Chapter 6
Conclusion

This investigation of discourse features of the Scythian account of Herodotus' *Histories* has focused upon the typology, segments and boundaries, and prominence in the main narrative.

6.1 Summary of Findings

Chapter 3 describes the genres of *Histories* and those found in the Scythian account. The frame or backbone of the Scythian account is a narrative of Darius' attempted conquest of Scythia. The study of typology reveals a unique piece of literature to its time, combining elements of historical epic narrative with scientific investigation into ways of diverse cultures and methods that empires used to rule their own and conquered peoples. The chapter also outlines the surface and notional structure. The text was found to be a climactic narrative with the typical corresponding surface features of pre-peak episodes, Peak, and postpeak episodes. Signals of Peak and other points of intensity in the narrative include preposed participle sequences, words describing emotion or intense action, and quotations. Longacre's observation that preposed participle sequences in Greek may mark Peak (1996:44-5) was supported in this text. The preposed participle series signal greater tension in the Scythian account and serve to build the intensity of the plot—to get the initial story going, and to build tension at particular significant points, including Darius' arrival in Scythia, the Peak, and the segments of "final suspense."

In Chapter 4, the episodes of the main narrative were delineated according to the major boundary signals found in the text. The most prominent boundary features were change of time or location, and each episode exhibits unity of action. Embedded segments, characterized by change in genre or tense, as well as preview and summary clauses, often serve as divisions between narrative episodes. Episodes of main narrative rarely exhibit special preview or summary clauses but instead simply continue the narrative with the next event, or utilize a preposed overlap clause to resume the narrative after some type of interruption.

In addition, reference with a full noun phrase was found at most episode openings. The noun phrase is frequently in marked, fronted position at the beginning of episodes which occur after embedded segments. Conjunctions begin nearly every episode (most frequently, δέ [de] 'and, but, then' and second most common, a summary conjunction). However, conjunctions also occur between clauses within episodes and thus were not found to be a definitive indicator of episode boundaries.

The examination in Chapter 5 revealed that a model with only one salience scheme does not account for the foregrounding of storyline clauses of the narrative, since the aorist tense conveyed the storyline in some segments, while the imperfect carried the storyline in others. Research by Bakker (1997) on the mimetic mode in Greek (especially Thucydides' writing) gives a coherent explanation for the phenomenon of a difference in mode. The mimetic mode, in which the imperfect verb carries the storyline, is dominant in the Scythian account. The mimetic mode, as Bakker explains, is used when the author wishes to bring the audience into the episode, to witness the action as it unfolds; this perspective of an observer within the scene creates a more vivid episode.

The less common mode in the Scythian account is the diegetic, in which the storyline is carried by aorist tense. In Chapter 5, each band of the two salience models are described and exemplified.

In the Scythian account, the mimetic is a linguistic method of building intensity in the plot and correlates with vivid scenes of high tension and emotion. The mimetic modes increase as the tension builds, and most of the Peak and the two Peak Prime segments are in the mimetic. This correlates with the traditional observation that the imperfect tense frequently appears to communicate durative action since an observer in the scene would be viewing each action as it unfolds. In addition, the mimetic is used for dramatic scenes which occurred repeatedly in the story but are only mentioned once in the text, which also relates to the durative designation often given to the imperfect.

6.2 Limitations and Future Research

This investigation focused upon the boundary features of the main narrative in the Scythian account; further research could probe into boundaries and also typology of embedded segments.

Regarding Peak marking, other accounts in *Histories* could be examined to create a more definite model of Peak marking features used in Herodotus' work.

The investigation of a distinction in mimetic versus diegetic mode is a preliminary study in that only one account of *Histories* was examined. Future study is needed to explore a modal difference in the rest of the *Histories* narratives, which could further corroborate the findings here. An outline of other accounts in *Histories* according to mode would undoubtedly shed more light on Herodotus' usage of the two modes. In particular, the points of greater plot intensity should be examined in other accounts of *Histories* to determine if the mimetic mode predominates. Other situations in which the mimetic is used might also be found with a greater corpus study.

A further interesting study would involve the analysis of modal usage throughout the centuries of Greek literature, and whether the usage changed or diminished over time.

A final idea for future study would be to investiage possible diegetic-mimetic distinctions in other languages. Genette (1980) studies the use of the mimetic in a French narrative by Proust (see 2.4.3). In English, change to present tense verbs at the peak of some stories (as Longacre observes, 1996:40) may be a type of mimetic feature. Any mimetic discourse in a language might also be marked by verbal aspect, or the major indicators might be different linguistic features.

It is hoped that this examination of a narrative in *Histories* in the light of discourse theory has provided greater understanding into how Herodotus communicated, and still communicates, his monumental work.