

## Chapter 5:

### The Herodotean Dialogue and Reliability Indicators

In the preceding chapters I have argued that source-attributing words are a part of Herodotos' dialogue with his audience through which he provides them with information about his sources, their status and the facts they provide. For example, source-attributing words identify informants who have some claim to be considered authoritative (local people or religious centres), specifically identify different sources when there are conflicting traditions or indicate that a story was derived from oral tradition. By knowing the identity of the informant, the audience has some basis upon which to judge the merits of Herodotos' record of events.

Source-attributing words, however, are only a part of Herodotos' dialogue with the audience. The most frequently occurring form of this dialogue is when Herodotos directly intrudes the separate persona of the *histor* into the narrative.<sup>1</sup> As *histor*, Herodotos steps outside the narrative to advise and instruct the audience about that narrative. In the *Histories*, therefore, there are two ostensibly different viewpoints presented to the audience within the work; the researcher/inquirer, establishing the information within the narrative, and the *histor*, commenting upon the research of the inquirer and the reliability of the facts presented. In the assumed guise of the *histor*, Herodotos seeks to establish the credibility of the *Histories* as the definitive record of events, customs, geography and motivation by

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<sup>1</sup> Dewald, p.150, n.10, notes 1087 individual authorial expressions.

informing the audience where information presented by the inquirer is unbelievable, of doubtful reliability, or absolutely correct. This extra commentary guides the audience's response to the narrative by indicating to them the relative reliability of sections of the narrative. These authorial comments by the *histor* inserted into the narrative I term "reliability indicators".

In the Introduction, the term "reliability indicator" was defined as including any word, phrase or statement by means of which Herodotos as *histor* expresses an authorial opinion about the reliability of particular information. Explicit statements of opinion, such as direct authorial insertions by Herodotos indicating his belief in the accuracy or falsity of information, the claim that he personally saw certain things, such statements as "I know (οἶδα) this is so", or more indirect statements such as "it seems to me these things happened",<sup>2</sup> function as reliability indicators. Reliability indicators can also be negative, such as a statement that certain information is unlikely or inaccurate. Reliability indicators also show the limits of Herodotos' information; for example, when he indicates that he does not know some fact or that he cannot learn something accurately. These explicit commentaries by the *histor* are all overt reliability indicators, guiding the audience's response to the narrative. Some scholars argue that Herodotos also employed covert linguistic distancing devices within the narrative to warn his audience that certain information is doubtful. Covert linguistic devices identified include intrusive infinitives,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> That is, some variation of "δοκέει μοι" or "ὡς μὲν ἐγὼ δοκεῖν".

<sup>3</sup> G.L. Cooper III, 'Intrusive Oblique Infinitives in Herodotus' *TAPhA* 104 (1974), pp.23-76, Lateiner, p.104, n.21 and Lateiner, *Method*, pp.22-23, J.W. Neville, 'Herodotus on the Trojan War' *G&R* 24 (1977), pp.7-10.

indirect speech<sup>4</sup> and source citations.<sup>5</sup> A summary is provided by Lateiner: "*Oratio recta* and *obliqua*, source citations, and various indications of caution constitute Herodotus' most frequently employed techniques of insulating himself from information reported."<sup>6</sup> In this study I have argued that there is evidence that source citations, for example, do not in fact indicate reserve and thus are not covert linguistic distancing devices. The status of the other suggested linguistic devices is, I believe, unclear but they may be a covert form of reliability indicator.<sup>7</sup>

A complete examination of all the reliability indicators in the *Histories* is beyond the scope of this study given their diversity and

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<sup>4</sup> J. Gould, *Herodotus*, London, 1989, p.50. For example, in Greek, ὡς may be prefixed to participles denoting an alleged cause, ground or purpose. By this means the author indicates that what is stated in the participial phrase is the thought or assertion of the subject of the leading verb without implying that it is also the thought of the author (W W Goodwin, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb*, New York, 1912 [repr. 1965], #864). This normal Greek construction however implies nothing about the accuracy of the information recorded. As Goodwin (p.343) notes: "It is a mistake to suppose that ὡς implies that the participle *does not* express the idea of the speaker or writer. It implies *nothing whatever* on this point which is determined (if at all) by the context" (Goodwin's emphasis).

<sup>5</sup> See Introduction, footnotes 11-12.

<sup>6</sup> *Method*, p.34.

<sup>7</sup> The existence of possible covert linguistic distancing devices is an issue I have not covered in this study. If source-attributing words do not denote reserve, as I believe, I have some doubts that the other suggestions are validly based. Any conclusive decision on the issue, however, would require a detailed analysis of all the incidences of the supposed distancing devices, such as this study attempts for source-attributing words. Such an analysis is beyond the scope of this study and so a firm conclusion should be deferred.

frequency.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, a brief identification of the different types of reliability indicators and how they function in the *Histories* will help to place the function of source-attributing words within the context of the broader authorial commentary of Herodotos as *histor*.

### 5.1: Reliability Indicators

Overt reliability indicators are extremely diverse and include the following categories:

- Category (a): direct authorial commentary by Herodotos as *histor* affirming that something is true, or that something is untrue,
- Category (b): statements by the *histor* that "I know" (οἶδα) some fact is reliable or unreliable,
- Category (c): more indirect commentary by the *histor*, such as, "it seems to me" that something is so,
- Category (d): statements which stress the limitations of the available information, and
- Category (e): claims by the *histor* that he personally saw something for himself.

Examples of passages within each of these categories are considered below.

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<sup>8</sup> For a list of passages where Herodotos opposes the view of someone else, see Lateiner, *Method*, pp.104-108. Although Carolyn Dewald has a study in progress, 'The Voice of the *Histor*: Narrator and Narrative in Herodotus' *Histories*' (Lateiner, *Method*, p.236, n.38), which studies anything praised, blamed, compared, wondered at or doubted, I have not seen this work.

Reliability indicators do occur in passages which include source-attributing words. Indeed, in Chapter Two some incidences of reliability indicators provided evidence of Herodotos' beliefs and helped to show that source-attributing words, by themselves, do not imply that Herodotos had reservations about the material he recorded. However, reliability indicators also occur in passages without source-attributing words and to avoid complications the function of reliability indicators can be outlined initially by examining a passage in category (a) where source-attributing words are not present.

A passage where the *histor* asserts that the account recorded in the *Histories* is totally reliable is the so called "Constitutional Debate" (3.80-82). According to the narrative, seven Persian noblemen, including Dareios,<sup>9</sup> conspired to assassinate the Persian king.<sup>10</sup> After carrying out their plot, the conspirators debated which was the best possible constitution for Persia; democracy, oligarchy or monarchy. Herodotos records the debate in dramatic direct speech: Otanes argues that a democracy should be established, stressing the evils of power on one man, Megabyzos argues for oligarchy and Dareios for monarchy.

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<sup>9</sup> In the *Histories* Otanes initiated the plot and was joined by Aspathines and Gobryas. They were later supplemented by Intaphrenes, Megabyzos and Hydarnes while Dareios later came to Susa from Persia; cf. Behistun §35 (Kent, p.124).

<sup>10</sup> Whether victim was the legitimate ruler or a usurper is not relevant here. For the ruler's identity, see M.L. Lang, 'Prexaspes and Usurper Smerdis' *JNES* 51 (1992), pp.201-207, Balcer, pp.101-118, 153-166, E.J. Bickerman & H. Tadmor, 'Darius I, pseudo-Smerdis and the Magi' *Athenaeum* 56 (1978), pp.239, 241, A Demandt, 'Die Ohren des falschen Smerdis' *IrAnt* 9 (1972), pp.94-101, P.T. Brannan, 'Herodotus and History: The Constitutional Debate Preceding Darius' Accession' *Traditio* 19 (1963), p.430, n.9.

This "constitutional debate" has generated a wide range of opinion about its historicity and Herodotos' source for his detailed account. In spite of some contradictory voices, the debate is generally thought to be unhistorical and, if not the creation of Herodotos himself, a Greek version which was current at the time Herodotos was collecting his information. The reasons for this conclusion vary.<sup>11</sup> However, the concept that a Persian noble would advocate a democratic form of government for Persia in 521 BC, before the vocabulary and concept of democracy even had been expressed in Greece,<sup>12</sup> seems to have been given credence by scholars only because Herodotos twice explicitly states that the debate did occur.

At the beginning of the debate, Herodotos as *histor* indicates his emphatic belief in the accuracy of his report. He states that the assassins held a council at which

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<sup>11</sup> For example, it is felt by many that the arguments recorded by Herodotos in direct speech on the various forms of government belong to a political tradition that was not developed until fifth century Greece; See Brannan, *ibid.*, pp.427-428, 433 for a summary of the different views and his conclusion (p.438) that it was substantially historical. For other references see, Lateiner, *Method*, pp.165-167 & n.12 (p.272), and Waters, *Tyrants*, p.93, n.9. The arguments are not dissimilar to those about Herodotos' report of the Council of Xerxes and the Persians on the proposed invasion of Greece (7.8-11) and the subsequent dream of Xerxes (7.12-19): the dramatic composition of the narration is Herodotos' own, Hellenised, creation; see F. Solmsen, 'Two Crucial Decisions in Herodotus' *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen* 37.6 (1974), pp.14-15 & n.37, A. French, 'Topical Influences on Herodotos' Narrative' *Mnemosyne* 25 (1972), pp.24-25, J. Wells, 'The Persian Friends of Herodotos' *Studies in Herodotos*, Freeport, 1923 (1970 repr.), p.99.

<sup>12</sup> V. Ehrenberg, 'Origins of Democracy' *Historia* 1 (1950), pp.524-527.

ἐλέχθησαν λόγοι ἄπιστοι μὲν ἐνίοισι Ἑλλήνων,  
ἐλέχθησαν δ' ὦν. (3.80.1)

words were uttered which seem incredible to some of the Greeks, but they were indeed uttered.

No supporting evidence is provided by Herodotos for this statement although he much later returns to the existence of the debate asserting, "for the wonder of those Greeks who will not believe Otanes to have declared his opinion among the Seven that democracy was best for Persia",<sup>13</sup> that Mardonios deposed Ionian tyrants and set up democracies.<sup>14</sup>

These two statements by the *histor* are reliability indicators: they assert that the narrative is reliable, thus countering criticisms of that narrative. It is possible that Herodotos' authorial commentary, affirming the reliability of his version of events, indicates that there was another account of this debate current among the Greeks before Herodotos wrote the *Histories*<sup>15</sup> and that he was anxious to overturn this other, inaccurate, version. It is also possible that Herodotos added this authorial statement and the evidence of the deeds of Mardonios after this section of the *Histories* became known<sup>16</sup> as an emphatic rejoinder to those in Athens who, like the majority of modern critics, doubted that a Persian in the sixth century would argue in favour of a

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<sup>13</sup> trans. A. D. Godley, *Herodotus*, vol 3, Cambridge, Mass, 1982, p.189.

<sup>14</sup> 6.43.3. How/Wells, vol.2, p.80, outline the weakness in Herodotos' arguments. Mardonios had nothing to do with advocating democracy; the opinion of his father, Gobryas, is not given in the debate. Otanes was the advocate of democracy and in any case there is a great difference between permitting democracy in Ionia and establishing one in Persia.

<sup>15</sup> As Immerwahr, p.101, n.71, believes.

<sup>16</sup> How/Wells, vol 1, p.277.

democratic constitution for oriental Persia. However, Herodotos does not tell the audience why he was so confident that his version was correct, nor does he cite a source for the account.

As the passages considered in Chapter Two illustrate, Herodotos was ready to tell the audience when he believed that some piece of information, which might seem to others to be strange or fantastic, was accurate. This occurred when certain information, although seemingly unbelievable, fulfilled some of the tests of ὄψις, γνῶμη or ἱστορίη. For example, in terms of ἱστορίη, where Herodotos had obtained information from sources who would add credibility to the narrative, Herodotos cites those sources as his informants, especially when information reported by Herodotos is disputed or contradicts other traditions. The fact that Herodotos does not cite a source for his account of the "Constitutional Debate", despite it obviously being disputed or disbelieved by others, indicates that Herodotos did not obtain his information about the debate from a source whose citation as informant would establish the bona fides of his account.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the complete section of the *Histories* from the death of Kambyses to the constitutional debate, including the activities of Otanes' daughter with the earless Magos and the counsels of the conspirators before the murder of Smerdis (3.63-87) are reported by Herodotos without citing a source, with one exception. An analysis of the single source citation in the entire section helps to show why no source is cited by Herodotos for the "Constitutional Debate".

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<sup>17</sup> This should exclude as possible sources such Persians as Zopyros (cf. Wells, *op.cit.*, (n.11), pp.97-100; J.A. Evans, *Herodotus*, Boston, 1982, p.151, Waters, p.77) or the family of Otanes (cf. How/Wells, vol.1, p.397).



Herodotos records (3.84) that after the conspirators decided on monarchy, they agreed to ride out at sunrise and confer kingship upon the person whose horse first neighed. Herodotos (3.85-6) reports two versions of the events which followed. In the first, Dareios' groom Oibares let Dareios' horse serve a mare near where the conspirators would ride. When the conspirator group rode out, Dareios' stallion whinnied when they approached the spot and thus Dareios became king. The second version is the account of the Persians

λέγεται ὑπὸ Περσέων. (3.87)

They say that Oibares merely touched the mare with his hand and later held it under the stallion's nose to achieve the desired result.

Neither story is expressly doubted by Herodotos, nor does he indicate his preferred version. It has been argued in this study that source-attributing words occur in the *Histories* to counter rival accounts and to help establish that his is the definitive record. In this instance there is evidence that a different Greek version did exist in which Dareios was elected by lot.<sup>18</sup> It is to counter this rival version that Herodotos indicates to his audience that one version of events is the account relayed by the Persians; that is, the account of locals which, through ἱστορίη, has a claim to be reliable. In addition, Herodotos also relies upon ὄψις to support his account, citing the evidence of an equestrian statue erected by Dareios with the following inscription:

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<sup>18</sup> Aischylos, *The Persians*, v.779. This reference to lot is accepted as accurate by Drews, p.160, n.53.

Δαρείος ὁ Ὑστάσπεος σὺν τε τοῦ ἵππου τῇ ἀρετῇ (τὸ οὖνομα λέγων) καὶ Οἰβάρεος τοῦ ἵπποκόμου ἐκτήσατο τὴν Περσέων βασιληίην. (3.88.3)

Dareios, son of Hystaspes, aided by the excellence of his horse (here recording the name) and by his groom Oibares, won the kingdom of Persia.

In the case of the action of Dareios' horse, Herodotos had sources he could cite, confident that through ἱστορίη they would enhance the credibility of his version. He also indicated to the audience that his account was supported by ὄψις in the form of the statue and its inscription. Both are cited by Herodotos to establish the authority of his report of events.<sup>19</sup>

In contrast, it appears that Herodotos had little in terms of ὄψις, γνώμη or ἱστορίη with which to persuade his audience that his version of the "Constitutional Debate" was definitive. For example, his source (or sources) was clearly not someone who could be acknowledged as authoritative, thus ἱστορίη would not assist. I believe that Herodotos' response was to adduce the scant evidence he had available through γνώμη, citing the deeds of Mardonios, and to rely on his assertion of the accuracy of the story to establish a superiority. This suggests that such reliability indicators, inserted by the *histor* as an ostensible commentary outside the narrative, may occur when Herodotos needs to assert the superiority of his version but that

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<sup>19</sup> Even if an equestrian statue did exist, the inscription would be unlikely to refer to a ruse whereby Dareios won the throne; S. West, 'Herodotus' Epigraphical Interests' *CQ* 37 (1985), p. 297. The story may be a result of the practice of horse divination observed in Persia until the Sassanian period: O. Murray, 'Herodotus and Oral History' *AchHist II*, p.115, J. Dillery, 'Darius and the Tomb of Nitrocris' *CPh* 87 (1992), p.38.

he lacks other evidence. In this passage, I believe the *histor* is saying "believe me and trust me" to the audience as an alternative to evidence. This is a direct, explicit expression affirming the reliability of a story recorded in the *Histories* and shows that Herodotos is quite capable of providing explicit authorial support for stories which seem to others to be disputed, doubtful or far-fetched.

A more frequent form of commentary by the *histor* is phrases such as:

οἶδα (I know) (category b),

or some variation of category (c), such as

δοκέει μοι (it seems to me),

ὡς ἐγὼ εὐρίσκω (as I discovered; 1.60.3)

or ὡς μὲν ἐγὼ λέγω, (this is what I say; 1.75.3)

to indicate his beliefs. All these phrases are reliability indicators as well as a commentary by the *histor* to the audience about the reliability of the narrative. Through this commentary the audience is guided about how they should view certain information.

Category (b) and (c) statements frequently occur in passages where Herodotos neither indicates a source for the information nor provides any additional evidence. Thus, as was the case of the authorial insertion of belief examined above, their function seems to be to take the place of evidence adduced in terms of ὄψις, γνώμη or ἱστορίη. Again, the effect of these phrases is to say to the audience "trust me, I am telling you that this is reliable". Some examples of category (b) commentary (οἶδα statements) in passages where source-attributing words are absent illustrate this argument.

Examples of οἶδα statements without source-attributing words occur in connection with Herodotos' report of the oracles prior to the Battle of Plataiai. Herodotos records (9.43) that, during the counsels of the Persians before the battle, Mardonios urged that the Persians should offer battle instead of adopting the more cautious advice of Artabazos to withdraw within the walls of Thebes and employ bribery to split the fragile Greek alliance. To support his view, Mardonios argued that an oracle existed which stated that the Persians would come to Greece, plunder the temple at Delphi and be destroyed. Therefore, concluded Mardonios (9.42.2-4), as the Persians knew of this oracle they did not desecrate the temple at Delphi and would be safe.<sup>20</sup> Herodotos, however, states that Mardonios was wrong because he knows (οἶδα, 9.43.1) that this oracle was not given to the Persians at all but to the Enchelees promising them a victory over the Illyrians. Instead, Herodotos quotes in full a prophecy by Bakis.<sup>21</sup> This prophecy, in which great slaughter among the Medes is predicted, Herodotos states does refer to the battle at Plataiai. This prophecy and others like it spoken by Mousaios, Herodotos knows (οἶδα, 9.43.2), did refer to the Persians. No source is cited for these passages and no evidence in terms of ὄψις, γνώμη or ἱστορίη is offered by Herodotos. Instead twice Herodotos as *histor* affirms that the narrative is accurate by means of his οἶδα statements. Both οἶδα statements are reliability indicators whereby the *histor* as commentator stresses the accuracy of Herodotos' report of the oracles. The function of these reliability

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<sup>20</sup> This seems inconsistent with the Persian attack on the temple at Delphi the previous year described by Herodotos (8.37-39).

<sup>21</sup> Probably the prophet from Eleon in Boiotia; Pausanias 4.27.4 & 10.12.11, How/Wells, vol.2, p.240.

indicators is to affirm that information is accurate when other evidence is lacking.

The passage where twice the commentator expresses belief in the narrative of Persian customs (1.131-140) supports this view. At the start of his report of Persian customs Herodotos states

Πέρσας δὲ οἶδα νόμοισι τοιοισίδε χρεωμένους

(1.131.1)

and at the completion of the section he repeats his assertion of accurate knowledge with even greater emphasis

ταῦτα μὲν ἀτρεκέως ἔχω περὶ αὐτῶν εἰδὼς εἰπεῖν.

(1.140.1)

Within these οἶδα statements, the narrative of Persian customs is both diverse and fantastic. For example, Herodotos tells the audience that the Persians do not set up statues, temples or altars to the gods nor pour libations, that the Persians welcome foreign customs, hold lying to be a foul deed, revere rivers and that their names all end in the letter "s". Other than as noted below, Herodotos does not cite a source for his information nor give any reason why he is so confident his information is reliable. Herodotos does cite informants for certain specific pieces of information within the οἶδα statements.<sup>22</sup> In the first incidence, the Persians are cited (φασὶ Πέρσαι, 1.133.2) for information criticising Greek dining customs. Two other source-attributing words occur in a section describing a seemingly unbelievable fact. Herodotos reports that they say (λέγουσι, 1.137.2) that no Persian child has ever killed their mother or father and that, when it

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<sup>22</sup> The λέγουσι at 1.132.3 is not strictly a source-attribution word. The sense in this case is that a report is relayed as Persian custom dictates.

appears this has happened, the killer on investigation was found to be a bastard or a changeling. For, they say (φασί , 1.137.2) that it cannot be true that a child would kill its parent.

These statements would be likely to be treated with scepticism by a Greek audience, familiar with the legends of the House of Atreus. It is therefore precisely at this point that extra authority is needed to show that the report was not the imagination of Herodotos but information found in oral traditions. Yet even in this case informants are not directly identified and while Persians may be implied, they are not directly cited. For this reason the sources for the entire passage are unlikely to be Persian.<sup>23</sup> However, Herodotos wanted to assure his audience that his account of Persian customs was accurate and reliable and as support in terms of ὄψις, γνώμη or ἱστορίη does not seem to be available, the repeated "I know" certifies that information<sup>24</sup> which

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<sup>23</sup> Herodotos often suggests that he has superior knowledge about Persian customs (see, for example, 1.153, 7.54, 7.64.2, 7.114, 8.85, 8.98.2, 9.20 & 9.107.1) and he does cite Persians as sources (1.1-2, 1.5.3, 1.95.1, 1.133.2, 3.1.5, 3.87, 3.105.1-2, 6.54 & 7.12.1). As locals are considered reliable witnesses by Herodotos about their own history and customs, if Persians had been his sources it is likely he would have cited them as informants.

<sup>24</sup> Although in some cases his information is doubtful, in other cases inaccurate. For example, within the two οἶδα statements Herodotos makes his famous misidentification of the female goddess Aphrodite with the Persian male god of light Mitra (1.131.3) and states inaccurately that the Persians do not set up statues, temples or altars but sacrifice in an open space (1.131.1 & 1.132.1); Behistun §14 [Kent, p.120], How/Wells, vol.1, pp.112-113, Waters, pp.101-102, Bickerman & Tadmor, *op.cit.*, (n.10), p.245, J. Cook, *The Persian Empire*, London, 1983, pp.149, 151 and fig. 8, p.152. In addition, Plate 5 is the fire-altar on the tomb of Dareios at Naksh-i-Rustam. I believe that these errors are a case of misinformation and not a deliberate attempt by Herodotos to claim certain knowledge when he was aware he was wrong.

seems strange or fantastic is indeed true. Through οἶδα the *histor* attests to the reliability of his report.<sup>25</sup>

Where reliability indicators such as οἶδα are present in a passage there is little scope to argue that Herodotos does not support the information he records. If source-attributing words are supposed to indicate reserve there is a dilemma; where source-attributing words occur in the same passage as reliability indicators it seems Herodotos attests to the accuracy of information while at the same time implying that it is unreliable. This seems both illogical and unlikely. In contrast, if source-attributing words are not indicators of reserve, as I have argued in this study, the apparent dilemma is resolved.

This view can be illustrated by the passage which concerns the gifts of the Hyperboreans to Delos. Herodotos commences the report of the Hyperborean gifts by noting that the Delians say (λέγουσι, 4.33.1) the Hyperboreans had once sent two maidens bearing offerings wrapped in wheat-straw to Delos. These maidens never returned to the north. As a result, the offerings now are sent by the Hyperboreans from hand to hand through the tribes of Skythia to the Adriatic, south to Dodona, the Melian Gulf and Euboia, from city to city to Karystos, Tenos and finally Delos. Herodotos then, as *histor*, advises the audience that he knows (οἶδα, 4.33.5) of a similar custom where wheat-straw is used for offerings among the Thracians and Paionians. He also knows (οἶδα,

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<sup>25</sup> The other two source-attributing words in the section are at 1.138.1 (φασί twice). Both cite anonymous sources, the first for the Persian view about lying and debt, the second for the view that they believed leprosy is caused by some sin against the sun. Both claims may appear contrary to Greek experience and, similar to the idea of parent murder, need some support to be believed.

4.34.1) that Delian juveniles cut their hair and lay it on the σῆμα of the Hyperborean maidens.

By the time of Herodotos, Hyperboreans were firmly established in Greek thought and literature.<sup>26</sup> It has been suggested that Herodotos has doubts about their existence<sup>27</sup> but this seems unlikely as he stresses the credibility of the account of the journey of the offerings through reliability indicators and source-attributing words. First, the Delians are cited as informants. They have status as local informants and a religious centre and thus rate highly in terms of ἱστορίη. Second, Herodotos adduces two pieces of supporting information, indicating with the repeated reliability indicator οἶδα that the information is within his personal knowledge. Third, ὄψις is implied; the location of the tomb of the Hyperborean maidens is described by Herodotos in enough detail to suggest that he saw it himself in Delos.<sup>28</sup> In this passage, the function of the reliability

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<sup>26</sup> Herodotos (4.32) says that they are mentioned by Homer in a poem called the *Epigoni* and in Hesiod. They also occur in the *Homeric Hymns* 7.28-29, Hekataios (E.D. Phillips, 'The Legend of Aristeas: Fact and Fancy in Early Greek Notions of East Russia, Siberia, and Inner Asia' AA 18 [1955], p.163 & n.18), Pindar, *Pythian* 10.29-30, *Olympian* 3.16, *Isthmian* 6.23.

<sup>27</sup> How/Wells, vol.1, p.314. Herodotos (4.36.1) does scoff at the story of Abaris, said to have been a Hyperborean who carried an arrow around the world while fasting, but this does not show that Herodotos disbelieved in the existence of Hyperboreans. In addition, Herodotos' comment that if there are men above the north wind there must also be men below the south wind (4.36.1) is not a rejection of the existence of Hyperboreans but an attack upon geographers about the River Ocean. (4.36.2). Herodotos obviously is hostile to this tradition for he also attacks it elsewhere (2.23).

<sup>28</sup> That Herodotos was wrong and that the tombs are Minoan (C.T. Seltman, 'The Offerings of the Hyperboreans' CQ 22 (1928), p. 156, T.B.L. Webster, *Greek Art and Literature 700-530 BC*, Dunedin, 1959, p.17, n.14) is not relevant.



indicators, the implied autopsy and the source-attributing words are similar. All are intended to lend credence to an account, recorded by Herodotos, which some of his audience might challenge or consider unbelievable.

Analysis of the first occurrence of οἶδα in the *Histories*, in a passage where Herodotos records the different accounts of the Persians, Phoenicians and Greeks about the origins of the conflicts between Asia and Europe, suggests a similar conclusion. In this passage the different informants, and the information each provide, are precisely indicated to the audience by source-attributing words. The different accounts are as follows. The "learned men" of the Persians say

Περσέων . . . οἱ λόγιοι . . . φασί (1.1.1)

that the Phoenicians were responsible for the conflicts because they abducted some Argive women. Both Persians and Greeks say (λέγουσι, 1.1.3) that Io, daughter of Inachos, was one of those women. The Phoenicians, not surprisingly, do not accept that they initiated the conflict and Herodotos reports their version of events. The Phoenicians say (λέγουσι, 1.5.2 & 3) that Io became pregnant after a liaison with a Phoenician ship's captain and to avoid her parents left willingly with the Phoenicians. Herodotos states

ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ μὲν τούτων οὐκ ἔρχομαι ἐρέων ὡς οὕτως ἢ  
ἄλλως κως ταῦτα ἐγένετο (1.5.3)

I am not able to say whether these things happened one way or the other

but he concludes that he knows (οἶδα, 1.5.3) the identity of the person who was the first to do an injustice to the Greeks. Then Herodotos

records the history of Kroisos of Lydia without citing a source for the information.

The structure and content of the passage as a whole need to be considered to show the role of the reliability indicators and source-attributing words. First, the content is relevant. Clearly, the responsibility for initiating the East/West conflict which culminated in the Persian invasions of Greece was an area of conflicting traditions, not capable of accurate reconciliation by an inquirer. Herodotos applied his usual technique to resolve the impasse: he recorded all the variant traditions which fulfilled some part of his criteria of ὄψις, γνώμη or ἱστορίη, providing the audience through source-attributing words with the identity of the source for each. In this instance, each version derived some authority in terms of ἱστορίη because all accounts emanated from the races involved as local informants. As such, one version was balanced by another under ἱστορίη and so Herodotos does not reject specifically any of the variants recorded but identifies the source for each variant through source-attributing words. Yet Herodotos does possess information independent of these local sources which, it seems, is less credible than the others in terms of ἱστορίη. Thus, he cites no source for his statement that Kroisos was the first to harm the Greeks. Instead, as *histor*, he asserts a claim of knowledge through the phrase "I know" without other evidence, asking the audience to judge the reliability of the report not through a citation of credible sources but on the personal authority of the reporter. The researcher thus places his own credibility against the merits of the other versions.

Because of this, the οἶδα in this structure is not just a neutral aside by the author to the audience. A neutral aside would not act to strengthen Herodotos' record of events in the face of accounts from ostensibly credible sources. Instead, the οἶδα is an assertion by the *histor* that the information he is about to provide to the audience carries his own authority, certifying to its reliability. It is, in other words, a reliability indicator.<sup>29</sup>

Additional examples of οἶδα passages are discussed in Chapter Six. The conclusion from the passages cited above is that οἶδα statements provide another ostensible voice in the *Histories* outside the narrative. The function of this additional voice is to affirm the reliability of information which may not otherwise be considered by the audience to be credible. The circumstances when οἶδα is used tell against it having a neutral effect for it is the commentary by the *histor* which guides the audience on their reading of the narrative. To assert that "I know" something is to affirm personally to an audience that information is reliable. This can be illustrated simply; not once in the *Histories* are facts included within οἶδα statements rejected as untrue by Herodotos.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> It has been argued that this οἶδα carries a formal weight of delineating the *spatium historicum* which it does not carry elsewhere; W. Schadewaldt, 'Die Anfänge der Geschichtschreibung bei den Griechen' *Die Antike* 10 (1934), p.161, V. van Leyden, 'Spatium Historicum: The Historical Past as Viewed by Hecataeus, Herodotus, and Thucydides' *Durham University Journal* 11 (1949-50), pp.94-95, Dewald, p.160; cf. A.E. Wardman, 'Herodotus on the Cause of the Greco-Persian Wars' *AJPh* 82 (1961), p.139.

<sup>30</sup> His certainty can be expressed in the negative, such as "I know of no River Ocean" or "I know of no Tin Islands" (2.23 & 3.115.1) but this is not rejection of facts he otherwise affirmed.

The most frequent reliability indicators in the *Histories* are passages in category (c) where Herodotos provides his own view of facts or events through variations of "it seems to me" such as

δοκέει μοι or ὡς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκέει,<sup>31</sup>

a simple δοκέω or ἐγὼ δοκέω,<sup>32</sup>

or even ὡς ἐμοὶ καταφαίνεται εἶναι.<sup>33</sup>

Over one hundred and fifty seven instances have been identified where Herodotos expresses his opinion in this general way.<sup>34</sup> These are clearly direct authorial insertions of opinion by the *histor* and require little explanation. The contexts in which these reliability indicators occur range from simple geographic comparisons to political and religious judgments. For example, the *histor* comments on the accuracy of the narrative in connection with such varied information as the extent of Egypt (2.11.3, 2.12.1, 2.15.2 & 3), the size of Kadytis (3.5.2), the distance between Arabia and Libya (2.5.1), the course of the Nile (2.34.2), the numbers of ships in Xerxes' fleet (7.185.2 and 7.186.1), how the Greeks learnt to measure land (2.109.3), where they learnt the names of their gods (2.50.1), the founding of the shrine at Dodona (2.56.1), the name of the man who made the large mixing bowl at Delphi (1.51.3), the feathers which were said to fall in Skythia (4.31.2) and why the Ionians had only twelve cities (1.145). Some of these expressions of opinion do involve information for which sources are

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<sup>31</sup> For example 1.152.2, 1.131.1, 1.172.1, 2.24.1, 2.25.3, 2.49.1 & 3, 2.56.1, 2.98.2, 2.103.1, 2.109.3, 2.116.1 & 3.5.2.

<sup>32</sup> Such as at 1.97.2, 1.186.1, 1.51.3, 1.119.7, 2.11.3, 2.12.1, 2.15.3, 2.23, 2.34.2, 2.50.1, 2.93.6, 3.146.1, 4.31.2, 4.96.1, 4.155.2, 7.185.2, 7.186.1 & 9.65.2.

<sup>33</sup> 1.58.

<sup>34</sup> Dewald, p.161.

cited by Herodotos, others do not.<sup>35</sup> While the level of belief may not be as strong as οἶδα, these phrases are still reliability indicators which provide guidance, through the alternative persona of the *histor*, to an audience about the relative reliability of particular information.

A further form of reliability indicator (category d) is a statement by the *histor* that he cannot satisfactorily establish reliable information about some event because of source limitations created by geography or the lack of informants. In brief, if no-one has knowledge of something Herodotos' report of his enquiries comes to a complete halt.<sup>36</sup> A statement by Herodotos that he cannot record information about what lies to the north of the "Baldmen" as no-one can speak with accurate knowledge because impassable mountains bar the way (4.25.1) is an admission by the *histor* of his inability to provide accurate information. This is a "negative" reliability indicator and the message being presented to the audience is again about the credibility of the researcher and the level of his research. For if the inquirer is shown to be "honest" with his audience, clearly expressing his limitations when he cannot provide reliable information, that audience is invited to accept that the information provided on other occasions, and certified by the *histor* as being reliable, is indeed reliable. This admission of limitation is a further part of the dialogue between the researcher and the audience intended to establish the credibility of the researcher, and the reliability of his report of his researches.

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<sup>35</sup> Of the examples given in above in this paragraph 1.145, 2.11.3, 2.15.3, 2.34.2, 3.5.2, 7.185.2 & 7.186.1 contain no source-attributing words while 1.51.3, 2.5.2, 2.12.1, 2.15.2, 2.50.1 & 2.56.1 include source-attributing words citing specific informants.

<sup>36</sup> Herodotos' ways of expressing these limitations were outlined in Chapter 1.3.

The final category of overt reliability indicator to be considered in this chapter is claims by the *histor* of personal observation (category e). Statements by the *histor* such as "I saw this" or "this can still be seen" are also reliability indicators, for they affirm either that Herodotos has verified something by personal autopsy or that the thing stated is capable of independent assessment by anyone who cares to go to the trouble of looking for themselves. In either case the audience is assured by the *histor* that something is indeed so because the evidence is verifiable through the test of ὄψις.

Statements of personal observation occur over 30 times in the *Histories*.<sup>37</sup> For example, while describing the rise of Athenian power Herodotos notes that the Athenians defeated the Boiotians and Chalcidians in separate battles on one day and took many captives. This claim might seem unbelievable to some (non-Athenian) Greeks. Accordingly, as verification of his account Herodotos indicates (5.77) that the fetters with which the Athenians bound their captives can still be seen hanging on the wall of the Acropolis near a chariot which had been dedicated from the ransom monies obtained for the release of the prisoners. Similarly, Herodotos states (2.102-103) that the Egyptian army of Sesostris conquered Europe as far as Thrace, a statement confirmed, Herodotos believed, by the fact that stelae raised by the

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<sup>37</sup> Marincola, p.122, identifies 21 statements by Herodotos that he was an eyewitness. How/Wells, vol.1, pp.17-18, cite 10 instances where Herodotos states that something can still be seen in his day. The fact that Herodotos was unlikely to have seen some of the things which he says he has seen (e.g. the forts on the Oarus said to have been built by Dareios [Hdt. 4.124]; How/Wells, vol.1, p.342, Phillips, *op.cit.*, [n.26], p.165), does not effect the argument as to why Herodotos cited statues etc, to support his statements. See also Chapter 2.1.

Pharaoh could still be seen in that country but no further.<sup>38</sup> These passages show personal observation as a reliability indicator. Herodotos, by asserting personal autopsy, provides his own evidence which he uses to authenticate certain oral information which may seem to his audience to be unreliable.

Two further passages provide supporting evidence for this conclusion. First, Herodotos records (1.66) that the Lakedaimonians, misinterpreting an oracle from Delphi, invaded Tegea carrying fetters with which to enslave the Tegeans. When the Spartans were defeated, the Tegeans bound them in their own fetters. To add credence to this story of Spartan miscalculation and defeat, Herodotos states (1.66.4) that the fetters are still on the wall of the temple of Athena at Tegea. The second passage concerns the numbers of the Skythians. Herodotos says that "I heard" (ἤκουον, 4.81.1 & 6) that King Ariantas conducted a census by requiring each Skythian to bring in one arrow-point. When the census was complete, the bronze arrow-points were made into a huge bowl with metal six fingers thick, capable of holding easily 600 amphorae. Herodotos states that he was shown this bowl at Exampaios:<sup>39</sup>

ΤΟΣΟΝΔΕ ΜΕΝΤΟΙ ΑΠΕΦΑΙΝΟΝ ΜΟΙ ΕΣ ὈΨΙΝ. (4.81.2)

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<sup>38</sup> Herodotos states (2.106.1) that he had seen some of Sesostris' stelae in Palestine and describes them. For problems with Herodotos' autopsy in this instance see West, *op.cit.*, (n.19), pp.298-301.

<sup>39</sup> There is a dispute as to whether, firstly, Herodotos here means that he was actually shown the bowl and, secondly, whether his claim to have seen it can be true. On the first point, it seems clear that Herodotos maintains that he was shown the bowl; How/Wells, vol.1, p.331, O.K. Armayor, 'Did Herodotos ever go to the Black Sea' *HSCPh* 82 (1978), pp.50-51. On the second dispute, see Armayor, pp.55-57, Dewald/Marincola p.32; cf. Pritchett, pp.246-251.

It is significant is that Herodotos makes his insertion of personal autopsy and describes the huge bowl and the legend concerning its manufacture after a disagreement among his sources about the numbers of the Skythians. In order to resolve this dispute Herodotos introduces the results of his own autopsy, intended to establish that his version is accurate. In this case, autopsy functions as a reliability indicator.

Other examples of autopsy show the *histor* vouching for the existence of a marvel which might not otherwise be believed by a Greek audience. For example, when describing the labyrinth near Lake Moiris in Egypt, a wonder which Herodotos says surpasses the pyramids or even all the buildings constructed by the Greeks put together, he certifies that the narrative is reliable by stating

τὸν ἐγὼ ἤδη εἶδον λόγου μέζω. (2.148.1)

It is not relevant that Herodotos' personal certification of accuracy is incorrect; personal autopsy does not necessarily ensure accuracy.<sup>40</sup> Rather, the function of the statement of personal observation is to act as a reliability indicator supporting the narrative and adding authority to the record in instances where Herodotos is anxious to establish the reliability of his version of events.

In an age dependant on oral transmission of traditions and accounts Herodotos obtained his information for the *Histories* throughout the Greek world. His audience could not themselves hear the source accounts and judge for themselves how reliable the informants were. Herodotos, the inquirer and relayer of the information, intrudes his opinions in the persona of *histor* into the

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<sup>40</sup> See the list and comments in Pritchett, *ibid*, p.241.



narrative to guide the audience's responses. When an author states " I know that this is so" or "this, it seems to me, is what happened" or "this can still be seen" the author is presenting a certificate of belief in the accuracy of the information affirmed to his audience. Such reliability indicators attest that particular information has the active support of the author.

### **5.2: The Function of Reliability Indicators in the *Histories*.**

This examination of reliability indicators in the *Histories* shows that Herodotos is not averse to intruding his opinions about particular information into the narrative of the *Histories* in the form of reliability indicators. This occurs in many different ways, as the range of authorial comments discussed shows.

Reliability indicators are distinct from source-attributing words. Reliability indicators operate outside the narrative, as a separate voice commenting on the credibility of the narrative. These reliability indicators are part of the dialogue between Herodotos and his audience and are intended to signify to that audience how Herodotos expects particular sections of the *Histories* to be viewed. If Herodotos, as *histor*, says that he has seen something, or believes something to be so, the audience is expected to relate the reliability of the account recorded in the *Histories* to the reliability of Herodotos as a researcher and inquirer. If a researcher indicates the things he does not know accurately, or is unsure of, this adds an air of certainty to the balance of the information. One conclusion from the passages examined in this chapter is that Herodotos introduces reliability indicators into the

narrative where accounts may appear far-fetched, fantastic, beyond the range of belief of a normal xenophobic Greek audience, or when Herodotos is trying to overturn other reports and show that his record of events is the definitive version.

Source-attributing words occur in many of the same circumstances and serve a similar function to reliability indicators. Yet source-attributing words may be distinguished from reliability indicators because reliability indicators occur as the direct commentary of the *histor*, outside the narrative and distinct from that narrative. Source-attributing words on the other hand, operate within that narrative. Both, though, are part of the dialogue between Herodotos and the audience intended to enhance the credibility of the narrative.

## Chapter 6:

### Two Further Source-Attributing Words?

In the previous chapter I argued that Herodotos utilised reliability indicators as part of a dialogue with his audience intended to convince that audience that his account was reliable and credible. I also argued that, while source-attributing words do operate in a similar way to reliability indicators, the main difference is that reliability indicators are the direct commentary of the *histor*, outside of the narrative and distinct from the narrative, while source-attributing words occur within that narrative. In the present chapter, forms of two verbs, ἄκούω and πυνθάνομαι, are discussed as source-attributing words and this distinction becomes less clear cut. For example, in the sentences

ὡς δ' ἐγὼ ἤκουσα Τύμνεω (4.76.6) or

πυθόμενος παρὰ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων (3.12.1)

ἤκουσα and πυθόμενος indicate to the audience the identity of Herodotos' informants as Tymnes or locals. Each clearly functions as a source-attributing word in a similar manner to words such as λέγεται, λέγουσι or φασί. Unlike these source-attributing words, however, ἤκουσα and πυθόμενος in the passages above are also first person authorial insertions into the narrative by the researcher, certifying to an audience that he, the researcher, has personally discovered certain information. This commentary is not a reliability indicator, for it is not the *histor* supporting the narrative from beyond the narrative. Instead, it is commentary within the narrative, alerting the audience to

Herodotos' research, mapping that research effort and inviting the audience to assess the reliability of the narration on the basis of the credibility of the researcher.

Clearly, the number of times ἀκούω and πυνθάνομαι forms operate as source-attributing words in the *Histories* is limited. As noted above, only first person occurrences are relevant and thus occurrences in the narrative such as

πυνθάνονται τὸ γινόμενον αἱ γυναῖκες τῶν Ἀθηναίων

(9.5.3),

οἱ δὲ ὡς ἐπύθοντο ταῦτα(8.21.2),

τοὺς πλείστους ἐπυνθάνετο εἶναι ἔν τε τῆσι νηυσί

(9.3.2),

ἀκούσας ταῦτα ὁ Κῦρος(1.125.1), or

ταῦτα ἀκούσαντες οἱ Σκύθαι(4.4)

are not source-attributing words. In these passages, "they learnt" or "he heard" give no information about where Herodotos heard or learnt the story, only that somebody, such as Kyros or the Athenian women, had received information.

While Powell lists 193 occurrences of ἀκούω (pp.10-11) and 258 occurrences of πυνθάνομαι (p.328, sense II) in the *Histories*, only a small number (see Table C at the end of this chapter) are source-attributing words. In this chapter a number of the passages which include forms of πυνθάνομαι and ἀκούω will be examined to show how they function as source-attributing words.

### 6.1: "I heard" as a Source-attributing Word

As oral accounts were the basis of most of the *Histories*, it is no surprise to find that forms of ἀκούω may function as a source-attributing word. "I hear" is the complement of "they say"; for while the latter shows oral derivation of information, ἤκουον or ἤκουσα indicates specifically the receipt of oral information by Herodotos. Informants may be identified specifically, such as

ἤκουον θερσάνδρου ἀνδρὸς μὲν Ὀρχομενίου and  
ταῦτα μὲν τοῦ Ὀρχομενίου θερσάνδρου ἤκουον  
(9.16.1 & 5),

ὅτε τῶν ἱρέων ταῦτα ἐγὼ ἤκουον (2.13.1), or  
ᾧδε μὲν γενέσθαι τῶν ἱρέων τοῦ Ἡφαίστου τοῦ ἐν  
Μέμφι ἤκουον (2.2.5)<sup>1</sup>

while in other passages informants are not identified and ἤκουον becomes a general statement that certain facts were derived from oral tradition.<sup>2</sup> However, whether the informant is specified or not, "I heard" indicates that the source of Herodotos' report was an oral account and thus it functions as a source-attributing word.

A typical passage is Herodotos' account of the level of the Nile. The section commences with the identification of Herodotos' sources

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<sup>1</sup> Other informants specifically identified through a form of ἀκούω functioning as a source-attributing word are Delphians (1.20), Egyptians priests of one sort or another (2.2.5, 2.13.1, 2.43.1, 2.55.1, 2.150.4), Kyreneans (2.32.1), Dodona (2.52.1) and Spartans (4.77.1).

<sup>2</sup> Such as at 2.104.1, 2.112.2, 3.117.1, 4.81.1, 4.81.6, 6.117.3, 7.35.1, 7.55.3, 9.84 & 9.95.

ἔλεγον δὲ καὶ τόδε μοι μέγα τεκμήριον περὶ τῆς χώρας  
ταύτης οἱ ἱερεῖς (2.13.1)

the priests told me a great piece of evidence concerning this country

and the narrative is as follows. When Moiris was king of Egypt a rise of eight cubits in the Nile would water all the land of Egypt beyond Memphis. Herodotos again identifies his source; he heard this from the priests

ὅτε τῶν ἱρέων ταῦτα ἐγὼ ἤκουον (2.13.1)

when Moiris had not been dead 900 years. By itself this passage provides little evidence of Herodotos' view of the information. The statement, however, occurs in the midst of an elaborate series of proofs adduced by Herodotos to support the proposition that Egypt is the land reclaimed by the sea,<sup>3</sup> a proposition Herodotos as *histor* twice explicitly supports in commentary.<sup>4</sup> This assertion of reliability by the *histor* is based upon ἱστορίη as the identity of his informants is continually made clear to the audience through source-attributing words; the passage commences and finishes with a source citation which functions to reinforce an earlier citation of the Egyptian priests as informants for the entire section on the extent of Egypt.<sup>5</sup> Herodotos' belief in the Egyptian priests as reliable informants for Egyptian history and affairs has already been discussed.<sup>6</sup> In the above passage, ἤκουον functions

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<sup>3</sup> The section is examined in Chapter 2.3.

<sup>4</sup> That is, κατὰ περ οἱ ἱερεῖς ἔλεγον, ἐδόκεε καὶ αὐτῷ μοι (2.10.1) and more strongly τὰ περὶ Αἴγυπτον ὧν καὶ τοῖσι λέγουσι αὐτὰ πείθομαι καὶ αὐτὸς οὕτω κάρτα δοκέω εἶναι (2.12.1).

<sup>5</sup> οἱ ἱερεῖς ἔλεγον (2.10.1).

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 1.5.2 and Chapter 2.3.

as a source-attributing word, identifying the source of Herodotos' information for the audience. This identification is intended by Herodotos to suggest to the audience that the information narrated in the *Histories* is accurate because of the authority of his source.

A further example of the Egyptian priests being cited as informants through ἤκουον occurs at the beginning of Book 2 where Herodotos relates the experiment of the Pharaoh Psammetichos designed to discover the oldest race of mankind. The report of the experiment is as follows. The Pharaoh isolated two new born-children in the care of a silent shepherd in order to discover the language they would first speak. The word they first uttered was identified as Phrygian and accordingly the Egyptians acknowledged that the Phrygian race was more ancient than themselves. At the end of this story, Herodotos indicates that he had heard it from the priests of Hephaistos in Memphis

ὧδε μὲν γενέσθαι τῶν ἱρέων τοῦ Ἡφαίστου τοῦ ἐν  
Μέμφι ἤκουον (2.2.5)

and he immediately adds that the Greeks say, among other foolish things

Ἕλληνες δὲ λέγουσι ἄλλα τε μάταια πολλά (2.2.5),

that Psammetichos, in order to ensure that the children were raised in silence, had them reared by women whose tongues he had cut out.

The citation of the Egyptian priests as the source of the first variant through ἤκουον does not indicate that Herodotos has reservations about the account of the Egyptian priests. Rather, the function of ἤκουον in this passage is identical to that of the source-attributing words considered in Chapter Four in connection with

variant accounts. In cases where variant accounts exist the role of source-attributing words is to act as information indicators for the audience showing that the source of the information, and thus the information itself, had a claim to be considered reliable. In the section about the experiment, while the second variant (that of the Greeks) also incorporates a source-attributing word, λέγουσι, this account is specifically rejected by the *histor* as foolish. This was because the account of the Egyptians was superior in terms of ἱστορίη and γνώμη. In terms of ἱστορίη the first variant is the version of the Egyptian priests, recalling their own history. In contrast, the Greek version is one of many Greek accounts about Egypt which Herodotos seeks to discredit.<sup>7</sup> In terms of γνώμη it seems Herodotos doubted the Greek version because he preferred to believe in the basic humanity of the Egyptians.<sup>8</sup> To show that his account was reliable, Herodotos steps outside the narrative and as *histor* asserts that the Greek version is incorrect while at the same time within the narrative providing the audience with evidence in terms of ἱστορίη supporting his statement. The Egyptians are the local informants, not the Greeks, and the

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<sup>7</sup> For other Greek stories about Egypt rejected by Herodotos see Chapter 2.3. The Greek account about the experiment of Psammetichos rejected by Herodotos may have been found in Hekataios. Despite Herodotos' confidence and his attack on the Greek version, the version he does attribute to the Egyptian priests is considered by Lloyd to be Greek in origin: Lloyd *I-98*, pp.5-12. However, Herodotos clearly believed that the origin of the story was in Egyptian tradition and acted accordingly. The fact that he may have been incorrect in this assumption is not relevant. See also, A. Sulek, 'The Experiment of Psammetichus: Fact, Fiction, and a Model to Follow' *JHI* 50 (1989), pp.645-651.

<sup>8</sup> Hdt. 2.45 and Lloyd, *I-98*, p.9. T.S. Brown, 'Herodotus in Egypt' *AncW* 18 (1988), p.95, notes Herodotos' rejection of anything which maligns the Egyptians in his account of the Trojan War in Book 2.



function of ἤκουον, citing the Egyptian priests as his source, is intended by Herodotos to establish the reliability of the account. In this passage ἤκουον functions as a source-attributing word.

Reliability indicators also occur in other passages which include a form of ἀκούω as a source-attributing word. For example, in his account of the Lydian kings (1.19-20) Herodotos records that Alyattes, son of Sadyattes, was at war with the Milesians and accidentally burnt a temple of Athena near Miletos. Alyattes became ill and sent messengers to Delphi to enquire about his sickness. When they arrived the Pythia would not respond until Alyattes had restored the destroyed temple. The accuracy of the narrative is confirmed:

Δελφῶν οἶδα ἐγὼ οὕτω ἀκούσας γενέσθαι. (1.20)

In this sentence Herodotos affirms that the narrative is accurate in two ways. First, οἶδα ἐγώ is a reliability indicator, through which the *histor* confirms his belief in the truth of the narrative. Second, ἀκούσας is a source-attributing word, identifying that the source for the account was Delphi. In terms of ἱστορίη, they are a local, religious centre, relaying information about which they could be expected to possess reliable knowledge. In this instance, their citation as informants is an adjunct to Herodotos' certification of belief. Both reliability indicator and source-attributing word are intended to persuade the audience that the information in the narrative is reliable.

Similar circumstances apply in a passage where Herodotos by means of ἤκουον cites an individual as an informant in respect of an unusual story. Thersandros,

λογίμου δὲ ἐς τὰ πρῶτα ἐν Ὀρχομενῷ (9.16.1),

is cited by Herodotos as his source for details of the banquet given for Mardonios and the Persian nobles at Thebes prior to the battle of Plataiai. Herodotos indicates that he heard from Thersandros

ἤκουον Θερσάνδρου ἀνδρὸς μὲν Ὀρχομενίου (9.16.1)

that at the banquet an unnamed Persian nobleman warned Thersandros to make provision for his own safety because the Persians would be defeated heavily in the imminent battle. The Persian added that this impending disaster was known to many of the Persians but they obeyed their leaders through necessity and he concluded by telling Thersandros that it was the most hateful of human sorrows to possess great knowledge but no power. Herodotos repeats the citation of his source

ταῦτα μὲν τοῦ Ὀρχομενίου Θερσάνδρου ἤκουον (9.16.5)

and added that Thersandros claimed he immediately told others of this Persian revelation before the battle.

The content and the language of this account raise doubts about the authenticity of this story and it is possible that a Greek audience could have rewarded such revelations with scepticism. For example, it is difficult to believe that a Persian nobleman knew the result of the battle was predestined and confided his concern to a Greek ally in terms compatible with Greek ideas on the power of necessity and the inevitability of fate.<sup>9</sup> To establish the credibility of the account Herodotos cited as an informant a man who was at face value an impeccable source: a leading man of a Greek city who was present at the banquet, personally spoke to the Persian and relayed his

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<sup>9</sup> Marincola, p.134. As S. Flory, 'Laughter, Tears and Wisdom in Herodotus', *AJPh* 99 (1978), p.152, noted, the sentiments might have come straight from Attic tragedy.

information directly to Herodotos. Herodotos does not express an opinion about this story but he does twice declare that he heard the story directly from Thersandros<sup>10</sup> and adds that Thersandros said he had told his story to others prior to the battle. The ἤκουον in this case does not imply that Herodotos doubts the story. Instead, it perform two functions. First, it stresses to the audience that Herodotos performed this research in person. Second, it highlights that Herodotos derived his information from a source who is credible, reliable and likely to possess accurate information.<sup>11</sup> In the passage the repeated ἤκουον functions as a source-attributing word, highlighting the high status of the source and thus the information.

In the above passages, the various forms of ἀκούω specifically identify sources, such as Egyptian priests, Delphi or Thersandros.

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<sup>10</sup> The repeated ἤκουον may also serve as a framing word for the passage although the repeated citation of Thersandros ensures that his name is kept in the mind of the audience. In addition, the genitive case taken by the name of the informant after ἤκουον (9.16.1 & 5) indicates that Herodotos heard the story directly from Thersandros. Compare this episode with that reported by Herodotos at 8.65. There Herodotos records that Dikaïos son of Theokydes of Athens said (ἔφη) that he had a vision on the plains near Eleusis which predicted the Persian defeat at Salamis. In this instance, Herodotos does not say that he heard the story directly from Dikaïos.

<sup>11</sup> Similar considerations apply to the citing of Tymnes (4.76.6) during the passage about the death of Anacharsis discussed later in this chapter. Tymnes is the agent of the Skythian king and supplies the information that Anacharsis was killed by his own uncle. The Greeks had a particular repugnance for killings within the family as it threatened the property and gods of the family unit (e.g., Plato, *Laws* 865A-874D, W.K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece*, Auckland, 1980, p.193). Tymnes could be cited as a good "local" source with inside information which supported the claim and thus strengthened the credibility of the narrative.

Other passages show that even when informants are not specified, ἀκούω can still function as a source-attributing word. For example, one passage describes how the Persian king regulated the flow of water to a certain area by means of five dams. After the narration, Herodotos makes a statement of belief about the reliability of his account and supports his statement with a source-attributing word:

ὡς δ' ἐγὼ οἶδα ἀκούσας, χρήματα μεγάλα πρησσόμενος  
ἀνοίγει πάρεξ τοῦ φόρου. (3.117.6)

as I know having heard, he exacts great sums in addition to the tribute for opening the gates.

As was the case with the information from Delphi considered above, the *histor* provides a personal certification that the information in the narration is correct. In contrast to that passage, however, he cannot indicate in terms of ἱστορίη the specific source for the account. In this case ἐγὼ οἶδα as a reliability indicator carries the main weight of convincing the audience that the narrative is credible and accurate; ἀκούσας provides support by showing that the information was derived by Herodotos personally from an oral source.

Some of the accounts Herodotos reported without direct comment appear contrary to γνώμη and were likely to be received by his audience with a degree of scepticism. One example concerns the deeds of Aristeas of Prokonnesos. This passage incorporates source-attributing words, reliability indicators and claims of personal autopsy. It illustrates the methods Herodotos employed to attempt to persuade his audience that his record of events was based on reasonable sources,

assembled in person by the researcher in accordance with reliable historical methodology.

The passage commences with the statement

τὸν δὲ περὶ αὐτοῦ ἤκουον λόγον ἐν Προκοννήσῳ καὶ  
Κυζίκῳ, λέξω. (4.14.1)

I will tell the story I heard about him (Aristeas) in Prokonnesos and Kyzikos.

The account recorded is as follows. They say (λέγουσι, 4.14.1) that Aristeas was a man of repute on the island of Prokonnesos. He died there in a shop. When news of his death spread, however, a resident of the town of Kyzikos said that he had just met Aristeas going towards Kyzikos and had spoken with him. When the shopkeeper returned with the relatives of Aristeas to collect the body it had disappeared. Seven years later, Aristeas suddenly re-appeared at Prokonnesos, gave them the *Arimaspea* and vanished again. The narration continues

ταῦτα μὲν αἱ πόλεις αὗται λέγουσι, τάδε δὲ οἶδα  
Μεταποντίνοισι τοῖσι ἐν Ἰταλίῃ συγκυρήσαντα μετὰ  
τὴν ἀφάνισιν τὴν δευτέραν Ἀριστέῳ ἔτεσι  
τεσσαράκοντα καὶ διηκοσίοισι,<sup>12</sup> ὡς ἐγὼ  
συμβαλλόμενος ἐν Προκοννήσῳ τε καὶ Μεταποντίῳ  
εὔρισκον. (4.15.1)

This is what they say in these two cities, but I know that Aristeas appeared to the Metapontines in Italy 240 years later as I discovered from a comparison of facts in Prokonnesos and Metapontion.

The citizens of Metapontion say (φασί, 4.15.2) that Aristeas instructed them to set up an altar to Apollo and a statue bearing the name of

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<sup>12</sup> One MSS has a reading of 340 years; OCT, IV.15, 1.4.

Aristeas of Prokonnesos before he disappeared for ever. The Metapontines also say (λέγουσι, 4.15.3) that they asked Delphi for advice and were told to do as Aristeas instructed. As a result, there now stands at Metapontion an altar to Apollo and a statue of Aristeas in a grove of trees.

Aristeas was a mystical figure in antiquity around whom fantastic, shamanic, stories evolved.<sup>13</sup> The account recorded by Herodotos is fantastic and it is in response to possible scepticism that Herodotos carefully identifies the sources throughout his account, certifies that certain information is accurate and adds supporting detail based on autopsy. First, through source-attributing words (λέγουσι 4.14.1 & 4.15.1) locals are identified as the informants for the first part of the story and the extent of the information carefully delineated. In this section, ἤκουον (4.14.1) also confirms that Herodotos himself obtained this information from the local informants. Initially, therefore, a claim of reliability in terms of ἱστορίη seems well-founded.

Other information, also derived from local informants in Italy, has equal claims in terms of ἱστορίη to be considered reliable but their information relates to a much later period. As such, γνώμη would suggest that one story is unlikely to be true. It is a measure of the strength of Herodotos' belief in the credibility of local informants

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<sup>13</sup> J.D.P. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 134-139, E.D. Phillips, 'The Legend of Aristeas. Fact and Fancy in Early Greek Notions of East Russia, Siberia and Inner Asia' *AA* 18 (1955), pp.161-177. Various versions of his deeds appear in Strabo 589c, Plutarch, *Romulus* 28, Maximus of Tyre, *Philosophumena* 10.2 & 38.3c-f (Bolton, *ibid.* T[exts] 19 & 20, pp. 212-213), Theopompos (quoted in Athenaios 13. 605c), Pliny, *HN* 7.174.8

and the shamanic reputation of Aristeas that Herodotos does not unequivocally dismiss the information from Prokonnesos and Kyzikos. Rather, the *histor* attests that "I know" the information from Italy is accurate before the researcher provides his supporting evidence in terms of ἱστορίη, γνώμη and ὄψις. To allay scepticism about his account, Herodotos specifies the informants, outlines his methodology of calculation and comparison, notes that Delphi has been involved and concludes with autopsy evidence in the form of the grove and statue at Metapontion. In this instance the source-attributing words again do not imply reserve; indeed, the information for which the Metapontines are cited through φασί (4.15.2) and λέγουσι, (4.15.3) is supported by Herodotos through reliability indicators and autopsy. While their story does seem to be chronologically inconsistent<sup>14</sup> with the account of the people of Prokonnesos and Kyzikos, the latter are still local informants and are cited by Herodotos to show that this version has some claim to be considered reliable.

Stories about Aristeas were probably too popular to be excluded from the *Histories*. If Herodotos was to record a version of the story, the reliability indicators and source-attributing words show the audience that the version recorded by Herodotos was likely to be more credible than most. In this passage, the occurrences of ἦκουον, λέγουσι, οἶδα, εὔρισκον and φασί indicate to the audience the lengths to which Herodotos has gone to produce a feasible account of Aristeas. They map the extent of his research, identify his sources, and

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<sup>14</sup> The modern world would clearly label the chronology impossible. Aristeas, in antiquity, was attributed with non-human qualities which is probably why Herodotos does not specifically reject the earlier story: Bolton, *ibid.*

illustrate the methodology he used based on ὄψις, γνώμη and ἱστορίη.

In other passages, forms of ἀκούω function both as source-attributing words and as indicators attesting to the personal research effort of Herodotos. For example, Herodotos states that the Egyptian pharaoh Proteus had a temple precinct at Memphis where there was a shrine to the Stranger Aphrodite. Herodotos concluded from a comparison of facts (συμβάλλομαι, 2.112.2) that this temple was a shrine to Helen of Sparta; partly because

τὸν λόγον ἀκηκώς (2.112.2)

that Helen was at the court of Proteus and partly because this shrine was the only one to Aphrodite called the "Stranger Aphrodite". The story is thus supported by γνώμη and ἱστορίη. The authorial comment συμβάλλομαι and the source-attributing word ἀκηκώς enhance the credibility of the account by mapping Herodotos' research and locating the source of Herodotos' information in oral accounts.

The above passages show that forms of ἀκούω are used by Herodotos as source-attributing words in contexts where they cannot denote reserve. However, as the passages considered in Chapter Two indicate, Herodotos may specifically disagree with information incorporating source-attributing words. This disagreement also occurs with information incorporating forms of ἀκούω. This confirms that ἀκούω, despite being a first person authorial insertion, is not a reliability indicator; as shown in Chapter Five, Herodotos nowhere expresses disagreement with information he elsewhere affirms by means of reliability indicators.



When Herodotos disagrees with information he indicates he heard, the specific source need not be identified as is the case where he implies that he doubts the stories he heard (ἤκουσα, 6.117.3 & 9.95) of the blinding of Epizelos son of Koyphagores at Marathon or that Deiphonos was not the son of Evenios. On other occasions, however, Herodotos identifies, and rejects, information he heard from the Spartans and the priestess at Dodona.

The Spartans are cited by Herodotos as informants in a passage about the death of Anacharsis of Skythia (4.76-77). Herodotos first reports details of Anacharsis' visit to Greece and his death in Skythia without citing any sources except Tymnes, the ἐπίτροπος of the king of Skythia. Herodotos adds that he had already heard another story about Anacharsis told by the Peloponnesians

καίτοι τινὰ ἤδη ἤκουσα λόγον ἄλλον ὑπὸ  
Πελοποννησίων λεγόμενον. (4.77.1)

Their story was that Anacharsis was sent by the king of Skythia to investigate the ways of the Greeks. On his return to Skythia he reported that, while all the Greeks loved learning, it was only the Lakedaimonians who spoke and listened with discretion. This piece of Spartan self praise is disbelieved by Herodotos who comments that it was invented by the Greeks themselves:

ἀλλ' οὗτος μὲν ὁ λόγος ἄλλως πέπαισται ὑπ' αὐτῶν  
Ἑλλήνων. (4.77.2)

Herodotos does not indicate why he does not believe the Spartans, perhaps he felt further comment unnecessary. In any case, it is clear that his disagreement with the account is not signalled to his audience by means of the source-attributing word, ἤκουσα, but by means of a

direct authorial statement of disbelief. Instead, the function of the source-attributing word is to show the audience that, while he himself does not believe the story, he records it because he had derived the information from a source with a claim to be authoritative.

A more extensive example is Herodotos' consideration of the origins of the shrines in Greece and in Libya. This passage has already been discussed (in Chapter 2.2.1) in connection with Herodotos' view of the reliability of religious centres; it can now be considered to illustrate the similarity between source-attributing words based on forms of λέγω and ἀκούω. In summary, the Egyptian story was that two priestesses were abducted by Phoenicians from the temple of Zeus at Thebes. One was sold in Dodona, the other in Libya, and both established shrines. Herodotos shows the audience that he did not blindly accept his source's information; he notes that he asked the Egyptian priests how they knew the information they told him and they replied that they had made enquires and later learnt the information they now reported. At the conclusion of their part of the story Herodotos carefully marks the demarcation between sources, this time citing the Egyptians using ἤκουον, before indicating his alternative source:

ταῦτα μὲν νυν τῶν ἐν Θήβησι ἱρέων ἤκουον, τάδε  
Δωδωναίων φασὶ αἰ προμάντιες. (2.55.1)

The story of Dodona, on the other hand, was that two black doves flew away from Egyptian Thebes. One came to Dodona, settled in a tree and in a human voice urged the people to establish a shrine. This citation of Dodona as a source is repeated by Herodotos, and the three priestesses named in order of age, before he concludes that others at the temple confirmed that their story was true.

This account of the founding of a religious shrine presented difficulties for Herodotos; it involved conflicting claims by different religious centres and the stories contained information which was controversial, implausible or unnatural. Herodotos is cautious but gives his own opinion

ἐγὼ δ' ἔχω περὶ αὐτῶν γνώμην τήνδε. (2.56.1)

He considers that if the Phoenicians did indeed abduct the priestess, her foreign speech could be likened by the Dodonians to the cries of a bird.

Some of the information in this passage may seem unlikely in terms of γνώμη, and indeed the *histor* does intrude into the narrative to record reservations and his interrogation of his Egyptian sources. Herodotos' citing of the names of the priestesses, in order of age, and his specifying that others at the shrine support the story is also intended to establish the authority of the Dodonians' account. This commentary is one part of Herodotos' dialogue with the audience concerning the reliability of the passages. A second part of the dialogue of reliability is source-attributing words. At an obvious level, the source-attributing words in this passage indicate the source;<sup>15</sup> yet the number of citations, plus the infinitival verbal forms throughout the passages,<sup>16</sup> is excessive if the purpose is simply to indicate the presence of oral information and sources or to suggest disbelief on the part of

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<sup>15</sup> Sources in Egypt: λέγουσι and ἔφασαν, 2.54.1, λέγουσι, ἔφασαν and ἔλεγον, 2.54.2, ἤκουον, 2.55.1; sources in Dodona: φασί, 2.55.1, λέγουσι and ἔλεγον, 2.55.3.

<sup>16</sup> ἐξαχθῆναι, πυθέσθαι, εἶναι (2.54.1), γενέσθαι, ἀνευρεῖν, πυθέσθαι (2.54.2), ἀπικέσθαι (2.55.1), αὐδάξασθαι, γενέσθαι, ὑπολαβεῖν, εἶναι, ποιῆσαι (2.55.2), ποιέειν (2.55.3).

Herodotos. Instead, I believe that this repeated citation is intended to confirm to the audience that Herodotos does have good, detailed, information for both versions of the account he records. Despite his reservations, the information from Dodona was worthy of consideration and reporting because it was derived from ostensibly reliable sources. In this section, ἤκουον functions to identify the nature of Herodotos' source and thus acts in an identical manner to the other source-attributing words.

On other occasions ἀκούω occurs as a source-attributing word without the presence of direct comment, reliability indicators, or the context giving any indication of Herodotos' view of the passage. For example, he neither seems to pass judgment on the information he had heard (ἤκουσα, 9.95) that the seer Deiphonos was not the son of Evenios, nor decides whether Xerxes crossed the Hellespont bridge in the midst of his army, or last as he had heard (ἤκουσα, 7.55.3). The ἤκουσα in each passage does not indicate that Herodotos doubts the information. Rather, the function of ἤκουσα is to map the extent of Herodotos' research by indicating to the audience that the researcher personally had heard these accounts and considered them worthy of report.

Some conclusions can be drawn from this examination of ἀκούω passages.<sup>17</sup> As was the case with the source-attributing words discussed in the earlier chapters of this study, Herodotos may agree, disagree or express no opinion about information for which a source is cited using forms of ἀκούω. The citing of informants through ἀκούω

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<sup>17</sup> Further examples of occurrences of ἀκούω as a source-attributing word are discussed in the following section on πυνθάνομαι.

is also not a signal by Herodotos that he has doubts about the passage. Rather, by citing people such as the Egyptian priests or an identified individual as sources, Herodotos indicates to the audience that the story he records was derived from a source who could be expected to possess reliable knowledge. In these circumstances, Herodotos' citation of these sources through source-attributing words is intended to enhance the status of his report, not reduce it.

### **6.2: "I learnt/discovered" as a Source-attributing Word**

"I learnt/discovered" may also function in a similar manner to "I heard" as a source-attributing word where it occurs in first person forms and indicates something about Herodotos' sources or illustrates his information gathering process.<sup>18</sup> In many passages, however, the distinction between source-attributing word and reliability indicator is difficult to discern. For example, in sentences such as

πυθόμενος παρὰ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων (3.12.1) or  
ὡς δὲ ἐγὼ πυνθάνομαι τῶν τὸν Ἑλλάσποντον καὶ  
Πόντον οἰκεόντων Ἑλλήνων (4.95.1)

the forms of πυνθάνομαι clearly function as source-attributing words, indicating to the audience the identity of Herodotos' informants as locals or the Greeks of the Hellespont. In other passages, phrases such as ὡς ἐγὼ πυνθανόμενος εὕρισκω indicate the oral derivation of information by Herodotos. For example, Herodotos notes that the fact

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<sup>18</sup> Liddell/Scott, p.1554, Powell, p.328. Although not used as a source-attributing word, ἐξιστορήσαντες τὰ ἐβούλοντο πυθέσθαι (Hdt. 7.195) shows the distinction.

that the oldest temple of the Heavenly Aphrodite is at Ascalon in Syria is information,

ὡς ἐγὼ πυνθανόμενος εὐρίσκω (1.105.3)

and that he learnt through inquiry

πυνθανόμενος οὕτω εὐρίσκω ἐόν (2.50.1)

that the names of the Greek gods came from foreign countries, chiefly Egypt.

The more simple ὡς ἐγὼ πυνθάνομαι less precisely identifies the oral source for information but does certify to the audience that Herodotos personally obtained particular facts. Through ὡς ἐγὼ πυνθάνομαι, Herodotos indicates his personal knowledge of such diverse information as why peace was signed between Lydia and Miletos (1.22.2), the fact that the offerings of Kroisos at Branchides in Miletos were of the same weight as his offerings at Delphi (1.92.2), the extent of Egypt (2.8.1),<sup>19</sup> the way Gorgo, daughter of Kleomenes, discovered the trick of the message on the wax tablet (7.239.4), the information that Xerxes knew well the treasures of Delphi (8.35.2) and that the tombs of the Greek allies erected after the battle of Plataiai were in fact empty (9.85.3). On other occasions πυνθάνομαι stands alone, but still functions as a source-attributing word. This occurs, for example, where Herodotos indicated that he learnt that Bias of Priene gave wise advice to the Ionians (1.170.1) or that a wise custom of the Babylonians is also a custom of the Eneti in Illyria (1.196.1).

In these passages "I learnt/discovered" functions as a source-attributing word, disclosing something about the nature of Herodotos'

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19 Here the phrase is ὡς ἐγὼ ἐπυνθανόμην. Any distinction in meaning is not relevant to this enquiry.

information or his sources. It also indicates that the researcher is personally responsible for collecting the information. By itself, this commentary suggests little about the reliability of the information other than the reliability which accrues from the researcher indicating that he personally had discovered the facts he then repeats to the audience. This indeed can, depending upon the audiences' perception of the reliability, historical methodology and critical acumen of the researcher, engender a feeling that the information is credible. As such, *πυνθάνομαι* phrases are also part of Herodotos' dialogue with his audience. Furthermore, in many passages *πυνθάνομαι* phrases occur in conjunction with information Herodotos clearly believed was accurate.

The passage where the *histor* and the researcher combine to provide a precise historical summary of the character of Aristeides is a good example. In the passage,

τὸν ἐγὼ νενόμικα, πυνθανόμενος αὐτοῦ τὸν τρόπον,  
ἄριστον ἄνδρα γενέσθαι ἐν Ἀθήνησι καὶ δικαιοτάτον  
(8.79.1),

from what I have learnt of Aristeides' way of life I am persuaded that he was  
the best and most just man in Athens

the first person reliability indicator and source-attributing word ensure that the audience is in no doubt about how they are expected by Herodotos to view Aristeides. Similarly, in the passage narrating the customs of the Babylonians, Herodotos commences

κατὰ γνώμην τὴν ἡμετέραν, τῷ καὶ Ἰλλυριῶν ἔνετοῦς  
πυνθάνομαι χρᾶσθαι.(1.196.1)

their shrewdest custom in my opinion is one which I learned is practised by the Eneti of Illyria.

There is no suggestion by Herodotos that he has doubts about this information; instead, πυνθάνομαι informs the audience that a particular custom, while it could seem strange to the Greeks, has a counterpart elsewhere as the researcher, personally, has learnt.

Other passages incorporating forms of πυνθάνομαι support this conclusion. For example, the battle between the Persians and the Massagetai in which Kyros the Great was killed was, the *histor* judges in a specific comment to the audience, the fiercest fought between non-Greeks, and this was confirmed by what the researcher learnt:

ταύτην τὴν μάχην, ὅσαι δὴ βαρβάρων ἀνδρῶν μάχαι  
ἔγένοντο, κρίνω ἰσχυροτάτην γενέσθαι, καὶ δὴ καὶ  
πυνθάνομαι οὕτω τοῦτο γενόμενον. (1.214.1)

The subsequent description of the battle in the narrative confirms the authorial comment. In a similar manner, Herodotos notes that an oracle he learnt (ἐπυθόμην, 2.18.1) was given at Ammon supported an opinion he had already formed about the extent of Egypt.

In the above passages the forms of πυνθάνομαι are not an indication that the information "learnt" by Herodotos is doubted by him. Instead, in each case the function of πυνθάνομαι is to indicate to the audience that the information relayed was a result of the personal researches of Herodotos. Indeed, in the passage on the death of Kyros, the authorial insertion of the *histor*, providing a commentary on the passage, and the statement of personal inquiry by the researcher, are both expected to prepare the audience's reaction to the subsequent narration. The narrative in this passage does not stand



alone but is affirmed by personal certification and personal inquiry. Both interventions are part of the dialogue between Herodotos and the audience intended, again, to convince them that the narration is reliable.

It has been argued in this study that reliability indicators and source-attributing words often occur in passages which are likely to be challenged, disbelieved or received sceptically by a Greek audience. Two further passages incorporating forms of *πυυθάνομαι* certifying personal inquiry in addition to other source-attributing words supports this view. The first passage concerns the strange case of the bones of those killed in the battle between Kambyses and Psammenitos in the Nile Delta. The second describes the Persian attack on Delphi in 480 BC.

The passage about the bones has already been discussed (Chapter 2.1) in a different context. Herodotos reported (3.10.1) that the Persians and the Egyptians fought a battle near the Pelusian mouth of the Nile. At that place Herodotos saw a very strange thing, having learnt of it by inquiry from the local inhabitants:

θῶμα δὲ μέγα εἶδον πυυθόμενος παρὰ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων.

(3.12.1)

The bones of those killed were in two piles; the Persian bones in one place and the Egyptian in another. The skulls of the Persians were so brittle that they could be shattered by a pebble thrown against them whereas the Egyptian skulls were so hard that they could hardly be broken by a blow from a rock. The locals provided an explanation. They said (ἔλεγον, 3.12.2) the Egyptian skulls were hard because the Egyptians shaved their heads from birth and the bone thickened as a

result of this exposure. The *histor* unequivocally accepts the explanation of the locals for the strength of the Egyptian skulls,

αἴτιον δὲ τούτου τόδε ἔλεγον, καὶ ἐμέ γε εὐπετέως  
ἔπειθον (3.12.2),

and adds that of all mankind one sees fewer bald men among the Egyptians. Herodotos concludes that he personally saw (εἶδον, 3.12.4), the skulls of the Persians killed with Achaimenes, son of Dareios, by Inaros the Libyan at Papremis and they were brittle in the same way.

This story seems unlikely<sup>20</sup> but the narrative shows Herodotos seeking to establish it as a credible report. First, through a source-attributing word (ἔλεγον) he shows that the story was based on the report of local inhabitants who provide a rational explanation. Second, the claim of personal autopsy is a reliability indicator which is further supported by personal inquiry (πυθόμενος). When a story seems far-fetched, a historian who wants his audience to accept the accuracy of his report adduces the supporting evidence he possesses. The more unlikely a story, the more supporting evidence is required to prove its accuracy, and it is in this light that Herodotos' repeated citing of local informants, claims of personal autopsy and reasoned explanations should be viewed. In this passage εἶδον, πυθόμενος and ἔλεγον function to assure the audience that, while the information seems strange, it emanated from reliable sources and was supported by Herodotos' own observation and inquiries. The citation of local informants, Herodotos' claimed autopsy and rational explanation have

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<sup>20</sup> Fehling, pp.28-30.

exactly the same function: to make the account seem both believable and reliable to a disbelieving or sceptical audience.<sup>21</sup>

These conclusions are supported by an examination of a passage which has been considered unlikely; Herodotos' description (8.36-39) of the Persian attack on Delphi in 480 BC. The account is as follows. As the Persian force approached, the people of Delphi asked the oracle whether they should hide the treasures of the shrine. The god replied that he would protect his own. Subsequently, the temple priest, who is named in the narrative, saw that some sacred weapons miraculously had moved themselves from within the temple to outside the shrine. Herodotos affirms the miraculous nature of this event; he comments that the fact that sacred weapons should move of their own accord was surprising enough but what happened next was especially amazing.<sup>22</sup> When the Persians approached the temple thunderbolts fell among them from the sky, two outcrops of rock crashed down on them from Parnassos and a cry of triumph came from within the temple. The survivors broke and fled, pursued by the Delphians. Herodotos adds that the barbarians who returned safely to Boiotia said (ἔλεγον, 8.38), as Herodotos personally learnt (ὡς ἔγὼ πυνθάνομαι, 8.38), that other supernatural things happened to them; two hoplites larger than

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<sup>21</sup> For another examination of this passage, see R.V. Munson, 'Herodotus' use of Prospective Sentences and the Story of Rhampsinitus and the Thief in the *Histories*' *AJPh* 114 (1993), pp.34-35. She shows how prospective sentences within the passage co-operate with other narrative strategies for engaging the recipient of the story. Some of these narrative strategies are the source-attributing words, although Munson does not identify them as such.

<sup>22</sup> θῶμα μὲν γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο κάρτα ἐστί, ὄπλα ἄρῆια αὐτόματα φανῆναι ἔξω προκείμενα τοῦ νηοῦ· τὰ δὲ δὴ ἐπὶ τούτῳ δεύτερα ἐπιγενόμενα καὶ διὰ πάντων φασμάτων ἄξια θωμάσαι μάλιστα (8.37.2).

men pursued and killed them. These two hoplites, the Delphians say (λέγουσι, 8.39.1), were the local heroes Phylakos and Autonomous who both had shrines near the temple. Herodotos concludes his report by stating that the boulders which fell from Parnassos could still be seen in his time (ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἡμέας, 8.39.2) lying in the precinct of the temple.

This account reads like fantasy and has long been labelled "one of the most transparent fictions in Herodotos".<sup>23</sup> Yet Herodotos' techniques for attesting to the reliability of the report can clearly be seen. He outlines his process of enquiry through πυνθάνομαι, citing Persians and Delphians as informants by means of source-attributing words (ἔλεγον and λέγουσι). The Delphians are a local, religious source relaying details about events around the shrine and as such would be considered reliable informants. Further, the accounts of the two sources are complementary, the Delphians providing an identification which adds precision and detail to the Persian story. The citation of sources by Herodotos, supported by autopsy in the form of the extant boulders and the detail within the account, such as the name of the priest who found the moved weapons, aids the impression of reliability. Using these techniques, Herodotos indicates that the account, miraculous as it seems, is derived from credible sources and is capable of a measure of verification. The source-attributing words ἔλεγον and λέγουσι, the assertion of personal inquiry πυνθάνομαι (twice repeated for emphasis), and the reliability indicator indicating Herodotos' own ὄψις are all intended to persuade the audience that

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<sup>23</sup> Macan, *VII-IX*, pp.414-415.

the information recorded by Herodotos was a reliable record of the miraculous deliverance of Delphi from the Persians.<sup>24</sup>

The passages considered above suggest that *πυνθάνομαι* phrases can function as source-attributing words, indicating to the audience either Herodotos' specific source or that certain information was derived from oral tradition. In addition, while *πυνθάνομαι* phrases are not strictly reliability indicators, because they are first person authorial insertions attesting to the personal research of Herodotos, they are intended to persuade the audience that certain information is likely to be reliable. In both circumstances, *πυνθάνομαι* phrases are part of Herodotos' dialogue with his audience.

### 6.3: The Herodotean Dialogue

I have argued throughout this study that the purpose of Herodotos' dialogue with his audience was to persuade them that his account was reliable. For example, sections of the dialogue show the audience the extent of Herodotos' research and the lengths to which he was prepared to go to acquire information from authoritative sources. Other sections outline his research methodology or indicate the limitations of the available information. The dialogue invites the

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<sup>24</sup> The complete passage was almost certainly Delphic in origin and seeks to explain the non-destruction of Delphi by the Persians; Macan, *ibid*, p.415. Waters, p.80; cf. P.B. Georges, 'Saving Herodotus' Phenomena: the Oracles and the Events of 480 BC' *ClAnt* 4 (1986), pp.28-31. W.G. Forrest, 'Herodotos and Athens' *Phoenix* 38 (1984), p.7, notes Herodotos' attachment to Delphi but maintains, incorrectly I believe, that Herodotos did not give his personal approval to the story of how Apollo saved his sanctuary.

audience into Herodotos' λόγος, and they are asked to accept that the inquirer is honest, reliable and based his report on a precise and rational historical methodology. When trust is established between reporter and audience, the integrity of the report and the research is less likely to be challenged where some doubt exists.

The passages examined in the present chapter show that forms of ἀκούω and πυνθάνομαι are a part of the Herodotean dialogue. They also occur sufficient times as source-attributing words to have an impact upon the Herodotean dialogue (see Table C below). Yet, unlike source-attributing words such as λέγεται, λέγουσι or φασί, ἤκουσα and πυνθόμενος are also direct first person authorial insertions into the narrative, certifying to the audience that he, the researcher, has discovered certain information. As such, while some of the information may seem unlikely in terms of γνώμη, the information was worthy of consideration and reporting because it was derived from ostensibly reliable sources or by the inquirer's own research effort.

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**Table C:**  
**Πυνθάνομαι and Ἀκούω**  
**as Source-attributing Words by Book<sup>25</sup>**

<i>Book:</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	<i>Totals</i>
πυνθάνομαι	6	6	1	1	-	1	3	3	1	22
ἀκούω	1	10	1	5	-	1	2	-	5	25
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>47</b>

<sup>25</sup> For a detailed list of occurrences see Appendix B.

## Chapter 7:

### **Settling the Historical Record: the Function of Source-attributing Words in the *Histories***

Proponents of the view that source-attributing words function as indicators to the audience that certain information is unreliable<sup>1</sup> refer to only a few examples out of the approximately 470 occurrences of source-attributing words in the *Histories* to support their case. I believe that the function of source-attributing words in the *Histories* cannot be established by considering their occurrences singly, in small groups or divorced from the context in which they appear. No single example conclusively proves, or disproves, the view that Herodotos utilises source-attributing words as indicators of reserve. Therefore, this study has examined a substantial number of the passages in which source-attributing words occur. The consequence of the examination has been to show that, contrary to the view of some scholars, the presence of source-attributing words in a particular passage of the *Histories* is not an indication that Herodotos considers the information suspect or unreliable.

Herodotos, as he indicates, does not in all cases believe the information he records. By citing informants through source-attributing words, however, Herodotos can indicate to his audience that an account has a claim to credibility, whatever Herodotos' own opinion, because it originated from the oral accounts of a particular group. This is especially the case when Herodotos records controversial information, information which on face value seems marvellous or

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<sup>1</sup> See the Introduction, footnotes 11-12.

dubious, fantastic stories, stories contrary to γνώμη, or information which contradicts other widely known Greek accounts. From his first authorial statement of intention in the proem, Herodotos makes it clear that the *Histories* are intended to be a lasting record, preserving in the collective memory of humankind a knowledge of the achievements of both Greeks and non-Greeks. An unstated premise of this intention is that Herodotos' account was reliable and accurate, intended to settle the historical record in cases of disputed or inadequate oral traditions. Herodotos seeks, through a dialogue with the audience, to show that audience that his account was reliable. He explained his intentions and his historical methodology, inserted reliability indicators and authorial commentary through the persona of the *histor* outside the narrative, admitted his limitations and implied that the narrative was likely to be accurate because it was based upon authoritative sources.

The frequency of source-attributing words and commentary by the *histor* can be explained through reference to Herodotos' intellectual environment. Herodotos inserted the commentary and cited his informants so frequently because he was on the cusp of the move from oral to written modes of narration and presentation, and the intellectual adjustments this entailed.<sup>2</sup> His models, and those of his audience, included the verse epics of Homer and Hesiod. Homeric influences on the *Histories* have been noted from antiquity to the present and even the dramatic elements in Herodotos echo Homeric

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<sup>2</sup> A. Cook, *Myth and Language*, Bloomington, Ill., 1980, pp.6-12, J-P. Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, trans. J. Lloyd, London, 1980, pp.187-193, Thomas, pp.9-10, 29-34, C.G. Thomas, 'Between Literacy and Orality: Herodotus' Historiography' *Mediterranean Historical Review* 3 (1988), pp.54-67.



tradition.<sup>3</sup> Herodotos' purpose, as explained in his proem, was not dissimilar from that of the epic poet,<sup>4</sup> but Herodotos was keen to establish that his achievement and methodology were of a new order. Through source-attributing words and reliability indicators the audience was informed that, although they are dealing with a work based largely on oral tradition and technique, unlike the epic poets, Herodotos' information had not been derived from the Muses. Instead, through methodological statements, first person commentary and source-attributing words, Herodotos shows that it is from rational information, derived above all through oral inquiry from credible human informants and evaluated by means of a rational historical methodology, that the *Histories* have evolved. Source-attributing words are therefore one way Herodotos distinguished his move away from the oral traditions and techniques of epic.

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<sup>3</sup> [Longinus] *De Sublimitate* 13.3, Hermogenes, *De Ideis* 2.421, Jacoby, *RE*, cols.502-504, Aly, pp.263-277, L. Huber, 'Herodots Homerverständnis' in H. Flashar & K. Gaiser, (eds) *Synusia. Festgabe für W. Schadewaldt*, Pfulingen, (1965), pp.29-52, F.W. Walbank, 'History and Tragedy' *Historia* 9 (1960), pp.216-234, D. Grene, 'Herodotus: the Historian as Dramatist' *JPh* 58 (1961), pp.477-488, K.H. Waters, 'The Purpose of Dramatisation in Herodotos' *Historia* 15 (1966), pp.157-171, J.R. Grant, 'Ἐκ τοῦ παρατυχόντος πυνθανόμενος' *Phoenix* 23 (1969), p.264; D. Lateiner, 'No Laughing Matter: a Literary Tactic in Herodotus' *TAPhA* 107 (1977), pp.173-182, C.C. Chiasson, 'Tragic Diction in Herodotus: Some Possibilities' *Phoenix* 36 (1982), pp.156-161; J.G. Gammie, 'Herodotus on Kings and Tyrants: Objective History or Conventional Portraiture?' *JNES* 45 (1986), pp.171-195, Marincola, pp.132-133.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 7.1 following.

### 7.1: The "Inspiration" of the Muse

The *Histories* are both a part of Greek oral tradition and a development creating a new genre. Herodotos' purpose as explained in his proem was to record the achievements of the Greeks and non-Greeks so that the knowledge of their deeds would not fade from the memory of mankind. This record was to be the result of ἱστορίη, a rational, conscientious inquiry<sup>5</sup> although even this term looks back to the epic tradition in which ἱστορίη seeks to record events and explain their meaning.<sup>6</sup> Further, in preserving the achievements of mankind so that they would not fade in time from the collective memory of the society, Herodotos' intent was not dissimilar from that of the *logioi* who sang of the deeds of the heroes of myth and legend or the founders of cities to save the memory of their deeds from oblivion.<sup>7</sup> Yet Herodotos' historical awareness and his methodology marked a development. This development was the search for the "true" account from among the numerous stories told by the Greeks, a development expressed clearly by Hekataios of Miletos who began his *Genealogies* with the statement that he intended to write down what seemed to him to be the truth from among the many stories told.<sup>8</sup> Herodotos did not specifically express

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<sup>5</sup> Herodotos' proem begins "Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησσεῶς ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἧ δέ". For a discussion of Herodotos' purpose and the proem, see Chapter 1.2.

<sup>6</sup> Lateiner, *Method*, p.15.

<sup>7</sup> E.g., *Iliad*, 9.524-525; Pohlenz, p.3, A. Ferrill, 'Herodotus and the Strategy and Tactics of the Invasion of Xerxes' *AHR* 72 (1966-67), p.114, Evans, p.96.

<sup>8</sup> *FGrHist* 1 F1: Ἐκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ᾧδε μυθεῖται· τάδε γράφω, ὡς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι· οἱ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὡς ἐμοὶ φαίνονται, εἰσίν.

the same aim but it underlies his intention to set forth<sup>9</sup> the results of his enquires so that the achievements of the Greeks and non-Greeks would not fade from the memory of mankind. In both cases the historical record is to be settled by virtue of establishing the most reliable account from the many told<sup>10</sup> by means of a rational historical methodology.

This methodology, coupled with inquiry from human informants, marks the distinction between Herodotos and the epic poets. Although Hesiod had criticised the lack of truth of others and Homer and Hesiod claimed to speak the truth<sup>11</sup> about the events described, the "truthfulness" of their accounts is confirmed by the presence of, and the knowledge gained from, the Muse. Indeed, a characteristic of the epic tradition is its reliance upon the Muse for inspiration, knowledge and assistance. For example, the Muse is invoked throughout the *Iliad*<sup>12</sup> while the proem of the *Odyssey* makes the influence of the Muses clear in that work.<sup>13</sup> The invocation of the Muse in epic poetry had many functions<sup>14</sup> but for the purpose of this study the essential characteristic is that it is the call of the poet to the

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<sup>9</sup> The term ἀπόδειξις also may refer back to epic; E. Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, Oxford, 1963, p.54, n.8.

<sup>10</sup> Hartog, pp.276-277, Evans, pp.104-105.

<sup>11</sup> Homer, *Odyssey* 19.203, Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 8, *Theogony*, 27-28; H. Strasburger, *Homer und die Geschichtsschreibung*, Heidelberg, 1972, pp.21-25, F. Lasserre, 'L'historiographie Grecque à l'époque Archaique' *QS* 4 (1976), p.117, Vernant, *op.cit.*, (n.2), pp.198-199, Evans, p.105.

<sup>12</sup> For example, 1.1, 2.484, 2.761, 11.218, 14.508, 16.112. See also R. Harriott, *Poetry and Criticism before Plato*, London, 1969, p.44.

<sup>13</sup> 1.1; also 8.73 & 8.499.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, the discussion of P. Murray, 'Poetic Inspiration in Early Greece' *JHS* 101 (1981), pp.87-100.

Muse to provide accurate information and knowledge. The Muses do not invent information, however, or provide revelation but repeat to the poet what they know and which, like a natural resource, is available to those who seek it.<sup>15</sup> Thus, before the catalogue of the ships in the *Iliad*, Homer requests information from the Muses:

ἔσπετε νῦν μοι, Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι  
ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαὶ ἐσσι, πάρεστέ τε, ἴστε τε πάντα,  
ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τε ἴδμεν (2.484-6)

Tell me now, you Muses who live on Olympos, for you who are goddesses, are there, and you know everything, but we hear only a rumour and know nothing

which shows that the catalogue was knowledge obtained by Homer from the Muses.<sup>16</sup> The proem of the *Odyssey* makes the same claim:

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα . . .  
τῶν ἀμόθην γε, θεά, θύγατερ Διός, εἰπέ καὶ ἡμῖν (1.1-2)

while the Muses are also invoked by Hesiod. They are named in the first word of the first line in *Works and Days* and *Theogony* and the proem of the *Theogony* makes it clear that the Muses have the power to provide both false and true information.<sup>17</sup> The same proem also establishes that the *Theogony* is based upon the information they provided to Hesiod:

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<sup>15</sup> P. Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in their Myths*, (trans. P. Wissing), Chicago, 1983, p.23, E.A. Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write*, New Haven, 1986, pp.19-23.

<sup>16</sup> Murray, *op.cit.*, (n.14) pp.90-91, M. Finkelberg, 'A Creative Oral Poet and the Muse' *AJPh* 111 (1990), p.295.

<sup>17</sup> vv.27-28. At the beginning of *Works and Days* (v.8) the insistence that Hesiod is telling the truth is even more plain: M.L. West, *Hesiod, Theogony*, Oxford, 1966, pp.161-162.

αἶ νύ ποθ' Ἡσίοδον καλὴν ἐδίδαξαν ἀοιδήν. (v.22)

The characteristic feature of these calls on the Muses is that the poet invokes their authority as sources to establish the authority of his account by guaranteeing the truth of the poets' words.<sup>18</sup>

Herodotos, like Homer, organised his work around a war and sought the truth. Yet, the epic poet did not have to seek out the truth by inquiry from human sources; he was the articulate mouthpiece of the Muses who both provided and gave authority to the song sung by the poet. Herodotos, on the other hand, sought the "truth" through independent inquiry from credible, human informants and tried to apply a diachronic sorting process, based on patterned human behaviour.<sup>19</sup> His work was a result of research, not inspiration, a contrast implicit in the passages where Herodotos criticised the inventions of the poets, including Homer and Hesiod.<sup>20</sup> In his dialogue with the audience, therefore, Herodotos frequently showed that it is not inspiration or the Muses which provide information, but research conducted by himself with the physical limitations this method of inquiry imposed.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Murray, *op.cit.*, (n.14), p.90. This was still the case for Virgil, who following the epic tradition requests "Musa, mihi causas memora" (*Aeneid* 1.8).

<sup>19</sup> A. Cook, 'Herodotus: The Act of Inquiry as a Liberation from Myth' *Helios* 3 (1976), pp.23-66, esp. pp.23, 34.

<sup>20</sup> Hdt. 2.53. See also D. Konstan, 'Comparative Methods in Mythology' *Arethusa* 19 (1986), p.87, C. Segal, 'Greek Myth as a Semiotic and Structural System and the Problem of Tragedy' *Arethusa* 16 (1983), p.177. At 2.116.1-3 Herodotos records his belief that Homer knew of the Egyptian version of the story of Helen but preferred to ignore it as unsuitable for epic poetry.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 1.3.

The limitations on available evidence and the *persona* of the *histor* conducting a methodical historical inquiry from credible human sources highlights Herodotos' development from the epic tradition. His information was not limitless but limited, his informants were not all seeing but saw only part of their own world. The scope of the researcher was also limited by physical constraints to particular informants within particular regions or cities. However, when local informants spoke about their own world, the history, geography and customs of their own people, they were as authoritative as human informants could be, providing details of human concerns. Thus, instead of the Muse, Herodotos cites his informants by means of source-attributing words. His purpose in citing informants, however, is the same as the poets' invocation of the Muse; to provide the authority for the narrative. In both cases, the credibility of the narrative rests upon the credibility of the informant.

## 7.2: Oral Tradition and Source-attributing words

The role of source-attributing words in the *Histories* in my view evolved because of the character of oral accounts and the need by Herodotos to distinguish his account from the accounts of the poets. His historical methodology was quickly challenged by others with different aims, ambitions and methods and it was Herodotos' reliance upon oral traditions, and his repeating of the accounts he heard, that was the basis of much of the challenge.<sup>22</sup> The function of source-attributing words in the *Histories* was not addressed until much later and the negative view subsequently adopted seems a result of a historical consciousness which depreciates the value of oral evidence in historical inquiry. This historical mind-set evolved from the German school of scientific thought and technique which based historical knowledge solely upon verifiable, written records. Ranke considered Thucydides the greatest historian<sup>23</sup> and, since Ranke, established principles of objective historical research required a critical analysis of public documents contemporary with the events described while the worth of later chronicles or the works of non-contemporary historians is depreciated.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Summarised in A. Momigliano, 'The Place of Herodotus in the History of Historiography' *History* 43 (1958), pp.1-13.

<sup>23</sup> H. Butterfield, *Man on his Past*, Cambridge, 1955, p.106.

<sup>24</sup> G.I. Iggers, 'The Image of Ranke in American and German Historical Thought' *H&T* 2 (1962), p.21, R. Gruner, 'Ranke's Historical Theory' *DUJ* 59 (1967), p.141, P.K. Conkin & R.N. Stromberg, *The Heritage and Challenge of History*, New York, 1971, pp.197, 205, 209, 216-219. R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Oxford, 1946, traces the development of "scientific history" noting (p.26) the lack of "critical precision" on the part of Herodotos and Thucydides. Collingwood

To have value under these terms of reference, historical evidence must be material and objective, capable of existence in its own right.<sup>25</sup> It must, in essence, be primary sources.<sup>26</sup> Oral information, in contrast, was discounted and this mind-set carried over into evaluations of the oral information used so obviously by Herodotos. This contrast between the historical value of oral and written information is totally anachronistic when applied to the thought processes of fifth century Greece<sup>27</sup> and especially Herodotos. An oral society cannot and does not depreciate the value of oral information; the traditions mirror the values of the society as researches into modern oral cultures illustrate.<sup>28</sup> It was only with the researches of Milman Parry into orality<sup>29</sup> that the value of oral information was affirmed. Subsequently, it began to be understood that different

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concludes (p.209) that modern historical method includes the reconstruction of the past from documents written and unwritten but oral information is not included as p.212 makes clear. A.D. Momigliano suggests that the new attitude towards documents appeared during the Late Empire and that the *Augustan History* and Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* display this attitude: *Studies in Historiography*, London, 1966, p.145, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, Oxford, 1977, p.217, Veyne, *op.cit.*, (n.15) pp.12,133.

<sup>25</sup> Schepens, pp.259-261.

<sup>26</sup> The distinction is clearly recognised by A.D. Momigliano: 'Modern methods of historical research are completely founded on the distinction between original sources and secondary sources.'; Quoted by G. Huppert, *L'idée de l'histoire parfaite*, Paris, 1973, p.7, n.1.

<sup>27</sup> Evans, p.109, R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge, 1992, p.89.

<sup>28</sup> Vansina, pp.114-123. For a recent study of the analogies with modern oral societies, see Evans, *op.cit.*, (n.6), pp.113-120.

<sup>29</sup> Milman Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, ed. Adam Parry, Oxford, 1971.



techniques could coax a viable historical harvest from oral information and an exoneration of Herodotos' reputation as a reliable historian began.<sup>30</sup>

Herodotos does not accord the written word, be it inscriptions or the records kept by the Egyptian priests, any priority over oral traditions.<sup>31</sup> Nor does Herodotos make any distinction in credibility between instances when he notes that he writes something and when he notes that he says something.<sup>32</sup> Herodotos relied upon ὄψις, γνώμη and ἱστορίη (including ἀκοή) alone or in combination, to provide the material for his report. While in Herodotos, as elsewhere, "autopsy" when possible may have exercised the strongest claim to reliability,<sup>33</sup> after ὄψις comes ἀκοή in all its guises. As Jacoby has noted "for [Herodotos] *akoe*, *opsis*, and even *gnome* are sources of knowledge of equal reliability".<sup>34</sup> Clearly, Herodotos did not doubt information just because it was relayed orally. His indications of oral transmission by source-attributing words suggested reserve to scholars steeped in the methodology of scientific history and written evidence. However, as the examples considered by this study have shown, there is for Herodotos no real distinction in historiographical principle between

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<sup>30</sup> See references Chapter 1, footnote 67.

<sup>31</sup> Hartog, pp.279-283.

<sup>32</sup> As outlined by Hartog, pp.283-289.

<sup>33</sup> An appeal to personal autopsy in order to verify the reliability of some account, especially when that account relates to astonishing phenomenon, was present in Homer and from the early Ionian philosophers to Aristotle the evidence of the eyes was considered more trustworthy than that of the ears; G. Nenci, 'Il Motivo dell'autopsia nella Storiografia Greca' *SCO* 3 (1953), pp.14-46, Hartog, pp.261-262.

<sup>34</sup> F. Jacoby, *Atthis*, Oxford, 1949. p.391, n.16.

knowing because of autopsy and knowing because he heard it. It is necessary, therefore, to view the citations of Herodotos on his own terms, not upon a modern theory of source criticism which was alien to Herodotos and his society.

### **7.3: Some Passages With Source-attributing Words Reconsidered**

In the Introduction, proponents of the view that source-attributing words function as indicators by Herodotos to the audience that certain information is unreliable were cited. However, the passages they adduce as evidence for their view are only a very small sample of the number of times source-attributing words are utilised by Herodotos. In fact, most of the passages cited as evidence that Herodotos distanced himself by means of source-attributing words were first suggested in the commentary of Macan. I have argued in this study that source-attributing words do not themselves function as indicators of reserve, but as indicators to the audience of oral information and the identity of sources. In the remainder of this chapter I intend to reconsider the occurrences of source-attributing words which seem to lie at the heart of the negative viewpoint. The passages reconsidered below are the source citations at 4.184.4, 5.42.1, 5.82.3, 5.113, 7.212, 8.88, 8.118.3 and 8.138.3.

4.184.4: λέγονται<sup>35</sup>

This source-attributing word occurs in a passage describing the geography and customs of the people of Africa from Libya towards the Atlas Mountain (4.181-194). This descriptive passage contains information about many seemingly strange customs, such as people who eat snakes and lizards, speak like the squealing of bats or people who have no individual names. To show the audience that, despite its strangeness, the information is likely to be reliable, a Herodotean dialogue occurs. For example, Herodotos comments that the Atarantes, alone of mankind we know, have no individual names

οἱ ἀνώνυμοί εἰσι μόνοι ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν

(4.184.1)

and, as part of the same dialogue, he reveals that the people of the Atlas Mountain are said (λέγονται, 4.184.4) to eat no living creature nor dream when asleep. This dietary information, based on a misconception of North African eating habits,<sup>36</sup> would seem dubious to a Greek audience unused to total vegetarians.<sup>37</sup> As the passages examined in Chapter 3.3 illustrate, the customs of all peoples are of interest to Herodotos and all are explicable in terms of the diversity of human nature whether source-attributing words are present in the

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<sup>35</sup> Cited by Macan, *IV-VI*, p.228, as an example of reserve. In his commentary on 4.184 Macan (*IV-VI*, p.134) refers to the entire passage but makes no other reference to reserve.

<sup>36</sup> How/Wells, vol.1, p.363.

<sup>37</sup> Although the poor would not eat meat regularly, meat and fish formed part of the diet: Hdt. 2.77, Hippocratic, *A Regimen For Health* 1, Xenophon, *The Spartan Constitution* 1.3-4, J.M. Moore, *Aristotle and Xenophon on Democracy and Oligarchy*, London, 1983, p.95, W.K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece*, Auckland, 1980, p.167.

account or not. Herodotos does not doubt that bizarre and strange customs exist nor does he reject any information about them on the basis of γνώμη; all customs are reasonable because different societies possess their own values and customs. Recording details of these customs is an integral part of the Herodotean narrative. In the section describing African geography and customs many strange customs are described by Herodotos and it seems unlikely that he has doubts about just one. Instead, I believe that the function of source-attributing word in this description is to attest that the story, even though strange, was not invented by Herodotos but was based upon oral information.

5.42.1: ὡς λέγεται<sup>38</sup>

This reference occurs as an aside in a section on the birth of Kleomenes and the fate of his brother Dorieus (5.41-48). The sentence reads

ὁ μὲν δὴ Κλεομένης, ὡς λέγεται, ἦν τε οὐ φρενίρης  
ἄκρομανής τε (5.42.1)

and the emphasis is provided within the sentence: "Indeed Kleomenes, as is said, was not in his right mind but crazy".

It is extremely unlikely that ὡς λέγεται in this sentence is intended by Herodotos as a distancing device implying that he doubts the story. As in his account of Kambyes,<sup>39</sup> Herodotos consistently

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<sup>38</sup> Cited by Macan, *IV-VI*, p.228, as an example of reserve. In his commentary on 5.42 Macan (*IV-VI*, p.183) only questions the identity of the informant, not the use of ὡς λέγεται by Herodotos. For a recent view of Herodotos' portrait, see G.L. Cawkwell, 'Cleomenes' *Mnemosyne* 46 (1993), pp.506-527.

<sup>39</sup> Herodotos' portrayal of Kambyes is examined in Chapter 3.1.3.

portrays an individual, in this case Kleomenes, as a madman,<sup>40</sup> a portrayal which culminates in an extensive section (6.75-84) devoted to variant explanations of why Kleomenes went mad<sup>41</sup> which concludes with Herodotos' first person comment that

ἔμοι δὲ δοκέει τίσιν ταύτην ὁ Κλεομένης Δημαρήτῳ  
ἐκτεῖσαι. (6.84.3)

Herodotos' opinion about the sanity of Kleomenes, confirmed by the narrative, is outlined in the statement which introduces Kleomenes in the *Histories*. The statement incorporating ὡς λέγεται (5.42.1) is intended to guide the audience's perception of the character of Kleomenes from the start. In these circumstances, the source-attributing word is unlikely to be an indication of reserve. Rather, the source-attributing word reinforces the narrative account of the madness of Kleomenes because it shows that Herodotos' view has support in oral tradition. Although not entirely free from doubt, the source-attributing word may have been introduced to enhance the narrative because Herodotos was aware of the existence of alternative, contrary accounts about Kleomenes which he challenged.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Immerwahr, pp.192-193, noted that Kleomenes' birth and accession were irregular and argued that the common theme of his *logos* in the *Histories* is his impiety.

<sup>41</sup> The section is examined in Chapter 2.2.1 & footnotes 37-40.

<sup>42</sup> Which Herodotos' narrative on other occasions cannot hide. For a recent re-examination of Herodotos' account of Kleomenes which points to the parallels between the accounts of Kleomenes and Kambyzes, see A. Griffiths, 'Was Kleomenes Mad?' in A. Powell (ed), *Classical Sparta: Techniques Behind Her Success*, London, 1989, pp.51-78, esp. pp.70-72.

5.82.2: λέγεται<sup>43</sup>

This source-attributing word occurs in a section incorporating numerous source-attributing words, variant accounts and reliability indicators in which Herodotos describes the enmity between Aigina and Athens (5.82-89). This section was examined in detail in Chapter 4.2.3 and is not repeated here. Many source citations to both Athenians and Aiginetan informants occur in this section<sup>44</sup> and I believe that it is inconsistent to infer reserve in respect of a single example while ignoring the others. When Herodotos disagrees with information within the section, he specifically says so, for example, when he directly states that he disagrees with the account of the Aiginetans that two statues fell simultaneously to their knees (5.86.2-3). In the face of Herodotos' specific statements, identifying facts he does not believe although he does record them, the source-attributing words which identify the source for each variant are unlikely to mean that Herodotos has reservations about the totality of both versions of events and believes each to be unreliable. Rather, the function of the source-attributing words in this section is to show the audience the identity of the various informants and to delineate precisely the information each provided. The account of the conflict between Athens and Aigina was derived from local informants, telling a believable story about events in their own past which is often in agreement on essential details and has supporting evidence. Their citation by Herodotos is intended to show the audience the authority of his oral sources for the different accounts, not imply reserve.

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<sup>43</sup> Cited by Macan, *IV-VI*, p.228, and Figueira, pp.54, n.14, as an example of reserve.

<sup>44</sup> Informants are identified at 5.85.1, 5.86.1, 5.86.2, 5.86.4, 5.87.1 & 5.87.2.

5.113.1: λέγονται<sup>45</sup>

This source-attributing word introduces an aside in Herodotos' account of the Persian conquest of Cyprus. Herodotos names Stesenor as the tyrant of Kourion and adds that the Kourians are said to be Argive:

οἱ δὲ Κουριέες οὗτοι λέγονται εἶναι Ἀργείων ἄποικοι.

This claim, that the Argives settled Kourion, was not without challenge in antiquity.<sup>46</sup> Where there were conflicting oral traditions Herodotos' citation of a source is intended to establish the authority of his record. In this instance, rather than implying reserve, the source-attributing word is intended to show that Herodotos' record has the support of the oral tradition of the locals and is therefore likely to be reliable.

7.212.1: λέγεται<sup>47</sup>

This source-attributing word occurs in the middle of Herodotos' description of the fighting at Thermopylai (7.209-213). The passage commences with Demaratos of Sparta's advice to Xerxes that the outnumbered Spartans were the bravest men of Greece and would fight to the death, advice which the narration indicates Xerxes considered incredible

κάρτα τε δὴ Ξέρῃσι ἄπιστα ἐφαίνετο τὰ λεγόμενα  
[εἶναι]. (7.209.5)

Demaratos replies, in effect, that "events will show" and the narrative of the *Histories* confirms this judgment. First the Medes and Kissians

<sup>45</sup> Cited by Macan, *IV-VI*, p.261, as an example of reserve.

<sup>46</sup> Strabo (683) supports the claim but there were conflicting Phoenician and Peloponnesian claims to have settled Kourion: How/Wells, vol.2, p.62.

<sup>47</sup> Cited by Macan, *VII-IX*, p.315, as an example of reserve.

attacked the Spartans and were repulsed with heavy losses. Xerxes then committed the Immortals but in fierce fighting they too were defeated. In the course of this conflict, it is said, Xerxes three times sprang up from his throne in fear for his army:

ἐν ταύτησι τῆσι προσόδοισι τῆς μάχης λέγεται  
βασιλέα θηεύμενον τρὶς ἀναδραμεῖν ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου,  
δείσαντα περὶ τῆ στρατιῆ. (7.212.1)

The context of the passage makes it extremely unlikely that Herodotos doubted Xerxes acted as reported. Instead, the information incorporating the source-attributing word is consistent with Herodotos' narrative as it stresses the bravery of the Spartans and the ferocity of the conflict. As such, the λέγεται information reinforces the narrative, emphasising that the information that Xerxes feared for his army is not invention by Herodotos but was derived by him from oral tradition.

8.88.2: λέγεται<sup>48</sup>

This source-attributing word occurs in Herodotos' account of the battle of Salamis and specifically refers to information about the conduct of Artemisia, tyrant of Halikarnassos. The context of the reference is examined in detail in Chapter 3.1.2. In brief, Herodotos reports that Artemisia by sinking the ship of Damasithymos won favour with Xerxes, for it is said (λέγεται, 8.88.2) that he saw her sink the ship. Confirming that the action was performed by Artemisia, it is said (λέγεται, 8.88.3), Xerxes exclaimed

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<sup>48</sup> Cited by Macan, *VII-IX*, p.496, as an example of reserve. The other source-attributing words are not commented upon by Macan.



οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες γεγόνασί μοι γυναῖκες, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες  
ἄνδρες. (8.88.3)

This exclamation is of importance for Herodotos immediately stresses the basis of his report; they say that Xerxes said these things:

ταῦτα μὲν Ξέρξην φασὶ εἰπεῖν. (8.88.3)

The theme emphasised by Herodotos in the narrative and by Xerxes (in his reported exclamation as repeated by Herodotos) is surprise and wonder at the achievements of a woman. The information introduced through the repeated λέγεται and the φασί reinforces Herodotos' narrative portrayal of Artemisia and is consistent in theme and tone with the rest of the picture of Artemisia in the *Histories*. In these circumstances, it is difficult to accept that the statement that Xerxes praised Artemisia is doubted by Herodotos. Rather, the information incorporating source-attributing words can be seen as an integral part of the story of Artemisia and her achievements at Salamis. The audience's admiration of Artemisia is expected to result from the description in the narrative of her actions, reinforced by the account of the esteem of the Great King. In this way, the source-attributing words act to reinforce the narrative, not undermine it.

8.118.3 λέγεται<sup>49</sup>

This source-attributing word occurs in a passage which describes Xerxes' flight from Greece after his defeat at Salamis. As the entire passage has already been examined in detail<sup>50</sup> only a brief outline is given here. Herodotos indicated that Xerxes marched

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<sup>49</sup> Cited by Lateiner, *Method*, p.22, as an example of reserve.

<sup>50</sup> Chapter 2.3.2.

through Thrace to the Hellespont where, discovering that the bridge of boats had been broken by a storm, he crossed to Abydos by boat. He records that another story is also told. Xerxes left his army at Eion and embarked on a Phoenician ship. In a violent storm Xerxes, it is said (λέγεται, 8.118.3), asked his Persian retainers to leap overboard. Herodotos immediately and emphatically stated that he disbelieved the story (8.119) and outlined his reasons, based on γνώμη and ἱστορίη.

In this passage, Herodotos rejected information involving the source-attributing words λέγεται and φασί because it was contrary to other information he obtained, and because it seemed unreasonable. His rejection of particular information was not implied by the source-attributing words but is stated specifically and unequivocally through authorial insertions by the *histor*, commenting on the narrative. The function of the source-attributing word was to indicate to the audience that, although particular information was rejected by Herodotos, it emanated from an oral source and was worthy of being recorded.

8.138.3: ὡς λέγεται ὑπὸ Μακεδόνων<sup>51</sup>

This source-attributing word occurs in a passage which records the origins of the Macedonian Royal family (8.137-138). This story contains many fairy tale motifs<sup>52</sup> yet incorporates only a single source-attributing word. Fleeing the Macedonian king, three Argive brothers settled near the place called the Garden of Midas where, as is said by the Macedonians

ὡς λέγεται ὑπὸ Μακεδόνων

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<sup>51</sup> Cited by Macan, *VII-IX*, p.578, as an example of reserve.

<sup>52</sup> Fehling, pp.41-43, J. Gould, *Herodotus* (London, 1989), pp.33-34.

the satyr Silenos was captured.

In antiquity, there were conflicting claims made about the site of the garden of Midas. Thymbrion in Turkey, near present day Antioch, was one claimant according to Xenophon,<sup>53</sup> while Pausanias (1.4.5) places the garden on the River Halys. The garden was also placed further to the east; Bion, according to Athenaios, located it midway between the Maidians and the Paionians.<sup>54</sup> The Macedonian location of the garden mentioned by Herodotos is difficult to establish. The name of the river the three brothers cross to evade pursuit is not mentioned in the *Histories* but Herodotos does locate the garden near Mount Bermion, which has been identified in the range between the Haliakmon (modern Vistritsa) and Ludias rivers; hence a site for the garden may be near ancient Edessa (modern Vodena).<sup>55</sup>

Clearly, people from widely separated regions claimed that their area contained the famous garden of Midas. There was a strong early tradition associating Midas with the Phrygians of central Turkey. For example, the name *Mi-ta-as* is attested in a Hittite document<sup>56</sup> while a site near Eskisehir contains a sixth century B.C. inscription

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<sup>53</sup> *Anabasis* 1.2.13.

<sup>54</sup> Athenaios 45c. The Paionians occupied the valleys of the Axios (modern River Vardar) and Strymon rivers between Macedon and Thrace; Hdt. 4.49, 5.1, How/Wells, vol.2, p.1. The location of the garden in this area could have been as a result of the legends which connected the Phrygian Midas with the Thracian Orpheus; see N.G.L. Hammond, *A History of Macedonia*, vol.1, Oxford, 1972, p.411.

<sup>55</sup> See the references in Macan, VII-IX, p.578. For Edessa, see Hammond, *ibid.*, p.303.

<sup>56</sup> Fehling, p.40, n.6.

"ΜΙΔΑΙ" and came to be known as Midas City.<sup>57</sup> It is surely this identification of Midas with the Phrygian highlands which gave rise to the traditions locating the garden in Asia later attested by Xenophon and Pausanias. Yet Herodotos locates the garden in Macedonia on the authority of the Macedonians. Herodotos (7.73) earlier had cited the Macedonians for the information that the Phrygians had, before migrating to Turkey, been neighbours of the Macedonians and had then been called "Briges". In Herodotos' view, therefore, the story of Midas and the satyr must have occurred before the migration of the Phrygians to Asia.<sup>58</sup> It followed, accordingly, that the garden was in Europe, not Asia, so Herodotos cited his source for this single piece of information within the story of the origins of the Macedonian kings.

It has been argued throughout this study that Herodotos utilised source-attributing words to identify informants when information was likely to be disputed or disbelieved in order to establish the authority of his report. Traditions do not grow up overnight and it seems that by the time of Herodotos there were conflicting claims about the location of the famous garden. It was precisely the location of the garden which was in dispute and so only this, seemingly unimportant, piece of information was attributed by Herodotos to the Macedonians using λέγεται. The legend of how the ancestors of Alexander came to possess Macedonia was not in dispute; it was the official tradition of

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<sup>57</sup> C.H.E. Haspels, *The Highlands of Phrygia*, Princeton, 1971, pp.3, 36-40, 289-292, E. Akurgal, *Ancient Civilization and Ruins of Turkey*, Istanbul, 1973, pp.272-275.

<sup>58</sup> For a summary of the theories about the migration of the Phrygians, see E.A. Fredricksmeyer, 'Alexander, Midas, and the Oracle of Gordium,' *CPh* 56 (1961), pp.161-162, Hammond, *op.cit.*, (n.54), pp.303-304, 412-413.

the Macedonians,<sup>59</sup> reported by the Macedonians. It was only in respect of one small detail that there were other traditions and it is on this point precisely that Herodotos cited an authoritative source using λέγεται. The Macedonians could be expected by a Greek audience to have reliable knowledge about their own origins; as they are Herodotos' authority for the location of the garden of Midas he cited them in order to enhance the credibility of the account presented in the *Histories*.

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The above passages all contained source-attributing words which have been cited as examples of Herodotos expressing reserve about information. They may be considered, in essence, the foundation stones of the theory that, merely because of the presence of the source citation, Herodotos doubts cited information. I believe, however, that the source-attributing words in each passage serve a different function. Some show that Herodotos report was based upon oral information. Others provide an emphasis or a climax to the narrative themes or cite as sources people who can be thought of as possessing reliable information. Although the evidence from each passage is not conclusive, I believe that in each case the source-attributing words act to enhance the authority of the narrative in some way. In none of these passages can it be shown why Herodotos was likely to disbelieve the information, or that, in fact, he did have reservations. Rather, each source-attributing word has some claim, in terms of the criteria outlined in this study, to enhance the narrative report.

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<sup>59</sup> Hammond, *op.cit.*, (n.54), pp.433-444.

#### 7.4: The Function of Source-Attributing Words in the *Histories*

English idiom makes it possible to say "John Smith said . . ." or "they say . . ." where the implication by the speaker is that the information is of dubious reliability, a pretext invented by the source to justify or excuse a course of action. However, it is equally possible to use the same idiom for a totally different purpose; to say, for example, "Hammond says . . ." where the identification of the source is intended by the speaker to establish the authority and reliability of the information. In this example, the citation of the view of a scholar with the reputation of N.G.L. Hammond on a point of Macedonian history would generally be accepted by a scholarly audience as authority, rather than reserve. This citation, as it were, functions as an academic footnote in an oral presentation. The interpretation of the information depends upon the intonation of the speaker, the context of the citation and the perceived authority of the source in both the mind of the speaker and the audience.

The large number of passages examined in this study indicate that in many instances Herodotos' citation of sources is analogous to a modern academic footnote, rather than denoting reserve. Clearly, readers of the *Histories* cannot now be certain of the thought processes of Herodotos, who was inventing a new genre. Nor should we expect total consistency in a work as varied and long as the *Histories*, researched and bound together over a considerable time.<sup>60</sup> The analysis

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<sup>60</sup> For the composition of the *Histories* see Macan, *IV-VI*, pp.xc-xcii, *VII-IX*, pp.xlv-1, *VII-IX*, p.xlv, n.2, R. Lattimore, 'The Composition of the *History* of Herodotus' *CPh* 53 (1958), pp.9-21, Waters, p.23, J. Cobet, 'Herodots Exkurse und die Frage der Einheit seines Werkes' *Historia Einzelschriften* 17, Wiesbaden, 1971.

conducted in the earlier chapters of many of the passages which incorporate source-attributing words does, however, strongly suggest that there is a measure of consistency in the use of source-attributing words by Herodotos and so some conclusions about their function are possible.

Herodotos, in order to establish his own enquiries as the definitive version, and to set straight the historical record, tried to show his audience that his report of events was a rational, cogent account, derived from authoritative sources. Thus, throughout the *Histories*, Herodotos engaged in a dialogue with his audience. Sections of the dialogue show the audience the extent of Herodotos' research and the lengths to which he was prepared to go to acquire information from authoritative sources. Other sections outline his research methodology or indicate the limitations of the available information. Reliability indicators and source-attributing words are both a part of the Herodotean dialogue. The dialogue invites the audience to be part of Herodotos' research effort and to accept that the inquirer is honest, reliable and that he based his report on a precise and rational historical methodology.

The passages considered in Chapters Two and Three provide a substantial body of evidence which strongly suggests that source-attributing words in the *Histories* do not function as indications to the audience that Herodotos has reservations about information. This is most clearly shown in the numerous passages where source-attributing words occur in conjunction with information which Herodotos indicates is true. The passages examined in Chapter Three show that there is a substantial number of passages where it is inconsistent with

the narrative theme or illogical to read source-attributing words as denoting reserve. The cumulative effect of the examples considered in Chapters Two and Three is to show that passages where source-attributing words either cannot, or are unlikely to, denote reserve are not in the minority but in the majority and recur throughout the *Histories*.

Herodotos was not averse to intruding his opinions about particular information into the narrative of the *Histories* in the form of reliability indicators. Reliability indicators are introduced by Herodotos into the narrative in circumstances where accounts appear far fetched, fantastic, beyond the range of belief of a normal xenophobic Greek audience, or when there are other accounts current which Herodotos is trying to overturn and show that his report of events is the definitive version. Source-attributing words occur in many of the same circumstances and serve a similar function to reliability indicators but operate within that narrative. Both are part of the dialogue between Herodotos and the audience intended to enhance the credibility of the narrative.

Why were source-attributing words a necessary part of Herodotos' historical reporting? The constant citation of sources by Herodotos was brought about by his reliance upon oral traditions and was part of his methodological response to them. It has been pointed out on more than one occasion that all cogent history is a form of myth, for statements of historical fact in isolation are not comprehensible but require representation, interpretation and



reconstruction in the mind of the historian to be history.<sup>61</sup> Herodotos recorded traditions "so that the memory of the past would be preserved" and as such, he was fixing a coherent and reliable tradition for future generations. One way to distinguish his account from epic was to highlight that the *Histories* were based upon information derived from knowledgeable sources and was not conceived and constructed in the mind of the author or inspired by the Muse. The historian, in reconstructing a rational account of the events of the past, is free to use all the aspects of imagination, except invention. It was therefore necessary for Herodotos to indicate to his audience that the information he records has a credible source or emanated from oral tradition, especially in instances where facts, interpretations or opinions were likely to be disputed. This indication was made through source-attributing words, especially where the informants can be assumed to have accurate knowledge. The recording of details of his sources and source material by Herodotos as part of his dialogue with his audience is intended to reinforce the ability of the narrative to elicit belief in the mind of that audience and thus attest to the superiority of the account in the *Histories*. The narrator uses source-attributing words as part of his technique to persuade his audience of the credibility of his account.

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<sup>61</sup> Immerwahr, p.4; E.H. Carr, *What is History*, Harmondsworth, 1964, p.22, P. Munz, 'History and Myth' *PhilosQ* 6 (1956), p.9.