theogony* line 360;

³ Pindar, *The Exant Odes of Pindar*, “For Ergoteles of Himera, Winner of the Long Foot Race.” Kindle e-book.

⁴ Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer, “Chance in Human Affairs,” *Sociological Theory* 12, no. 1 (March, 1994): 46-47.

⁵ Polybius *The Complete Histories*, Kindle e-book.

⁶ Hesiod, lines 170-210.

⁷ Hesiod, lines 336-363.

⁸ Kathleen J. Shelton, “Imperial Tyches,” *Gesta* 18, no. 1(1979): 29.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Charles Freeman, *Egypt, Greece, and Rome: Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 282.

¹¹ Herodotus 9.100.

¹² Herodotus 2.50.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2.53.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.52.

¹⁵ Freeman, 279.

¹⁶ Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 15.

¹⁷ Arnold Toynbee, *Greek Historical Thought* (New York: Mentor, 1952), 199.

¹⁸ H. D. F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (London: Penguin, 1991), 176.

¹⁹ *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, s.v. “Tyche.”

²⁰ Pindar “For Melissos of Thebes, Winner in the Pankration,” Trans. by Ernest Myers, Kindle e-book.

²¹ Herodotus, 1.32.

²² Herodotus, 1.118.

²³ Supposedly Cyrus was exposed to the elements as an infant, but rescued and suckled by a dog. At least, that is the legend that Herodotus relates, his main purpose being to disprove that legend. Herodotus, 1.108-1.122.

²⁴ Herodotus 1.118.

²⁵ Herodotus, 1.124. The original Greek is thus: “ὃ παῖ Καμβύσεω, σὲ γὰρ θεοὶ ἐπορῶσι· οὐ γὰρ ἂν κοτὲ ἐς τοσοῦτο τύχης ἀπίκνυ· σύ νυν Ἀστυάγεια τὸν σεωτοῦ φονέα τίσαι. . .” Again the presence of “fortune” or “luck” is readily discernable in the word “τύχης.” Herodotus could have chosen to use *μοῖρα*, or fate, instead.

²⁶ Herodotus, 1.114-1.118.

²⁷ Derek Collins, “Nature, Cause, and Agency in Greek Magic,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-) 133, no. 1 (2003): 19.

²⁸ Greek version: Herodotus 7.10.d.; Translation of the same text: Herodotus, *The History of Herodotus*, trans. G. C. Macaulay, 7.10.d, Kindle e-book.

²⁹ Herodotus 9.100-9.101.

³⁰ Herodotus 8.87-8.88.

³¹ J. B. Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians* (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), 47.

³² *Ibid.*, 48.

³³ *Ibid.*, 54-60.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

³⁵ J. A. S. Evans, *Herodotus* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 101.

³⁶ Bury, 125.

³⁷ Bresiach, 15.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Thucydides *The History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.84.

⁴¹ Thucydides 1.84.

⁴² Thucydides 1.140.

⁴³ Thucydides 1.144.

⁴⁴ Thucydides 2.11.

⁴⁵ Thucydides 3.45.

⁴⁶ Bury, 129.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁴⁸ Thucydides 3.97.

⁴⁹ Thucydides 3.97.

⁵⁰ Thucydides 4.12. Translation mine.

⁵¹ Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. by Richard Crowley (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2006), 226.

⁵² Thucydides 4.17.

⁵³ Thucydides 4.18.

⁵⁴ Thucydides 4.62

⁵⁵Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. by Richard Crowley, (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2006), 251.

⁵⁶Thucydides 4.62.

⁵⁷Thucydides 6.9- 6.24

⁵⁸Thucydides 6.23.

⁵⁹Thucydides 6.78.

⁶⁰Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. by Richard Crowley, (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2006), 179n.

⁶¹Joseph M. Brant, "Intellectuals and Religion in Ancient Greece: Notes on a Weberian Theme," *The British Journal of Sociology* 37, no. 2 (June, 1986): 280.

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