NARRATIVE SURFACE AND AUTHORIAL VOICE IN HERODOTUS' *HISTORIES*

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It is a *topos* nowadays that an author does not just construct his text but also encodes into it a narrative contract: he writes into the text the rules by which his audience is to read it, how we are to understand his performance as author and our own responsibilities and legitimate pleasures as readers.[1] Judged by the standards of later historical prose, the narrative contract that Herodotus establishes between himself, the author, and ourselves, his readers, is a peculiar one. Its rules are very odd indeed. Here I would like to explore two aspects of those rules: the construction of the narrative surface and of the authorial "I" within it. Both these aspects of Herodotus' rhetoric have generally been evaluated against the standard practices of history writing. But if we look at Herodotus' narrative surface and authorial voice on their own terms, the contract they suggest is not (at least in some essentials) a historical one. The Herodotus I would like to propose here is a heroic warrior. Like Menelaus on the sands of Egypt, he struggles with a fearsome beast — and wins. The antagonist that Herodotus struggles with is, like many mythic beasts, a polymorphously fearsome oddity; it consists of the logos, or collection of logoi, that comprise the narrative of the *Histories*. What Herodotus, like Menelaus, wants from his contest is accurate information. The *Histories* Herodotus has given us are the record of his heroic encounter: his exploits in capturing the logoi and his struggles to pin them down and make them speak to him the truths that they contain.[2]

[1] For a historical survey of reader-response criticism from antiquity to the present, see Tompkins 1980a. See Hartog 1980.19 for another description of the "contrat qui lie le narrateur au destinataire."

[2] Erbse 1956.211 observes that the phrase *historiēs apodexis* (*Histories* 1.1) implicitly compares Herodotus' accomplishments as a writer to the famous exploits about which he writes.

The most obvious difference between Herodotus' rhetoric and that of later history writing lies in the way that Herodotus writes the ongoing narrative account, the *res gestae* of the *Histories*. What becomes the standard for conventional historical narrative already appears in the work of Thucydides, writing perhaps twenty years after Herodotus. Thucydides' narrative style is often called transparent. This does not mean that the narrative has not been artfully shaped. But in Thucydides the shaping occurs in the narrative itself: the choice of nouns and verbs, the selection of significant narrative detail, the arrangement of the narrative sequence and the narrated thoughts and words of the participants in events. In Thucydides' narrative and most historical narrative after him, one event appears to lead logically to the next; as the narrative unrolls, its inner logic also becomes clear to the attentive reader.[3] And because Thucydides' narrative appears to generate its own shape and its own rules for how we are to read it as it goes along, it seems not only to describe *res gestae* but directly and in that sense truthfully to represent them.[4]

Herodotus' narrative works on quite different principles; it does not have the same organic, mimetic quality. It appears man-made rather than natural; perhaps we could term it "rhapsodic," that is, stitched together, uneven, a construction that gives every sign of having been laboriously assembled. For it is composed of a long chain of narrative units that follow each other like beads on a string, extraordinarily different both in form and in content from one another.[5] Herodotus incorporates into his narrative the accounts of political decision making and battles that form the bulk of later history writ-

[3] For this aspect of Thucydides' style see de Romilly 1967.21-106. Connor 1984.6-19 devotes some provocative and helpful pages to an analysis of Thucydidean "objectivity" from the standpoint of reader-response criticism. More generally, see Barthes 1981.11 and n. 7 below. Genette 1976.9, quoting Benveniste, categorizes prose of this type as narrative and opposes it to discourse: "(t)he events are chronologically recorded as they appear on the horizon of the story. Here no one speaks. The events seem to tell themselves."

[4] For the philosophical issues involved, see Atkinson 1978.128-139, Mink 1978.141-149, Ricoeur 1984.121-174 and the useful survey by White 1984.

[5] The most complete description of Herodotus' narrative procedures remains that of Immerwahr 1966, esp. 67-72 and 79-147. Herodotus' own terminology is imprecise. He refers to the *Histories* as both a singular logos and plural logoi (1.5.3, 4.30.1, 7.171.1; 1.140.3, 2.38.2, 5.36.4, 7.213.3). But I do not believe with Immerwahr 14 that Herodotus means by logos only the argument or contents of the account.

ing; but he includes as well atemporal descriptions of exotic peoples, places, and things, novelistic vignettes like the story of Solon and Croesus in book 1, and even folk tales. As readers, we are rarely permitted to sink into a direct and unmediated experience of the narrative for very long; the narrative itself keeps breaking and reforming into different pieces that need to be read in different ways.

This rhapsodic or stitched-together quality in Herodotus' narrative has its advantages; for one thing, it gives the *Histories* much of their peculiar thematic resonance and richness. Foreground and background appear in continuous redefinition, as one moves from one account, and one type of account, to the next. But it is a thematic richness achieved at some cost to the reading contract that is our focus here. We can analyze Herodotus' narrative techniques, producing studies full of scholarly patterns and diagrams that clarify his artistic purposes. Such studies, however, do not remove the fact that Herodotus remains a difficult author to read. For as the narrative of the *Histories* breaks, reforms, and breaks again, we do not experience the narrative as an unmediated mimetic event in which we participate as readers; the material does not establish its own internal connections. We read it rather as the achievement of an author acting as a master raconteur, subduing difficult and diverse narrative material to his will. Because the material itself is so diverse and the transitions between one segment and the next so patent, we must look to the author, Herodotus himself, to guide us along the *logōn hodos*, the "route of the logoi."[6] We are certainly not allowed the illusion that it exists independent of his efforts, or that we can traverse it by ourselves unaided.

This brings us to the second and equally striking difference between the contract that Herodotus establishes with his readers and that of later historical prose: the role of the authorial "I" within the third-person narrative.[7] Again Thucydides demonstrates the procedure that later becomes standard. Thucydides almost never interrupts the narrative to comment *in propria persona* on the contents of

[6] Herodotus uses this metaphor, distinguishing a true *hodos* from false alternatives, in 1.95.1, 1.117.2, 2.20.1.

[7] Barthes 1981.7-12 uses Jakobson's terminology to analyze the phenomenon of "organizing shifters" in history writing. Other more general discussions of this aspect of narrative include Booth 1961.74 and 151, Benveniste 1966.251-266, Scholes and Kellogg 1966.242-247, and Chatman 1978.196-262.

the narrative or his own procedures as a historian.[8] When he does so, it is further to reinforce the authority of the third-person narrative. He reassures us that he, Thucydides, is serious in his pursuit of *akribeia*, accuracy, and that what we are reading in the narrative has been carefully researched and recorded. Such interjections represent an additional guarantee that the third-person narrative tells *hōs eprachthē*, "what really happened."[9]

Again Herodotus' procedures are very different. Hundreds of times he interrupts to supplement his own text with first-person authorial opinions.[10] The pervasiveness of the authorial "I" makes our task as readers of the *Histories* more difficult; it reinforces the uneasiness and uncertainties we already experience in the discursive parataxis and variety of the narrative content. For each authorial interruption again reminds us that Herodotus' narrative is not an unmediated transcription of *res gestae* but a set of authorial choices. To extend the metaphor used above for Thucydides' narrative style: if Thucydides' narrative surface is perfectly transparent glass through which one is encouraged to imagine one is directly perceiving the *res gestae* narrated, Herodotus' authorial interruptions resemble rather those little decals — flowers, rainbows and whatnot — scattered by the cautious on the surface of the glass. They are designed to make us remember that the narrative surface is itself an artifact; like glass it connects but also inevitably separates us from what we would see through it.[11]

It is not just the fact of extensive authorial interruption that makes Herodotus' narrative contract so difficult to understand if we attempt to read his rhetoric as a historical one. The quality of the interruptions is also peculiar. Consider the following sentences:

[8] Thucydides 1.1-23, 2.47 ff., 2.65, 3.82 f., 5.26, 8.97. See Luschnat 1971.1242.

[9] See Lucian *Hist. Conscr.* 39: *Tou dē suggrapheōs ergon hen — hōs eprachthē eipein.* The principles formulated by Thucydides (1.22.2-3) became the standard (not always followed in practice) for history writing in later antiquity.

[10] 1087 individual authorial expressions are catalogued in this study. Many of these, however, occur within a line or two of each other, so that the number of perceptible interruptions is much smaller.

[11] Hartog 1980.300 sees the extensive use of the first person as part of a rhetoric of authority and control ("le narrateur principal qui intervient en disposant des marques d'énonciation"). I argue that we should begin with the simpler observation, that extensive first-person interjection rather deprives us of the unquestioned authority of the third-person narrative essential to narrative history writing. See n. 4 above.

> As for what is said by the Egyptians, let the person who finds such things credible use them. But for me throughout the whole logos it is the case that I write what is said as I have heard it from each speaker. (2.123.1)
>
> These two causes then are said to have occurred for the death of Polycrates, but it is possible to be convinced by whichever of them one wants. (3.122.1)
>
> Saying this they do not persuade me, but they say it nonetheless and saying it they even swear to its truth. (4.105.2)
>
> And I have to say what is said, but I do not at all have to believe it, and let this declaration on my account hold good for the whole logos. (7.152.3)

More than forty times Herodotus interrupts the ongoing narrative to make comments like these which expressly call into question the truth of the version of events he records. But what kind of historian expressly rejects his own data, without going on to put something better in its place? What kind of historian warns us that much of what we read in his history is simply untrue?

The response of Herodotus' ancient readers to such questions was blunt. They assumed that Herodotus chose to write the way he did and for this choice they admired him as a stylist but not as an historian.[12] He was charged with cynical indifference to the truth and even lying, writing at the least *epi to prosagōgoteron tēi akroasei ē alēthesteron.*[13] In Plutarch's darker version of the charge, Herodotus deliberately presented himself in his text as a charming, somewhat irresponsible authorial persona so that under the appearance of naive and open good humor he might with impunity slander all the great heroes of the Persian Wars. Plutarch waspishly observed: "It seems to me that, just like Hippocleides doing his headstand upon the table, Herodotus would dance away the truth and say, 'Herodotus doesn't care.'"[14]

[12] Evans 1968.15. See also Jacoby 1913.504-514, Schmid-Stählin 1934.665-670, Momigliano 1966.

[13] Thucydides 1.21.1. In the immediately preceding section he has criticized details found in Herodotus' *Histories* for their inaccuracy (9.53.2, 6.57.5).

[14] Plutarch *Moralia* 867 B ("On the Malice of Herodotus"). Plutarch's larger aim seems to have been to discredit Herodotus as historical evidence for Theban medizing

As modern readers, we no longer explain the peculiarities of Herodotus' historical rhetoric in moral terms. Our modes of explanation tend to be historical, and we tend to explain, or explain away, the abnormalities of Herodotus' historical rhetoric, including the apparent irresponsibility of the authorial persona, as a consequence of Herodotus' own position in literary history. The father of history was not necessarily himself a historian. We assume that, like many inventors, Herodotus did not fully understand the value of what he had invented. It was left to his successor, Thucydides, to develop a real historical rhetoric, complete with narrative hypotaxis and the reserved, authoritative authorial persona that we are accustomed to expect in narrative history writing.

This explanation too comes in a harsher and a more reasonable version. In terms of the Periclean generation of which chronologically Herodotus was a part, early twentieth-century scholarship often depicted him as a sport, a pious anachronism completely removed from the more speculative and critical currents of his time.[15] This is no longer a popular position. We now recognize that as a thinker Herodotus is a member of the generation of Sophocles and Protagoras.[16] But our enhanced respect for Herodotus as a critical thinker and researcher poses in a more acute form still the problem of his rhetoric, in particular his use of the authorial persona. For if Herodotus is not merely a superlatively gifted storyteller, but a critical and argumentative thinker who really cares about *ta genomena ex anthrōpōn*, why does he present us with such a paratactic and poikilic narrative? Why does he interject himself so abundantly and contentiously within it, reminding us repeatedly that what we are reading is not "wie es eigentlich gewesen," but something a good deal odder and less trustworthy?

(864 D-865 F, 866 D-867 B). As Legrand 1932a.535 points out, "l'entreprise n'est pas toujours conduite de façon très adroite." Plutarch's reading is useful, however, as an index of the difficulties ancient readers had reading Herodotus, raised as they were on a very different set of rhetorical canons from Herodotus' own.

[15] See Dodds 1951.50 n. 1 for a brief bibliography of Herodotus as a late archaic thinker. Erbse 1981.252 quotes Droysen effectively to illustrate the general attitude.

[16] See Dihle 1962 for parallels between Herodotus and sophistic thinkers. More generally, see the recent studies of Hunter 1982 and Hartog 1980. There is still substantial controversy about Herodotus' *bona fides* as a historian; see Verdin 1975.

If the rhetoric of Herodotus is a peculiar one, it is useful to begin by looking at it as a part of the narrative contract, on the assumption that Herodotus wrote as he did to help us, his readers, approach the text correctly. In the remainder of this essay, I would like to set out an overview of the authorial first person in Herodotus' *Histories*. The persona that emerges from such a survey has gone to the trouble of collecting, testing, and recording logoi — but he does not want us, his readers, to forget the difficulties of his task. Hence he has not tried, as historians after him were to do, to make the narrative surface of the *Histories* a smooth one, or to use his own voice as author to confirm the authority of the third-person narrative. He has rather presented the "I" of the authorial persona as an alternate voice, one that goes to some lengths to distinguish itself from the logoi it recounts. For Herodotus, the way to achieve *akribeia* (though he might have said *atrekeiē* instead) is carefully to preserve the distinction between his own voice, as an investigator, and the voice of the logoi he investigates; Herodotus has emphasized the alternation between the two voices in order to render our reading effortful in certain ways.[17] To revert to the metaphor with which this essay began, the *Histories* Herodotus has given us are both the record and the heroic reenactment of his encounters with the logoi. That is, the *Histories* contain the logoi Herodotus has captured, but, as importantly, they also show us Herodotus' own exploits in pinning them down.

Here we shall provisionally call the authorial persona of the *Histories* the *histōr*, to distinguish him from Herodotus himself.[18] The real Herodotus shares many of the same characteristics, but he also has many thoughts and feelings not revealed by the first-person authorial interjections. The comments of the *histōr* reveal the kind of authority Herodotus wants us to see him exercising in the text. They suggest how he wishes us to understand his authorial role.

[17] Professor Szegedy-Maszak's comment reveals an ambiguity in this sentence as it stands. I do not mean that Herodotus willfully complicates our reading of his text, but only that he wishes to make clear to us the difficulties that he sees inherent in it.

[18] The *nomen agentis* is most frequently found in archaic literature: Homer, *Iliad* 18.501, 23.486; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 792; *Homeric Hymns* 32.2; Heraclitus, fr.35 DK. But it is also found in fifth-century tragedy (Euripides *IT* 1431, Sophocles *El.* 850) and occurs as a compound in Thucydides 2.74.2. For discussion of the meaning of *histōr, historiē, historeō*, see Snell 1924.59-71, Muller 1926.234-237, Press 1982.23-34. See Jacoby 1913.396 for the use of *historiē* by Herodotus.

The *histōr* enters the *Histories* in four distinct but related postures: first, as an onlooker, a presence who assumes no responsibility for the narrative but responds to it passively, almost as a reader would; second, as an investigator, telling about his eyewitness explorations; third, as a critic, evaluating the likelihood of some phenomenon he recounts; and fourth, as a writer, busy putting into narrative order the material before us.[19] Let us go through these postures briefly in turn to see the picture of the *histōr* and his struggles that emerges, and the nature of the narrative contract that this picture suggests.

1. The onlooker

> To Themistocles alone of all men of whom we know the Spartans gave a procession. (8.124.3)
>
> And still even in my time many of the barbarians write on such skins. (5.58.3)
>
> And then what is the greatest wonder to me is said by the Thebans to have happened, when Mys of Europus on his travels to the oracles came also to the sanctuary of Ptoan Apollo. (8.135.1)
>
> This now is how they outfit their bodies, and these are the nomoi they have established: the wisest of them in our opinion is this, which I hear the Enetai of Illyria also use. (1.195.2)

The simplest mode in which the *histōr* presents himself is that of the zero-grade observer. It is one of the most frequent — it occurs

[19] Barthes 1981 organizes his taxonomy of authorial "shifters" differently: 1) shifters of listening, 2) utterer organizes his own discourse, 3) utterer is given psychological plenitude. His categories are designed to describe the usages of Herodotus but also of Machiavelli, Bossuet, and Michelet. The categories developed in this essay were arrived at inductively, from examination of 1086 Herodotean phrases. They are designed to reflect basic differences in the way the Herodotean "I" confronts the narrative: as an onlooker (331 times), as an eyewitness investigator (34 times), as a critic (502 times), and as a writer (219 times). Verdin 1971, D. Müller 1981, and in this volume Marincola use much of the same material to evaluate in detail Herodotus' heuristic as a historian.

over 300 times — and is one of the most subtle in its effects. In this group the "I" of the *histōr* indicates no assumption of control or authority over the narrative. He acts instead as an interested bystander, responding like his readers to the ongoing flow of events. Comments like "in my time" or "of all the men we know about" hardly break the third-person narrative surface at all. They occur so frequently and are so brief that they do little more than remind us of the *histōr*'s presence at our side.[20] In comments of wonder or praise and blame, the content of the authorial intervention is more substantial but the rhetorical effect is similar. The *histōr* depicts himself as a member of the audience, reacting freely to what the logos recounts — gaping, recoiling, or approving of various individual elements in it.[21]

The *histōr*'s comments as a bystander are not as obvious and disruptive an interruption of the third-person narrative as others we shall consider. And yet their cumulative effect is considerable. They lend a tone of intimacy to the author-reader contract, placing the *histōr* and ourselves on one side of an invisible divide, and the third-person narrative on the other.[22] The *histōr* seems to join us in the audience and respond as we might to what unfolds before our eyes. In these comments he does not present himself as an authoritative tour guide to the *logōn hodos* but as a detached and carefree observer like ourselves.

2. The eyewitness investigator

> From nobody else could I find anything out, but this much else I further found, going as an eyewitness up to the city of Elephantine, and from there investigating by hearsay. (2.29.1)

[20] Other aspects of these expressions are important for understanding Herodotus' concept of time and his use of the *prōtos heuretēs*. See Kleingünther 1933, van Groningen 1953.33-34, Thraede 1962, Shimron 1973.

[21] Wonder is often a part of a larger complex response on the part of the *histōr*. In its purest form, it signifies simple admiration or amazement on Herodotus' part (1.194), but it is frequently found attached to comments of eyewitness investigation or criticism. See Jacoby 1913.331-332, Barth 1968, Hartog 1980.243-249 and below, "the eyewitness investigator."

[22] Herodotus occasionally uses the second person singular (2.29.5) and other first person plural expressions (4.16.2) to involve the reader in the discourse. For the rhetorical effect, see "Longinus" 26.2 and Hartog 1980.298 and 370-372. Immerwahr 1966.7 comments on the "fiction" of an oral delivery that the *Histories* maintain.

> And the priests said to me, when I investigated, that the business concerning Helen had happened this way. (2. 113.1)

> And I myself saw these mines, and the most remarkable of all by far were those the Phoenicians opened, the ones who with Thasos founded the island, which now from this Thasos the Phoenician holds its name. (6.47.1)

We generally take the *histōr*'s second posture more seriously, even though it occurs in a much smaller number of examples. Thirty-four times the *histōr* intrudes into the narrative by stating that he has interviewed someone or has seen something with his own eyes.

Comments of eyewitness interview and *opsis* are among the most frequently cited passages in the *Histories*, since they are by modern students felt to reveal Herodotus' heuristic as a historian.[23] In part this is correct. For superficially they are accompanied by a rhetoric of reassurance and confirmation quite different from the spontaneous ease of the onlooker: the *histōr* cites authorities and evidence apparently designed to make us trust as veridical the material he presents. This is indeed a historian's procedure, and we feel more comfortable with it than we do with many of the *histōr*'s first-person interventions into the text. This aspect of the *histōr*'s presence, and some of his interventions as a critic as well, can be rationalized as ancient equivalents of the modern-day footnote: the author's sotto voce assurances that what the third-person text presents is seriously researched and dependable evidence.

What the *histōr* actually says, however, when he presents evidence he has collected from interview and *opsis* is often problematic material that opens difficulties rather than resolving them. Let us turn to the interview first. The *histōr* sometimes interviews named figures of some regional authority: priests at Memphis, Thebes, Heliopolis; priests at Tyre and priestesses at Dodona; Archias the Spartan in Pitane

[23] See Macan 1895.lxxxi-lxxxii; How and Wells 1928.I.16-20, Jacoby 1913.247-276 and 395-400, Verdin 1971.114, n.4, Hartog 1980.272-279 and Müller 1981.303-306. In the earlier scholarship, *opsis* and interview are considered largely for what they reveal of the order of Herodotus' travels and of his development as a historian. *Autopsia* is often assumed by scholars in contexts where it is not explicitly stated; see Podlecki 1971.260-263.

and, at unidentified locations, Tymnes the agent of the Scythian king and Thersandrus, a noble Orchomenan.[24] More often his interlocutors are anonymous inhabitants, authoritative only in that they know the local stories. What interviews with such figures add to the text is often argument rather than simple authoritative information. In 2.91 the city of Chemmis in the province of Thebes is described in the third person until Herodotus wants to introduce the controversial claim of the inhabitants of Chemmis that the hero Perseus was born in their city. To do so, he adduces a first person interview: "and when I asked why Perseus was accustomed to appear to them alone . . . they told me that Perseus' origins were from their city" (2.91.5). Other interviews, almost all in book 2, lead to a comparable questioning of traditional Greek story. The version of Helen's journeys that the *histōr* elicited at Memphis rejects Homer as a trustworthy guide to the past, but cannot replace him with a better authority. We are left, as in the story of Perseus at Chemmis, with an unresolved and probably unresolvable problem about past *genomena ex anthrōpōn*.[25]

In 2.29 and 2.99 the *histōr* implies that sight forms a foundation for knowledge that is more secure than that of other kinds of data. He also uses this criterion negatively: several times he expresses doubt about something told him by stating that he has *not* seen it.[26] He has not seen the island Chemmis float (2.156.2), or the sacred Phoenix

[24] In 3.55.2, 4.76.6 and 9.16.1 Herodotus names his source. Evans 1982.146 n. 18 includes 8.65.6 in this list, where Dicaeus son of Theocydes is cited as a source but Herodotus does not say he interviewed him. See Jacoby 1913.398-399 for Herodotus' epichoric citations.

[25] All but three of the comments of eyewitness interview occur in book 2. Thus the argumentative tone I have described is much stronger here than elsewhere in the *Histories*. Fornara 1971.18-23 sketches a difference in persona between the authorial voice of book 2 and books 7-9: in book 2 the tone is "clever, paradoxical, combative," while in the later books, "(h)istory became moral and Herodotus didactic." I am unwilling to make a genetic hypothesis out of these differences, especially since Herodotean readers of the caliber of Jacoby 1913.341-372 and Macan 1895.xcii come to diametrically opposed conclusions. Similar authorial traits exist throughout, though certainly in differing degrees of intensity. The inclusion of book 2 in the *Histories* shows that whenever Herodotus conceived of the work as a whole, he had not renounced the authorial attitudes there displayed. In any case, the possibility of extensive and repeated oral delivery of different parts of the *Histories* complicates any evidence for the order of composition considerably.

[26] Müller 1981.305.

(2.73.1); of the northern sea beyond Europe, he has not even been able to encounter anyone *autoptēs genomenos*, who claims eyewitness status (3.115.2).

Macan has noted that, given the heavy theoretical preference for *opsis*, it is surprising how infrequently Herodotus uses its evidence positively to confirm something reported in the narrative.[27] The *histōr* often mentions that he has seen something when he wishes to assure his readers that something difficult to understand or explain is nonetheless real and requires inclusion in our picture of *ta anthrōpeia*. The evidence of sight is used to confirm that some *thōma*, wonder, does really exist. The *histōr* himself has seen the various buildings around Lake Moeris (2.148 ff.) and the impressive Phoenician mines in Thasos (6.47.1). He reports that he saw the differing hardness of Persian and Egyptian skulls lying on the battlefields of Pelusium and Papremis (3.12.1, 3.12.4); he has also seen the peculiar skeletons said to be the remains of winged snakes in the pass between Arabia and Egypt (2.75.1). Sometimes the *histōr* mentions that he has engaged in further investigation in order to resolve a problem raised by *opsis*. In 2.104.1 it is the surprising similarity in appearance between Egyptians and Colchians that starts the *histōr* off on his investigation of the connections between the two peoples. The sight of Lake Moeris also raises a question that he goes on to answer: he asks where all the dirt has gone that was displaced by the digging of the lake (2.150.2).

Frequently, however, the *histōr* uses a report that he has himself seen something in order to destroy an inadequate set of assumptions and leave nothing in its place. The sight of the broken hands lying next to the female statues in the temple of Sais (2.131.3) causes the *histōr* to reject as a lying story Mycerinus' rape of his daughter. *Opsis* here neither explains whom the statues in fact represented, nor does it suggest a true story about Mycerinus in the place of the version dismissed. The sight of 345 Egyptian statues, reinforced by the priests' account of them, is what leads the *histōr* to reject wholesale a large body of Greek tradition about the past (2.143.2). But once more, *opsis* does not supply knowledge that will take the place of what has been lost. It only clears the ground for more accurate research and reporting in the future.

[27] Macan 1895.lxxxi.

Thus the *histōr*'s stance as an eyewitness investigator is a peculiar one. His experiences often mark the world as a more problematic and puzzling place than it had appeared before. The evidence he uncovers often represents a truth that is difficult to explain and leads to further difficulties of understanding. The most vivid image of this paradox is that of the bowl the *histōr* tells us he saw at Exampaeus, which stands for the size of the Scythian population (4.81). He remarks that he found no one who could give him an accurate idea of the number of Scythians; the bowl itself was the best marker available. It was made, his informants told him, out of the melted arrowheads required of each Scythian by their king. Like the real *thōmata* that the *histōr* claims he has seen in person, the bowl at Exampaeus exists as a pointer to reality. The aspect of reality to which it points, however, cannot be reduced to meaningful logoi. Like the god at Delphi, the *histōr* can point: he can describe the bowl, and he can give a rough estimate of size, but he cannot translate this knowledge into a concrete, communicable reality in words and numbers. Here as in other less extreme passages, the *histōr* uses the interview format and the evidence of *opsis* to testify to the complexity and difficulties of translating something experienced into narrative form. The bowl at Exampaeus indicates the reality of facts, it even attests the necessity for their rigorous investigation — but at the same time it suggests limitations inherent in the investigatory process.

3. The critic

> And it is clear to me that all of the affairs of the barbarians depended on the Persians, if these then fled even before meeting with the enemy, because they saw the Persians fleeing. (9.68)

> Now this charge was a pretext, but the army was sent, as it seems to me, for the conquest of Libya. (4.167.3)

> Now if there was also some dispute with him while they were still at the Hellespont, I can't say, nor can I say if she did these things from premeditation or if the ship of the Calyndians happened to meet her by chance. (8.87.3)

> These things the Lacedaemonians alone of the Greeks say, but I record what follows according to what is said by the Greeks, that these kings of the Dorians right back to Perseus son of Danaus, leaving out the god, are correctly declared and demonstrated to be Greeks. (6.53.1)

> And these same Chaldaeans say, speaking things unbelievable to me, that the god himself visits the temple and sleeps on the couch. . . . (1.182.1)

As an onlooker, the *histōr* responds as a man-in-the-street to the phenomena narrated. As an interviewer he emphasizes the complexity of the material he has encountered in eyewitness investigation. In the third mode of first-person intervention into the narrative, the "I" of the *histōr* considers the quality of the data that the narrative contains. Here again we find comments that have often been studied as part of Herodotus' heuristic as a historian, since they reveal to us Herodotus' critical judgment, his ability to select and defend data. But again it is on closer investigation only partially a rhetoric of assurance, authority, and control. The *histōr* goes to considerable efforts to describe the limitations of the data he has collected and the efforts he had had to make evaluating them.

The *histōr* makes about 500 critical comments about his data in the course of the *Histories*. Fifty-eight times the judgment is a positive one, that he knows something; another nineteen times he declares something to be so. The *touton de oida* of 1.5 formally delineates the *spatium historicum*, the period of the past that the *histōr* declares he wants to investigate and retell.[28] The formal weight of the *oida* in 1.5 is not echoed elsewhere in the *Histories*, however. The most frequent first-person use of *oida* is not a critical comment at all. It occurs in the idiom *tōn hēmeis idmen*, where the *histōr* as an observer sums up general Greek categories of knowledge.[29]

Most other statements of knowledge or certitude concern a specific and often rather trivial detail — a piece of supporting information in a larger, complex problem that the *histōr* does not guarantee in toto. It can be a matter of correct terminology — the lake "rightly called" mother of the Hypanis (4.52.2) or the expedition rightly at-

[28] Schadewaldt 1934.161 and van Leyden 1949-50.94-95.

[29] See note 20 above.

tributed to the reign of Codrus (5.76). Sometimes the knowledge that the *histōr* claims to have contradicts something reported in a logos. Thus he knows *(oida)* that a prophecy is not about the Persians, as the logos asserts, but about the Illyrians (9.43.1); he has heard *(ēkousa)* that many people buried Mardonius' body and he knows *(oida)* they were given gifts by Mardonius' son (9.84). Sometimes his statement of knowledge is a guarantee to the reader that he has investigated one aspect of a longer and more complex story, as when he adds to the bizarre logos about Aristeas (about which he does not claim knowledge) that he knows *(oida)* what happened in Metapontium in Italy 240 years after Aristeas' disappearance (4.15.1).

Much more common than expressions of certainty are various forms of opinion, ranging from qualified belief to outright disbelief. Ninety-five times the *histōr* uses *dokeein* to convey a general acceptance of something recounted,[30] and another sixty-two times he uses similar expressions: *hōs eikasai* (1.34.1), *hōs emoi kataphainetai einai* (1.58), *heuroi tis an logizomenos* (2.7.2), and the like.[31] Again, as in expressions of certitude, the *histōr* does not generally use such expressions of limited and considered assent to argue the probability of large stretches of narrative. Instead he speculates about and provisionally accepts individual details: a silver bowl at Delphi was probably the work of Theodoros of Samos (1.51.3), Scyllias of Scione probably did not swim to Artemisium, but came by boat instead (8.8.3). Most of the longer discussions of this type occur in books 2 and 4 and concern details of natural history or ethnography. Beyond book 4, the *histōr* speculates about the motive that an individual might have had to do something (7.24, 7.220.2, 8.30.1, 9.71.4), about the correct calculation of numbers (7.184.1, 9.32.2), or about matters of religion or gnomic judgments (7.137.1).

[30] Herodotus uses *dokeō* or *dokeein emoi* forty-one times of a factual detail, twenty-two times in speculating about motive, ten times of an overt value judgment, and eight times of a counterfactual hypothesis (5.58.1, 8.63, 3.38.4, 6.30.1).

[31] Herodotus' vocabulary of argumentation is not technical. *Sumballesthai* occurs in 2.33, 2.112, 7.184, 8.30. In 2.33 the *histōr* uses it to draw an analogy between the Nile and the Ister; in 2.112 he infers that a temple in Memphis is the temple of Helen; in 7.184 he calculates the number of ships in the initial Persian fleet; in 8.30 he speculates about Phocian motives in refusing to medize. See differently Hohti 1977. He argues that all conclusions characterized by *sumballesthai* in Herodotus are based on the combination of two facts that complement each other.

What are the kinds of argumentation he brings to these passages? As those who have studied his heuristic have testified, the *histōr* does prefer serious and accurate sources, sources who have taken the trouble to investigate, and sources who are more likely by nature to be knowledgeable (1.95.1, 2.28.2, 2.54.2, 2.77.1, 2.118.1).[32] But more essential than any of these is his general sense of the probable, *to oikos* (3.38.2, 4.195.4, 6.64, 7.167.1),[33] or what "fits" his own understanding of human behavior, as in the phrase *ho logos haireei*, "the logos fits" (2.33.2, 3.45.3). Most often the *histōr* does not reveal how he came to one qualified conclusion rather than another. He rather assures us that he has tried to fit the available evidence into a pattern that agrees with his informed sense of *to oikos*. Insofar as he can make it do so, the narrative recounted "makes sense," and he notes with particular care those places where he cannot himself supply a reasonable version.

This forms part of larger historiographical issues that cannot be fully developed here. As I have argued elsewhere, we see in the *sophoi* described within the narrative — in particular, in Solon and Hecataeus the Milesian (1.30.2, 5.36.2) — a pronounced capacity to integrate individual items of information into a larger interpretive picture.[34] Herodotus seems concerned to depict the *histōr*, in his critical mode, as someone possessing the same general sense of what fits and what does not in the world of *ta anthrōpeia*. He is not so much interested in our adopting his conclusions as he is in showing us the extent to which the narrative he recounts is a tissue of data that has been critically evaluated.[35]

Space prohibits investigation of other, related expressions of provisional critical judgment. A brief listing of their contents, however, should suffice to show that they largely confirm the picture of the *histōr*'s critical comments already sketched. Sixty-five times the *histōr* declares neither that he believes or disbelieves something, but that he has heard it. Sixty-three times he supplies variant versions of

[32] But Verdin 1971.228 comments that "nowhere does [Herodotus] appear to have linked the genuineness of his evidence directly to its authority."

[33] Müller 1981.307-310.

[34] Dewald 1985.52 and 60-62. See also Camerer 1965.76-79.

[35] A larger sense of pattern and order infuses the *Histories*, but the *histōr* rarely addresses this level of meaning. It rather arises out of the pattern created in the *Histories* as a whole, of which the *histōr*'s persona is only a part. See Schadewaldt 1962, Immerwahr 1966.306-326 and Lachenaud 1978.633-681.

the same event. Ninety-nine times he expresses doubt about something he reports, declaring sometimes that he reports it only because it was reported to him. And finally, we come to the sentences discussed at the beginning of this essay: forty-one times the *histōr* expresses outright disbelief. The argument I have tried to develop here explains these difficult sentences. The *histōr* lays considerable stress upon the partiality and the ambiguities of the record that he can write. Much of his energy as a critic goes into emphasizing the serious limitations of his data. 2.123 and the forty other expressions of outright disbelief do not express the cynical irresponsibility of someone writing to please rather than to instruct, nor are they the crude formulations of an insufficiently sophisticated historian. They rather express the *histōr*'s working experience of the fact that knowledge of the world is difficult to get, and partial and provisional at best.

We have now briefly examined three of the four kinds of intervention made by the authorial persona in Herodotus' text. I have tried to show that although many of them use a rhetoric of authority and control, an underlying pattern suggests quite different basic assumptions shaping Herodotus' portrait of the *histōr*. One posture, that I have here called the zero-grade onlooker, is cheerfully dismissive of any authority at all over what we are reading. The *histōr* rather seats himself at our side, as another member of the audience responding spontaneously to the narrative. As an eyewitness investigator, the *histōr* often complicates our picture of reality, by testifying to the reality of strange things and stranger stories that complicate our picture of *ta genomena ex anthrōpōn*. As a critic, he spends much of his energy qualifying the degree of trust he places, and expects us to place, in various details of the narrative. Taken together, these three postures suggest a *histōr* who is neither facile nor naive but has gone to considerable lengths to distinguish himself from his material and to present himself as its scrutinizer. But despite the consistency of this persona, a series of valid questions about its integrity remain. What kind of responsibility *does* Herodotus acknowledge for what he recounts? What indications does he give us, the readers, that what we are reading is somehow connected to real phenomena, *ta genomena ex anthrōpōn*? Or has Herodotus fashioned a *histōr* who is just another Hippocleides after all, doing rather sophisticated and Gorgianic headstands on the table, *ou phrontis Hērodotōi*?[36]

[36] Plutarch, *Moralia* 867 B. Gorgias argues that nothing exists; even if it does, it is

4. The writer

> This fleet that set sail from Asia has been described, omitting the subsequent service unit and the grain transports and the personnel who manned these. Still to be counted in addition to this whole body already enumerated is the army brought from Europe; it is necessary to give an estimate. (7.184.5 - 185.1)
>
> Concerning the land this logos has set out to speak about, nobody knows exactly what is beyond . . . but as much as we were able to attain precisely by hearsay shall all be told. (4. 16)
>
> Now I do not record for the Greeks what sort of appearance the camel has, because they know it already; but what they do not know about it, this I shall declare. (3.103)
>
> Although many logoi are told about the end of Cyrus' life, this one, the most credible one, has been told by me. (1. 214.5)
>
> And this wealth was substantial, as has been made clear by me in the first of the logoi. (5.36.4)

When we turn to the *histōr*'s fourth stance, as a writer, we meet for the first time a kind of authority rather than the determined articulation of detachment, problems, and limits. 219 times the *histōr* speaks not about the narrative as data but about his own efforts to confront it *as* narrative, that is, as a series of logoi about the world that he has gathered, examined, and is in the process of stitching together into his ongoing account. Many of the *histōr*'s comments about the kind of narrative control he intends to exert are quite straightforward. Eighty-four times he draws attention to the narrative structure of the *Histories*, stating that a given narrative segment is beginning, or ending, or that he will arbitrarily draw a halt to one narrative segment and begin another instead (7.184-5).[37] 135 times he comments on its con-

incomprehensible; even if it is comprehensible, it is not communicable (Gorgias, fr.3 DK).

[37] Immerwahr 1966.52 ff., Beck 1971 and Müller 1980 have studied the use of explicit and formular connectives to demarcate the beginnings and ends of Herodotean nar-

tent: he discusses whether to admit a given logos at all, sometimes adding that it must be said, or that it can be safely bypassed (4.16). The standards that he uses to justify inclusion or exclusion are not complicated. He includes logoi that retell *thōmata*, things that are rare, striking, or unfamiliar to his audience (1.93, 2.155, 3.103). Sometimes he declares that a variant version of a logos must be told because it exists (3.9.2). He can, however, omit the trivial, the offensive, or details concerning *ta theia*, religious matters (3.95.2, 3.125.3, 2.86). He appears to omit out of principle the names of petty flatterers or criminals (1.51.4, 4.43.7), or those who appropriate others' traditions as their own private invention (2.123.3). He mentions the length of the logos (3.60), sometimes adding that the logos itself seeks out what needs telling next (1.95.1). Praeterition allows him to point to alternate routes in the *logōn hodos* (1.95.1b, 1.214.5); cross-referencing allows him to indicate where the narrative course we are on might have doubled around and so come close to touching something passed much earlier on our journey (5.36).[38] As a writer the *histōr* is not just a critical onlooker; he is actively engaged in exerting control over the narrative that we have been reading.

Once more, however, the responsibility claimed is of a very peculiar kind, if we bring to our reading our own, or even Thucydides', ideas of authorship. The *histōr*'s authorial comments often suggest a sense of strain inherent in the process of composition. Sometimes he inserts a cross reference to remind the reader of something mentioned only one or two sentences earlier: in 5.35.3, he comments that the tattoo on the head of Histiaeus' slave "signified revolt, as has already been recounted by me," *hōs kai proteron moi eirētai* — a fact mentioned in the immediately preceding sentence.[39] Sometimes he suggests that the narrative contains a momentum of its own and a tendency to run on unless he checks it, as when he comments suddenly in book 4, "But I am amazed (for indeed from the first this logos of mine sought

rative units. The *histōr*'s explicit comments about the narrative *qua* narrative are only the most prominent of a large number of such connective sentences. Müller 1980.106-107 observes that such sentences are a hallmark of an oral style.

[38] Three cross-references in the *Histories* remain unfulfilled: 1.106, 1.184, 7.213. Powell 1939 collects a large number of implicit cross-references which he uses as keys to the order of the *Histories*' composition.

[39] See Benardete 1969.120 note 35 for other instances of this habit. It does not occur only in passages about Scythians.

out additions) that in all of Elis mules cannot be conceived . . ." (4.30.1). The *histōr* does not present as the product of his own mind the sequence of ideas that associates the natural properties of Scythian cold with the infertility of Elean mares. He presents it rather as a tendency inherent in the logos. His job is alternately to check such agglutinative logoi and to give them their head, to wrest them into a form that will enable the entire *logōn hodos* to proceed.

This sense of strain in the process of composition is allied to a detachment toward the content of the logoi that by now we find familiar. The *histōr* frequently simply points to the existence of a logos that he proceeds to retell. The phrases *logos estin* or *logos legetai* are used twenty times to add supplementary material to a narrative that is already underway (2.75.3, 7.189.1). He often points without much additional comment to the presence of variant versions of a given account. He is interested in untrue logoi and their capacity to inspire belief. The logos of Rhodopis, as he presents it in book 2, is untrue but powerful enough that many Greeks in Egypt believe her to be the builder of a massive pyramid (2.134.1). Malevolent and mythic logoi sometimes receive his attention because he wants to present belief in them as a significant fact — one that can explain subsequent actions undertaken by the individuals who believe the logos. In book 6, a logos of Alcmaeonid medizing during the battle of Marathon testifies to Athenian envy and disunity even at the pitch of military crisis (6.121). In book 7, mythic logoi about Boreas and Thetis complicate both Greek and Persian responses to the sudden summer storm off Cape Sepias (7.189, 191). The *histōr* does not believe the logos about Alcmaeonid medizing; he withholds judgment on the mythic logoi about Thetis and Boreas. What interests him is that both sets exist as real logoi, and *as* logoi they shape the beliefs and actions of others.

Thus as a writer, the *histōr* continues to articulate the detachment that we have also seen him express as an onlooker, an investigator, and a critic. But his procedures as a writer explain the meaning of the detachment. The stance that he chooses to articulate is not so much that of an author as that of a harassed editor of an unruly text. He must cut the logoi short when they want to go on at greater length than he thinks appropriate; he must wrest them into an order that will allow us to follow without too much effort along the path that they make when they are strung together. I am not here trying to argue that Herodotus is in fact only the editor and not the author of the logoi he recounts. From our vantage point, or even Thucydides', Herodotus

is the author of the *Histories*: the language is his, the motifs and selection of significant details reflect his authorial concerns. But this does not seem to be Herodotus' own perception of his function. In his own presentation of his role as a writer, what is continuously expressed is his sense of the logoi as "other," as a series of difficult opponents that he must as much as possible bring into line.

We have seen in his comments as a critic that the *histōr* is indeed interested in the truth content of the logoi. But part of his interest in *ta genomena ex anthrōpōn* is an interest in logoi *as* logoi, that is, as complex objects that might or might not be true, but that are important in any case because they reflect current beliefs and influence action. He investigates logoi of various kinds in a variety of ways, and arranges them into a long narrative sequence so that we may look at them too.

At the outset Herodotus refers to the work that follows as an *apodexis* of his *historiē*. The *Histories* are an *apodexis* in that they contain the results of Herodotus' own investigations. They are also, however, a demonstration of the process of investigation and the variety of wrestling holds Herodotus has used to subdue a difficult opponent to his will. This is why disclaimers like 2.123 are neither naive nor cynical in their warnings to us as readers. They rather represent an extreme version of what we have seen repeatedly in all of the *histōr*'s authorial interventions into the text: he reminds us that we are reading a collection of logoi and not an unproblematic, impartial, or necessarily veridical account of past events. As a *histōr*, he points at the logoi and at the various data they contain in the same way that he points to the bowl at Exampaeus. Like the bowl, the logoi too contain versions of the truth, but Herodotus often suggests that it may be a more complex truth than it appears to be on the surface.

In preserving the record of his struggles with a difficult and problematic medium, Herodotus' *Histories* are a re-enactment of his own modes of dealing with the logoi and an invitation to us, as readers, to wrestle with them too. The narrative contract that Herodotus implicitly establishes with us is not a conventional historical one. It has rather been constructed to thwart any tendency we might have had to fall under the spell of the logoi and to treat them as straightforward and unproblematic versions of past events. I have tried to argue here that both the parataxis of the narrative structure and the critical de-

tachment of the authorial persona are legitimate aspects of Herodotus' narrative contract with us, his readers. Both aspects of the text emphasize the sense of struggle I have tried to describe here.

At the outset I called Herodotus a victorious warrior. I would like to end by suggesting how the narrative structures I have described represent a victory on Herodotus' part. The first and in some ways the most basic point is that the difficult and fragmented narrative structure we have examined here accurately reflects Herodotus' understanding of the reality of the logoi he recounts. This structure enables Herodotus to present the logoi as he thinks they really are; he preserves the integrity of the logoi as objects in the world — complex objects that may or may not be true but are in any case genuine logoi. The literary structure and all its tensions remind us of that.

This format also enables him to explore in the *Histories* an important aspect of the ambiguity and dangerousness of logoi. As we have seen, logoi sometimes falsely claim to tell a true story. But they are treacherous in another way as well. Within the narrative of the *Histories*, logoi are frequently depicted as social acts, spoken for reasons that often remain hidden, in order to gain something for the speaker of the logos.[40] Herodotus first makes this point in the proem: Greeks, Persians, and Phoenicians all tell versions of the Io story designed to reflect well on their own national images. The Persians tell a version in which Phoenicians, not Persians, bear the blame for initiating hostilities between East and West; the Phoenicians tell a version in which the loose morals of a Greek girl were responsible; by implication (though Herodotus does not say it) the Greeks tell a version in which the whole thing is divinely inspired and Io herself a heroine. Herodotus' persistence in detaching the persona of the *histōr* from the substance of his narrative additionally emphasizes the fact that the logoi in the *Histories* have all been told by people with vested interests in one version rather than another. Herodotus goes to considerable pains to show that he has a vested interest in nothing but telling what has been told before him.

[40] See for instance 3.134.1, where the logos Atossa delivers to Darius has a complex past of which the king is not aware, and leads to important international consequences (3.138.4).

In his awareness of the capacity logoi have to change their shapes over time, Herodotus shows himself responsive to two different thought worlds. On the one hand, he pursues his investigations in an oral culture, a very old Greek world in which words were indeed "winged."[41] For oral logoi do change over time to reflect the interests and experience of their most recent speakers. But Herodotus is also aware of the possibilities of changing this state of affairs, by writing logoi down. He declares at the beginning that he wants to save past *genomena ex anthrōpōn* from becoming *exitēla*. The three competing versions of the Io story that follow demonstrate that for this story at least the facts of the case have become *exitēla*, "faded"; all that is left is the name of an Argive princess who went to Egypt and had a child. Herodotus cannot change the fact that people tell logoi for purposes of their own. But by writing down the logoi that constitute the *Histories*, Herodotus has at least put a stop to the further exercise of their Protean powers of self-transformation.

And this brings me to a final respect in which the narrative structures we have examined might be counted a victory for Herodotus. Herodotus has not only investigated the individual logoi and written them down; he has also stitched them together into a huge and unbroken web of logos far too large to be presented to any one audience at any one time. Herodotus presents *sophiē* as something very much connected to the understanding of patterns, larger contexts. What distinguishes gods from mortals in the *Histories* is that gods represent the larger pattern, while mortals are generally driven by their immediate and limited personal concerns.[42] By subduing the logoi and stitching them all together Herodotus allows us, as readers, to become a little bit like gods. For despite the imperfections of the individual logoi, the pattern that they make when stitched together is, Herodotus thinks, a real one. By seeing it as a whole, we too can step outside of our limited perceptions and see the order and meaning inherent in

[41] See Evans 1980 and 1982.142-153 for Herodotus as an oral researcher. See Goody and Watt 1968.31-34 for a description of oral societies as "homeostatic"; genealogies, for instance, "tend to be automatically adjusted to existing social relations as they are passed by word of mouth from one member of the society to another."

[42] Erbse 1981.262 quotes Focke: "Eben sein Götterglaube hat Herodot erst recht eigentlich zum Historiker gemacht, indem er ihn in der Fülle der Geschehnisse bestimmte Sinnzusammenhänge sehen liess." See also note 35 above.

things. And like Herodotus himself we can use our sense of the completed pattern to return to the multiple and beguiling voices of the logoi with a more informed sense of *to oikos* as one of our most powerful handholds against them.

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