

HERODOTUS
HISTORIES

BOOK VIII

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winds (12–14n.): as a result, he does not see the frequent disastrous storms and other omens as significant. The reader's and Xerxes' perspectives on matters here diverge in a kind of dramatic irony.

There is, therefore, enormous variety in Herodotus' narrative, and the reader has to be alert to the many things that are going on. Into the broadly chronological framework are woven studies in a remarkable number of areas of human research.

7 THE LANGUAGE OF HERODOTUS⁷¹

Our MSS are descended from an 'archetype' written probably in the first century AD.⁷² These MSS and the few surviving papyri do not suggest there is a wide divergence between our text and Herodotus' original in terms of expression, word order, order of incidents, etc. However, in matters of dialect, morphology, spelling, etc., considerable confusion reigns.⁷³ In the representation of particular forms, the MSS disagree with each other, are inconsistent with themselves, and contain some very peculiar spellings. It is clear that Herodotus' text has been heavily corrupted by the introduction of Attic and false Ionic forms by scribes and scholars who were more used to Attic or had their own theories about how his Ionic dialect should look. Furthermore, we have too little contemporary Ionic from inscriptions against which to check the MSS' readings, and the texts of other Ionic writers close in time to Herodotus, such as the early historians and Hippocrates, are themselves heavily Atticised (and in the former case, very fragmentary).

Faced with the plethora of competing variants in the MSS, editors have hard choices to make: when the MSS write $\pi\tau\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\iota$ and $\pi\tau\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\iota\nu$ more often than $\tau\pi\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\iota$ and $\tau\pi\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\iota\nu$, but by contrast prefer $\nu\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\iota$ and $\nu\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\iota\nu$ to the corresponding uncontracted forms, do editors go with the majority verdict in the case of each individual verb or form, do they standardise either the contracted or uncontracted form, or do they have a mixture of the two, and if so, how do they decide what the mixture will be? When standardisation and consistency of spelling is a relatively late feature of English, how much should we demand of fifth-century BC Ionia?

Again, it is difficult when we come across unusual forms to know how they should be accounted for. There are a number of possibilities. (1) They might be 'false' Ionicisms, that is, forms created as a result of insufficient knowledge of how that dialect works. A good instance of this problem concerns the genitive plural of the pronoun $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$, in which Ionic distinguishes between the feminine in $-\epsilon\omicron\nu$ (< $-\eta\omicron\nu$ < $-\alpha\tilde{\omicron}\nu$) and the masculine/neuter in $-\omega\nu$ (< $*-\sigma\eta\nu$). However, in the MSS we find the feminine $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\epsilon\omicron\nu$ used as a masculine or neuter. This might have been introduced by a scribe who saw $-\epsilon\omicron\nu$ frequently in his text and extended its use falsely, but we have $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\alpha\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\nu$ (neut.) on a Milesian inscription. The document itself dates from the mid-fifth century, which

⁷¹ There is appended to this section a brief guide to the language of Herodotus, for those who wish speedily to see the differences from Attic.

⁷² See further §8 below.

⁷³ Most useful on Herodotus' dialect are Smyth 1894; Untersteiner 1949; Legrand 1955: 179–223; Rosén 1962; for later literary Ionic, Lightfoot 2003: 97–142.

is promising, but the actual version we have was carved only ca. 100: is $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\alpha\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\nu$ an original form or a later one, based on what the writer thought it should be in Ionic?⁷⁴ (2) They might be Atticisms, wrongly substituted for Ionic forms: $\pi\acute{o}\lambda\alpha\iota$ (beside usual $\pi\acute{o}\lambda\iota$) is also found in Homer, but is likely to be an Attic form both there and in Herodotus. However, not all Atticisms need be copyists' errors: Herodotus seems to have spent time in Athens, and his lexicon (especially in later books) shows words that seem to have been specifically Attic (e.g. $\kappa\alpha\rho\delta\omicron\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\omicron$, $\delta\omicron\rho\omicron\delta\omicron\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\omicron$, $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\prime \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\phi\acute{o}\rho\omicron\iota$): why not Attic spellings as well? (3) They might be poeticisms borrowed by Herodotus perhaps from epic and used as part of an attempt to create a language suitably elevated for his great subject. (4) It has been argued that such doublets as $\mu\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ / $\mu\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ found in the MSS might be variant spellings of the same sound,⁷⁵ introduced by copyists if not Herodotus himself. (5) They might simply be mistakes. In the list that follows, therefore, there are many uncertainties.

Because Attic is the dialect that most people learn first, Herodotus' dialect will be discussed below largely in terms of the differences between Attic and his Ionic. Herodotus came from Halicarnassus (modern-day Bodrum) in Caria. This was a Dorian colony, but inscriptions from that area are in a form of 'East Ionic', a dialect spoken in the Ionic areas of the Asia Minor coast and some of the adjacent islands, as well as in their colonies around the Hellespont and Black Sea. Historically, Attic and Ionic are two branches of an earlier 'Attic-Ionic' dialect, one of the five main groupings into which the historical Greek dialects are divided.⁷⁶ This Attic-Ionic group separated from other dialects after the Mycenaean period, and subsequently divided into its two branches during the migrations that marked that period. This is important for understanding the material that follows. 'x for y' below is merely a short-hand way of saying 'where in Attic we find form y, in Ionic we find form x'. It does *not* mean that 'Ionic replaced Attic y with its own x'. The differences between the two dialects are sometimes the result of *Attic* introducing innovations after it split from 'Attic-Ionic' (e.g. the contraction of $\epsilon + \omicron > \omicron\upsilon$: Ion. $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, Att. $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma < * \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon(\sigma)\omicron\varsigma$), sometimes the result of Ionic and Attic independently treating an inherited form in different ways after the split (e.g. Ion. $\mu\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$, Att. $\mu\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma < * \mu\acute{o}\nu\upsilon\varsigma \omicron\varsigma$).

Here is a general account of the differences between Herodotus' language and Attic, with some historical explanations. It is followed by a much briefer survey for those who wish to see quickly what the differences are.

General. (a) *Psilosis*, the loss of the 'rough breathing', was a feature of East Ionic, but modern texts keep the initial aspirate as 'a venerable absurdity' (Powell).⁷⁷ e.g. $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\eta\nu\epsilon\varsigma$ should strictly be printed $\tau\epsilon\lambda\lambda\eta\nu\epsilon\varsigma$. In some compounds, which were no longer felt as compounds, the aspirate was preserved (e.g. $\kappa\alpha\theta\epsilon\upsilon\delta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota$), as it was

⁷⁴ $\kappa\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\nu$ etc. found in some MSS, with the first declension genitive ending transferred to the second declension, is a better candidate for falsehood.

⁷⁵ $\omicron$ is written in many forms for which the usual later spelling is $\omicron\upsilon$.

⁷⁶ The others are Doric, North-West Greek, Aeolic and Arcado-Cyprian. For a clear account of the Greek dialects, cf. Chadwick 1956.

⁷⁷ Papyri of Herodotus display *psilosis* more often than not.

in some non-Ionic names (Ἀφειτάι (< ἄπó + ἦμα), ἔφορος (< ἐπρί + ὄρoα)).⁷⁸ **(b)** *Etacism* involved the wholesale replacement in Ionic of original α by η, where Attic keeps α after ρ, ε, ι (πρήγισα, Πυθής, προθύμη). Forms like πᾶσα (< *πάνσα < *πάντ-γo), which developed a secondary long α, were created after the shift α > η had ceased to operate.⁷⁹ **(c)** *Hiatus* (conjunction of two vowels, often caused by loss of intervocalic -f-, -s-, -w-) is regularly found, especially between e and another vowel: Attic employs contraction more. Many examples of hiatus (e.g. νόος, πῆλπεε, κυνέη, the many verbal forms in -έει, -έεις, -έειν etc.) are also alien to spoken Ionic but are found in Homer: it is not absolutely certain whether they were written by Herodotus, but most editors keep them. Others we know to be Ionic (e.g. genitives ἑέρξεω, μοιρέων, γένεος, ἔσσει 'you will be', δοκέοι opt.).

Vowels. These are the most important differences in the treatment of vowels (note that in many cases here we are talking about a small number of particular words, not general rules).

α for ε	τάμνω, μέγαςος (Att. μέγεθος innovates by assimilation of α to the earlier ε).
α for η	μεσαμβρίη.
ε for α	τέσσερες, ἔρσην ('male').
ε for ει	κρέσσων (< κρέτ-γων: Att. κρέττων on analogy with χείρων etc.), μέζων; ἡμίσεια (fem. pl. of adj. in -υς); ἀποδέξω etc. (but uncontracted δέξω); ἔργω 'restrain' < root *f erg-; Att. εἶργω < *ε(ι)έργω with a prothetic vowel); τέλειος (adj., Att. -ειος).
ει for ε	κενός ('empty'), ξείνος, εἵνεκα/-εν (< κενfός etc.; East Ionic is unusual in lengthening the vowel thus); εἰρωτώ, εἰρόμην, εἰρώω, ἡνεΐχθην.
ε for η	ἑσσοῦμαι (but ἥσσω).
ε for ο	πεντηκόντερος.
ευ for ου	regularly in ποιέν (ποιεῖν, ποιεῖντες), and when -εο, -εου is preceded by a vowel (θηεῖμενος); the original sequence is εο, which contracts to ου in Attic, and either remains εο in Ionic or becomes ευ. These sounds were very close, so the variants are probably orthographic, i.e. two ways of representing basically the same sound.
η for ε	μαχήσομαι, ἦώς 'dawn'.
ηι for ει	nouns in -ήιον, -ήνη (ἀριστήιον); adjs. in -ήιος (οἰκήιος).
ι for ε	ἱστῆ 'hearth' (by assimilation from ἱστία (cf. μέγαςος above); Att. is unusual in keeping the original form; cf. also ἱστιαίεύς).
ι for ει	ἱκελος (but ἐκ- in compounds, which is a secondary form).
ι for ευ	ἰθύς, ἰθέος (Att. εὐθύς is unclear).
ο for ω	χρεών (< χρεώδν 'it being necessary').

⁷⁸ Such non-Ionic words and names often keep their own dialectal forms.

⁷⁹ I.e. the change from short vowel + -vσ- to long vowel + -σ- started after the α > η shift stopped.

ου for ο οὔρος, μούνος, νοῦσος (but νοσέω etc.) from *δῶρος, *μόνfος etc. (cf. κενός above); οὔνοια is a borrowing of a metrically lengthened form from Homer (contrast δνομάζω).

ω for αυ θόμα, τρώμα.

ω for ευ ἑπλώσα (from πλώω 'sail' rather than πλέω).

ω for ου ὦν (= οῦν; unexplained), τοιγαρόν etc.

Consonants. **(a)** *κός, κως, κόπτε, κότερος* etc., i.e. interrogative and indefinite pronouns and enclitics derived from the root *k^wθ- have forms with -κ-, where Attic and other dialects have -π-.⁸⁰ **(b)** *δέκομαι* in Herodotus, literary Ionic and other dialects: Attic δέχομαι, with -χ- from δέχσται. **(c)** οὐκί (< οὐ + k^wi) for οὐχί. **(d)** *γίνομαι, γινώσκω* for γίγνομαι, γινώσκω, probably with a weakening of the articulation of the second γ, by dissimilation (perhaps helped by forms in γεν- in the case of γίνομαι). **(e)** *ἐνθαῦτα, ἐνθεῦτεν* were turned by Attic through metathesis into ἐνταῦθα, ἐντεῦθεν.

Nouns and adjectives. **(a)** *a-stems.* (i) Gen. sg. masc. -εω (Ξέρξεω < -ηο < -αο). (ii) Gen. pl. -έων (μοιρέων, ἑουστέων < -ηων < -αων). (iii) Dat. pl. -ηισι, which is descended from the locative in -ᾱσι/i, and developed the iota on analogy with -οισι, locative of the o-stems: when Greek dispensed with the locative, some dialects used it to represent the dative; Attic -αῖς was created on analogy with -οῖς, an old instrumental. **(b)** *o-stems.* Dat. pl. -οισι, another locative; Attic again uses the instrumental -ῶσι. Note however τοῖδε, also found in Homer. **(c)** *Consonant stems.* (i) Nouns and adjectives in -ος and -ης are uncontracted: γένος, γένεος, γένει, γένεα, γενέων, γένεσι; Ἀστυάγης, Ἀστιάγεια etc.; ἀληθής, ἀληθεία, ἀληθέος etc. (ii) So nouns in -εύς: βασιλέα, βασιλέος etc. (iii) πόλις, ὕβρις, φύσις etc. retain the stem in -ι- throughout the paradigm (πόλιος, πόλι, πόλις, πόλις, πόλιον, πόλιστα).

Pronouns. **(a)** *ἐμέο, σέο, τέο* for ἐμοῦ, σοῦ, and also with more closed pronunciation ἐμεῦ etc. **(b)** *δοῖσις* gives ὅτεν, ὅτεω, ὅτεων, ὅτεοισι. **(c)** *δς, ῆ, τό, τόν, τήν,* τό etc. is the relative; note also Herodotus' rare use of καὶ δς 'and he'; cf. ἡ δὲ δς 'he said'. They tend to be used where there is no preposition or a preposition that cannot be elided. Herodotus also uses δς, ῆ, δ, δν, ῆν, δ etc., especially in phrases such as ἐν δῶι = 'while', ἐς δ = 'until'. **(d)** *σφεος, σφεων, σφι* and *σφι* are used like αὐτοῦς etc., not just to refer to the subject of the main clause as in Attic. **(e)** *ἑωυτῶν* stands for ἑαυτῶν (ἑω- generalised from crasis of ἑο αὐτοῦ). **(f)** Note also accusative sg. μιν = αὐτόν, αὐτήν.

Verbs. **(a)** *Syllabic augment* is omitted in pluperfects (παρσπετόχατο) and iteratives in -σπον (ἔχεσπον). **(b)** *Temporal augment* is sometimes absent, especially in verbs beginning with the diphthongs αι, αυ, ει, ευ, οι (e.g. αἰνεσσαι); in some cases, imitation of Homer may be involved. **(c)** *Uncontracted terminations:* 2nd p. sg. mid. -εαι for Att. -ει or -η (ἔσσει 'you will be'); -εο for -ου (πείθεο pres. mid. imper.); -εε for -η (ἔγεγόνεε (ppf.), ἐπύθεε (impl.)). **(d)** *Δεκνυμι* etc. have forms from the -ω

⁸⁰ A problematic feature: the inscriptions usually give forms in π, but these are inscriptions where Koine influence is notable, so the π-forms may not be original. Forms in κ appear very rarely in the Ionic of the Asia Minor cities and their colonies. Cf. Lillo 1991, Stüber 1996.

conjugation in 2nd and 3rd p. sg. and 3rd p. pl. pres. indic. and 3rd p. sg. impf.: προσπαλλύεις (for -υς), προδεικνύει (for -υσι), δεικνύουσι (for -ύασι), ἐδείκνυε (for -υ). **(e) -αται, -ατο** appear in the 3rd p. pl. of optatives, perfects and pluperfects (ἀνελόιστο, ἀπρίκαται, διεφάραστο), and in the present and imperfects of some verbs in -μι: regularly in δύναμαι, ἐπίσταμαι, ἵσταται (δυνάεσται, ἡπιστάεσται); less certainly also τιθέσται, ἐπιθέατο.⁸¹ -αται etc. arose as a treatment of -νται after a consonant, and was then extended to other contexts. **(f) Contract verbs.** (i) Verbs in -έω are usually uncontracted, but note δέῃ, ἔδει. (ii) -ε- sometimes replaces -α- in -αω verbs: τολμέω, ὀρέων (part.), ὀρέοσι (subj.), beside expected 2nd and 3rd p. sg. ὀράς and ὀραῖ (contracted forms are also frequent: ὀρώ etc.). **(g) -μι verbs,** in the 2nd and 3rd p. sg. and 3rd p. pl. of the present, have forms which show the influence of contract verbs: thus τήθημι, but τιθεῖς (Att. τήθης), τιθεῖ (Att. τήθησι), τιθεῖσι (as -εω verbs); δίδωμι, δίδοις, δίδοι, διδοῦσι (as -οω verbs); ἵστημι, ἱστάς, ἱστάι, ἱστάσι (as -αω verbs). **(h) Other forms.** (i) οἶδαμην and οἶδασι beside ἴδμεν, ἴσασι. (ii) εἶπα, εἶπας (part.) beside εἶπον, εἶπων. (iii) λάμψομαι, ἐλάμψην etc. from λαμβάνω. (iv) εἶς, εἰμέν are used for εἴ, ἐσμέν (cf. εἰμί < *ἐσμή); ἔωσι, ἔών, ἔουσα for ὄωσι etc.; opt. εἴησαν is used beside εἴην. (v) The frequentative suffix -σκον with the present or aorist stem: ἄγεσκον, λάβεσκον.

Brief guide to the language of Herodotus

(In this brief guide, Attic equivalents are given in brackets.)

Vowels and consonants

η for α: προθυμή (προθυμία).

Uncontracted forms: νόος (νοῦς), γένεος (γένους), γένει (γένει), πλήρες (πλήρης), προσπλέειν (προσπλεῖν), ἐπεβοήθειν (ἐπεβοηθῆουν), ἐπιθεε (ἐπιθεῖ).

ει for ε: κενός (κενός, 'empty'), ξείνος (ξένος), εἵνεκα/-εν (ἔνεκα).

ου for ου: ποιεύσι (ποιούσι), ποιεύντες (ποιούντες).

ου for ο: οὔρος (ὄρος), μούνος (μόνος), νοῦσος (νόσος), οὔνομα (ὄνομα).

κ for π: κός (πός), ὁκότε (ὀπότε), κότερος (πότερος).

γίνομαι (γίγνομαι), γινώσκω (γινώσχω).

Nouns, adjectives and pronouns

Gen. sg. masc. -εω (ου): Ξέρξεω (Ξέρξου).

Gen. pl. -εων (-ων): μοιρέων (μοιρών).

Dat. pl. -ηισι (-οις): ημέρηισι (ἡμέραις), λόγοισι (λόγοις).

Words like πόλις keep their iota: πόλιος (πόλεως), πόλι (πόλει).

ἔμιο (ἐμοῦ), σέο (σοῦ).

⁸¹ Where the verb stem has a long vowel, that is shortened: ὀρέμ-αται 'they have set out' (cf. ὄρη-σα etc.).

ὅστις: ὅτεν (οὔτινος, ὅτου), ὅτεω (ῶτινι, ὅτω), ὅτεων (ῶντινων ὅτων), ὁτέοισι (οἶοισι, ὅτοις).

Verbs

Arguments are sometimes missing: ἀμειβόμεν (ἡμειβόμεν), αἶνεσα (ῆνεσα).

-μι verbs sometimes conjugate like contract verbs: τήθημι but τιθεῖς (τήθης), τιθεῖ (τήθησι), τιθεῖσι (τιθέασι); δίδωμι but διδοῖς (δίδως), διδοῖ (διδώσι), διδοῦσι (διδόασι).

In εἰμί an initial epsilon is often preserved: ἔωσι (ῶσι), ἔών (ῶν), ἔουσα (οὔσα). Note also εἰς (εἴ), εἰμέν (ἔσμέν).

-αται, -ατο for -νται -ντο: ἀπρίκαται (ἀφρίκονται), ἀνελόιστο (ἀνέλοινοτο).

Various

ῶν (οὔν); ἴθεος (εὐθύς); ἐνθαῦτα (ἐνταῦθα); ἐκωπτόν (ἐκωπτόν); μιν = αὐτόν, αὐτήν; σφέας often = αὐτούς; δέκομαι (δέχομαι); οἶδαμεν (ἴδμεν), οἶδασι (ἴσασι); εἶπα (εἶπον), εἶπας (εἶπών).

8 LIFE OF HERODOTUS (BY S. R. WEST)⁸²

Herodotus tells us, in his opening sentence, that he came from Halicarnassus, modern Bodrum on the Aegean coast of Turkey, but he gives no further explicit information about himself, notwithstanding the pervasive sense of authorial presence conveyed by his references to his own opinions and observations. Extensive travels are indicated by his claims to have visited Elephantine in Upper Egypt (2.29.1), the North Pontic region (4.81.2), Metapontum in South Italy (4.15), Tyre (2.44) and Palestine (2.106.1); perhaps we should extend his range even further east, since he writes of Babylon in a manner strongly suggesting that he had been there (1.183.3; 193.4). He presents himself as one who, like Odysseus, has seen the cities of many men and come to know their minds, though we must remember that he could have talked to (e.g.) Colchians and Cyrenians without going to Colchis or Cyrene and that his references to local traditions need not imply that he had visited the places concerned. His appeals to his own observation are intended to validate what he reports, and cannot be treated as reference points for reconstructing his biography and intellectual development. Thus, while he mentions visits to Thasos (2.44), Dodona (2.55), Zacynthus (4.195), Thebes (5.59) and Thessaly (7.129), he simply leaves us to infer that he must have spent time in such important sources of his material as Delphi, Samos, and, above all, Athens. But, while there is room for debate as to whether he owed to first-hand observation and enquiry quite as much as he would have us believe (particularly since he appears to have spoken no language other than Greek),⁸³ his self-presentation has been enormously influential

⁸² Any discussion of Herodotus' life must owe a very substantial debt to Jacoby's magisterial treatment, 1913: 205–80. Among more recent accounts I have profited particularly from that of Asheri 1988: ix–xvii.

⁸³ For the sceptics' case see Armayor 1978 and 1980; Fehling 1989; against this trend see Kendrick Pritchett 1993. These discussions represent the extremes; but it should be emphasised