

## Introduction

In her preface to the published papers of a 1986 conference on the theme "Herodotus and the Invention of History" (*Arethusa* 20 [1987]), Deborah Boedeker noted (p.5) that there remained a considerable number of serious questions at the core of Herodotean studies. Some of the questions she identified were "How should we think of Herodotus as an 'author': what is his relation to his material and his audience? . . . what relation does his written work have to the oral traditions from which it purports, on the whole, to derive? What factors contribute to the engaging mimetic quality of Herodotus' prose, and can this kind of writing be considered serious historiography? What issues and concerns led to the creation of the *Histories*, and what kind of cultural environment made the work possible?" These questions can be addressed in a variety of ways, as the papers delivered at the 1986 conference illustrate. In this study Herodotos' relationship with his audience, his source material, his informants and his historical methodology are examined through an evaluation of the function of source citations in the *Histories*: Herodotos' references to "they say".

Along with digressions and variant accounts, the repeated statements by Herodotos that "the Greeks (or Egyptians or Persians) say" or "it is said" are among the most notable features of the *Histories*. These source citations take different forms but generally involve phrases<sup>1</sup> containing the verbs λέγω and φημί.<sup>2</sup> For example, in the sentences

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<sup>1</sup> The English phrases "it is said" or "they say" are expressed in Greek by single words. In this study, "word" and "phrase" are used interchangeably, depending on the sense of the English sentence.

τῷ δὲ λέγουσι Κορίνθιοι (1.23),  
 φασὶ δέ μιν Δελφοὶ (1.51.3) or  
 κατὰ περ οἱ ἱρέες ἔλεγον (2.10.1)

the verbs λέγουσι, φασί and ἔλεγον are part of a phrase pointing to the identity of Herodotos' sources<sup>3</sup> and thus function as source-attributing words. In other passages, such as Hdt. 2.175.5, λέγουσι and φασι do not have a specific subject and thus no generic source is identified. The "source" in this case is anonymous yet, while a specific informant is not identified, the verb still indicates that Herodotos' account emanated from what can be best designated as oral reports.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Although other words, for example, πυνθάνομαι and ἀκούω "I learnt/discovered" and "I hear", also provide information about sources: see Chapter 6.

<sup>3</sup> It should to be said from the beginning that this study is not a quest of the kind conducted by Jacoby and others to identify the sources used by Herodotos: Jacoby, *RE*, cols.392-467, W. Schmid and O. Stählin, *Geschichte der Griechischen Literatur*, Munich, 1920-1948, vol.2, pp.62-63, Ph.-E. Legrand, *Hérodote. Introduction*, (2nd ed.), Paris, 1955, pp.57-58, K. von Fritz, *Die Griechische Geschichtsschreibung* Vol.1, Berlin, 1967, pp.407-409, H. Verdin, *De Historisch-kritische Methode van Herodotus*, Brussels, 1971, pp.1-53. Nor does this study consider the question of the truthfulness of Herodotos' source citations so strongly argued by Detlev Fehling (*Die Quellenangaben bei Herodot: Studien zur Erzählkunst Herodots*, Berlin, 1971, revised and updated as *Herodotus and his 'Sources': Citation, Invention and Narrative Art* (trans. J.G. Howie), Leeds, 1989; cf. my review in *Ancient History* 20 [1990], pp.180-183). As this study examines the function of source-attributing words in the *Histories* it does not matter if the citations are completely fictitious, as Fehling believes, or not. Real or fictitious, it is their function in the literary work, the *Histories*, which is relevant.

<sup>4</sup> Λέγω and φημί may in some cases refer to written sources. For example, while Herodotos introduces the opinion of the Ionians and Greeks about the Nile Delta with φασί (2.15.1) and the account of the Greeks on the experiment of Psammetichos, the behaviour of the Nile and a story of Herakles with λέγουσι

The "source" of Herodotos' account is an oral tradition heard by Herodotos and it is fact that he indicates to the audience utilising words such as λέγουσι. For the purpose of this study, both generic and anonymous citations are source citations.<sup>5</sup> Because of this extension to include anonymous citations of oral tradition, "source citation" is too narrow a term to describe the various ways Herodotos provided his audience with information about his source material and his sources. Accordingly, in this study phrases where Herodotos provides both specific source citations and non-specific indications of anonymous oral information as sources are collectively termed "source-attributing words".

In contrast, phrases which introduce indirect and direct speech, such as "Xerxes said this" or "he said" are not source citations as they neither indicate the source Herodotos utilised nor the nature of his source material. The difference between "they say" when it functions as a source-attributing word and when it does not can best be illustrated by the following example. In his account of the Battle of Salamis (8.88.2-3), Herodotos recorded that Artemisia's sinking of the ship of Damasithymos achieved two things. First, the Greek ship pursuing Artemisia assumed she was on the Greek side and turned away. Second, she won favour with Xerxes, for it is said (λέγεται, 8.88.2) that he saw her sink the ship and, it is said (λέγεται, 8.88.3), he said (εἶπεῖν, 8.88.3): "My men have become women, and my women, men." Herodotos then confirms that they say Xerxes said these things:

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or λέγει (2.2.5, 2.20.1 and 2.45.1), there is a possibility that some of this information came from the written account of Hekataios; see Chapter 1, footnote 40.

<sup>5</sup> In Appendix B, these are marked "not attributed".

ταῦτα μὲν Ξέρξην φασὶ εἶπεῖν (8.88.3).

In this example, each λέγεται, as well as φασί, are source-attributing words while εἶπεῖν is not. This is because the latter is part of the narrative, indicating that Xerxes is the speaker, which tells the audience nothing about the source Herodotos used for the information about what Xerxes said. On the other hand, each λέγεται and φασί indicates to the audience that, while the specific informant is not identified, Herodotos' account emanated from oral reports. These are accordingly source-attributing words.

The number of occurrences of λέγουσι, ἔλεγον, λέγεται and φημί as source-attributing words in the *Histories* are indicated in the table below. Clearly, this table does not include every incidence of these words in the *Histories*; Powell, for example, lists 1096 occurrences of the various forms of λέγω alone,<sup>6</sup> most of which indicate direct speech. Rather, the table records only those instances where the words are used by Herodotos as source-attributing words.<sup>7</sup>

**Table A:**

**Source-attributing Words by Book**

<i>Book:</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	<i>Totals</i>
λέγουσι	36	43	22	45	17	17	19	12	5	216
ἔλεγον	1	41	2	3	-	3	-	2	-	52
λέγεται	15	17	25	18	6	7	21	11	7	127
φασί	15	37	10	12	1	3	3	3	1	85
Total	67	138	59	78	24	30	43	28	13	480

<sup>6</sup> Powell, pp.205-207.

<sup>7</sup> Jacoby, *RE*, cols.398-399, listed over 300 source citations but, as the table shows, his list is not complete. For a list of source-attributing words by Book, plus identified informants, see Appendix B. See also C Darbo-Peschanski, 'Les *Logoi* des autres dans les *Histoires* d'Hérodote' *QS* 22 (1985), pp.105-128.

I believe that Herodotos' frequent use of source-attributing words was, in part, a methodological response which resulted from his reliance upon oral traditions as source material. Oral tradition as historical information presents many problems for a researcher.<sup>8</sup> Oral traditions keep alive a selective past, elaborating and reworking events to the essential satisfaction and purpose of those maintaining the tradition from one generation to the next. They are subject to constant change through the vagaries of political loyalties, personal prejudice, bias or propaganda, exaggeration, individual interests, special pleadings, aesthetic forms, defective memory or merely the varied ability of those retelling the tradition. Because of the changeability of oral information, it was necessary for Herodotos to maintain a rational methodology in order to mould the mass of often contradictory information into some historical pattern.

Herodotos does provide information about his methodology but his information is fragmentary at best. Herodotos, it has been noted, "explains his procedure only in part and not all at once . . . and at different points throughout his work; he employs a diverse vocabulary of inquiry in his comments to the reader on his process of discovery; and his source citations outside of book 2 (and a few places in 3 and 4) lack specificity about where his enquiries took place and

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (esp. Chapt. 2), Oxford, 1978, J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, London & Nairobi, 1985, pp.193-196, and the bibliography, pp.229-245, and, more directly related to classical studies, R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens*, Cambridge, 1989 and *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge, 1992..

how he obtained the information presented in his work."<sup>9</sup> Some of the passages in which Herodotos explained his historical methodology, and the nature and limitations of oral information as source material as it applied to Herodotos, are considered in Chapter One.

In Chapters Two, Three and Four particular aspects of the incidence of source-attributing words in the *Histories* and their possible function are considered. In Chapter Two, the view that Herodotos used source-attributing words, especially λέγεται, in order to indicate to his audience that he had doubts about the veracity of the information recorded is examined. It has been maintained, for example, that when Herodotos states "the Athenians (or Spartans or Egyptians) say" he is really indicating to the audience that it is the people he cites who are responsible for the accuracy of the information, not Herodotos.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, when Herodotos states "it is said", λέγεται, this indicates that he reserves or suspends judgment on the veracity of the material. This view was proposed by Macan<sup>11</sup> and it has since been followed by Pearson, Waddell, Figueira, Lateiner and Shimron.<sup>12</sup> These scholars

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<sup>9</sup> Dewald/Marincola, p.38.

<sup>10</sup> Waters, *Herodotos*, p.76, Schepens, p.259, A.D. Momigliano, 'Greek Historiography' *H&T* 17 (1978), p.5.

<sup>11</sup> Macan, *VII-IX*, p.578. Macan in his commentary, for example, on 5.113, 7.212 & 8.88, repeats the view that λέγεται is used by Herodotos to signal reserve.

<sup>12</sup> L. Pearson, 'Credulity and Scepticism in Herodotus' *TAPhA* 72 (1941), p.344, W.G. Waddell, *Herodotus, Book II*, Hertfordshire, 1939, p.234 on Hdt. 2.130, Figueira, pp.54-55, Lateiner, p.104, n.21, and *Method*, pp.22 & 284, n.48, B. Shimron, 'Politics and Belief in Herodotus', *Historia Einzelschriften* 58 (1989), esp. pp.75-80. Shimron, p.18, note 9, includes ἔλεγον as an indication of doubt. Cf. Hartog, p.271, who more cautiously remarks that λέγεται does not indicate "either that the narrator credits [the information] totally or that he altogether disbelieves it".

maintain that source-attributing words are negative indicators by Herodotos; they denote reserve, a method by which Herodotos contrasts information he has heard, but is unable to vouch for, with other information. However, there is little supporting evidence adduced for this conclusion and, indeed, the instances cited are only a very small sample of the times source-attributing words are utilised by Herodotos.<sup>13</sup>

In this study, I propose a different view of the function of source-attributing words. In English it is indeed 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 excuse a course of action. However, in an oral presentation it is equally possible to say, "Hammond says . . ." or "Kagan states . . ." where the identification of the source is intended by the speaker to establish the authority and the reliability of the information. This citation of a source, as it were, in an oral presentation functions like an academic footnote. 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. While the intonation of Herodotos cannot now be established, the context of the source citation and the perceived authority of the source in the view of Herodotos and the audience can be determined to some degree. If the view that Herodotos used source-attributing words to indicate to his audience that he has reservations about the accuracy of particular

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<sup>13</sup> The limited examples cited by the scholars (footnotes 11-12 above) are considered in Chapter 7.3.

information is correct, therefore, it should be possible to show that Herodotos does clearly use source-attributing words to indicate doubt in the great majority of the passages in which they occur.

In Chapter Two of this study most of the passages where Herodotos uses source-attributing words but also expressly indicates his own view of the reliability of the information are examined. This examination suggests that when Herodotos wanted to indicate doubt about the accuracy of certain information, he stated his reservations directly and unequivocally. In Chapter Three many of the passages where Herodotos recorded material incorporating source-attributing words without expressing any view about its veracity are examined. In Chapter Four passages involving source-attributing words and variant accounts are discussed. The cumulative effect of this examination of passages which include source-attributing words is to show that in the majority of occurrences in the *Histories* source-attributing words are unlikely to indicate reserve on the part of Herodotos. They do not, therefore, function as indicators of reserve.

I believe, instead, that source-attributing words function as part of Herodotos' dialogue with his audience intended to persuade that audience that he was a credible researcher and reporter and that the *Histories* were a reliable and accurate record of events. Source-attributing words, however, are not the only way Herodotos provides information to his audience about his material. Unlike Thucydides and later historians of the Greco-Roman tradition, Herodotos frequently intrudes his own *persona* into the *Histories* in a very public dialogue with his audience about how he collected and analysed his source



material.<sup>14</sup> The most frequent form of this dialogue is when Herodotos intrudes the separate persona of the *histor* into the narrative.<sup>15</sup> This persona as *histor* is intended by Herodotos to be separate and distinct from the voice of the narrative. As *histor*, Herodotos steps beyond the narrative to advise and instruct the audience about that narrative. In the *Histories*, therefore, there are intended to be two ostensible viewpoints presented to the audience within the work; the researcher, establishing the information within the narrative, and the *histor*, commenting upon the research of the researcher and the reliability of the facts presented. This extra commentary guides the audiences' response to the narrative and indicates how Herodotos wishes the audience to understand the results of his research. These authorial comments are part of Herodotos' dialogue with the audience and they function as a section of what I have called in this study "reliability indicators" .

The term "reliability indicators" includes any word, phrase or statement by means of which Herodotos indicates to his audience his own opinion about the reliability of particular information. Thus, explicit statements of opinion, such as direct authorial insertions by Herodotos indicating that particular information is true, the claim that he personally saw things, or such statements as "I know this is so" or "it seems to me these things happened" are reliability indicators. Reliability indicators do not need to be positive; a statement that a certain piece of information is not reliable is no less a reliability indicator as it clearly provides evidence of how "unreliable" Herodotos

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<sup>14</sup> Thucydides does explain how he collected and analysed his information (1.20-21) but then does not mention it again.

<sup>15</sup> Dewald, p.153, explains the term *histor*.

believed that information to be. The role of reliability indicators in the *Histories* and their relationship to source-attributing words is examined in Chapter Five.

In Chapter Six, two further verbs used as source-attributing words in the *Histories*, ἀκούω and πυνθάνομαι, are examined and Herodotos' dialogue with his audience considered in more detail. For example, it is argued that 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. In the Herodotean dialogue, in essence, he invites the audience into his researches, and they are asked to accept that the inquirer is honest, reliable and based his report on a precise and rational methodology.

In Chapter Seven I argue that the Herodotean dialogue was a consequence of two main factors. First, it was a response by Herodotos to the nature of his oral source material. Second, it occurred because Herodotos needed to distance himself and the record of his researches, that is the *Histories*, from the epic tradition in Greek thought and literature. I believe that 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. His models, and those of his audience, included the verse epics of Homer and Hesiod. Herodotos' purpose, as explained in his proem, was not dissimilar to that of the epic poet but Herodotos was keen to establish that his achievement and methodology were of a new order. The epic poets received their information from the Muses. In the *Histories*,

through methodological statements, first person commentary, reliability indicators and source-attributing words, Herodotos shows the audience that, although they are dealing with a work based largely on oral tradition and technique, Herodotos' information had not been derived from the Muses. Instead, 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 traditions and techniques of epic.

This conclusion results from detailing and categorising most of the occurrences of source-attributing words in the *Histories*. It is true that we perhaps should not look to Herodotos for complete consistency in his use of language and accept that source-attributing words may be used with differing functions in the *Histories*. It may also be possible, as noted earlier, that tonal intonation gave a clue to Herodotos' audience that information was not intended to be taken seriously. However, Herodotos' tone of voice cannot now be determined and, in any case, it is not something over which any author has control when his work is read by others. On the other hand, it is clear that the *Histories* do show a unity of style, organisation and historical vision by Herodotos<sup>16</sup> and this study indicates, by examining a large number of passages incorporating source-attributing words, that there is indeed a measure of consistency in their use by Herodotos. No single example proves or disproves the hypothesis argued by this study. Rather, it is the accumulation of many examples which provides the basis for the

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<sup>16</sup> As argued, for example, in the studies of J.L. Myres, *Herodotus: Father of History*, Oxford, 1953 and H.R. Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus*, Atlanta, 1986.

suggested conclusion. The conclusions suggested are tested by means of an examination of the occurrences of source-attributing words and reliability indicators in a complete book of the *Histories*. Thus, Book Nine is examined in detail in Appendix A.

It has been pointed out on more than one occasion that all rational 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. 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 the epic tradition was to highlight that the *Histories* were based upon information derived from knowledgeable sources and were not inspired by the Muse. The Muse did not recite the knowledge recorded in the *Histories* to Herodotos. Instead, the knowledge was received by Herodotos from human informants. The credibility of the *Histories* as a record in these circumstances was based upon an authority derived from the reliability of its sources and the methodology and personal prestige of Herodotos. As such, 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.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See especially Hartog, pp.291-293.

## Chapter 1:

### Oral Information as Historical Source Material

Herodotos' source citations in the *Histories* are a constant reminder to the audience that he based his account upon oral information; the things people "said". The question of whether the source citations serve any consistent function has rarely been considered, although some scholars believe that on occasion they are Herodotos' indications to the audience that he doubted the accuracy of certain information.<sup>1</sup> This view, I believe, does not consciously take into account the fact that oral information was the source material for the majority of the *Histories*.

Oral information as historical source material requires particular assumptions to be made about the nature of evidence and a methodology tailored to oral evidence. Herodotos evolved his methodology in order to impose some form of order onto the mass of often contradictory oral information. His use of source-attributing words to identify informants should, I believe, be seen as an integral part of his evolution of a historical methodology developed to address the problems created by the unique characteristics of his oral source material.

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

### 1.1: The "Primacy" of Oral Information

Herodotos may have consulted written records during his researches for the *Histories*. For example, Herodotos does refer to and quote epigraphical evidence<sup>2</sup> and he may have had access to written material such as oracular responses at Delphi and Dodona<sup>3</sup> or archival material at Athens.<sup>4</sup> Written records may also have been the basis of sections of the *Histories* such as the accounts of the Persian Royal Road (5.52-54), the list of Persian satrapies (3.89-97) or the detailed inventory of the Persian forces which accompanied Xerxes into Greece (7.59-99).<sup>5</sup> Herodotos may also have consulted earlier historical and geographic accounts.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Herodotos shows an extensive knowledge of Greek poets and he may have had available copies of their works.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A list is given in S. West, 'Herodotus' Epigraphical Interests' *CQ* 35 (1985), pp.279-280.

<sup>3</sup> Although these responses may not have been written down and archived but remained in oral form: Evans, pp.133-134; cf. H.W. Parke & D.E.W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*, vol.2, Oxford, 1956, pp.vii, xii-xix.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, pp.39-40, 79-81.

<sup>5</sup> How/Wells, vol.1, pp.280 & 406, vol.2, p.152, A.T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, Chicago, 1948, p.299, A.D. Godley, *Herodotus*, (vol.1), Cambridge, 1981, p.xvii, Myres, pp.159 & 220, Pritchett, pp.264-266, G.C. Cameron, 'The Persian Satrapies and Related Matters' *JNES* 32 (1973), pp.47-56; cf. O.K. Armayor, 'Herodotos' Catalogues of the Persian Empire in the light of the Monuments and the Greek Literary Tradition' *TAPhA* 108 (1978), pp.3-8.

<sup>6</sup> L. Pearson, *Early Ionian Historians*, (repr.) Connecticut, 1975, esp. pp.3-6, Drews, pp.20-33.

<sup>7</sup> Herodotos displays an extensive knowledge of Homer by both direct quotation (2.116.3-5; 4.29, 7.161.3) and reference (2.53, 2.117, 4.32) and also refers to Hesiod (2.53, 4.32), Olen (4.35.3), Archilochos of Paros (1.12.2), Sappho (2.135.6), Pindar (3.38.4), Simonides of Keios (5.102.3, 7.228.4) and Solon (5.113.2).

Despite these written records, the majority of the information available to Herodotos was in the form of oral information and oral tradition, including city and family remembrances.<sup>8</sup>

Oral accounts of any kind, especially oral traditions, are clearly subject to constant change, and keep alive a selective past to the essential satisfaction and purpose of those maintaining the tradition from one generation to the next.<sup>9</sup> The more time that has elapsed since an event or the more frequently the oral account has been transmitted, the more chance that the account has been altered in some way. Yet, oral accounts survive through generations only because they serve a useful purpose to the group which preserves them: "every testimony and every tradition has a purpose and fulfils a function. It is because of this that they exist at all. For if a testimony had no purpose, and did not fulfil any function, it would be meaningless for anyone to pass it on, and no-one would pass it on."<sup>10</sup> Oral information is thus preserved by a particular group because it is important in some way to that group; it concerns great events, or their city, their family or their peers. Unimportant details or events unremarkable to that group are not preserved by that group although information about the same incident

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<sup>8</sup> Herodotos states throughout his account he proposes ὅτι τὰ λεγόμενα ὑπ' ἐκάστων ἀκοῆ γράφω (2.123.1) and the frequent references to speech as the source of information confirm that oral information provided the basis of much of Herodotos' information: Waters, p.76 & n.2, p.93, Schepens, p.259, A.D. Momigliano, 'Greek Historiography' *H&T* 17 (1978), p.5, S. West, 'And it came to Pass that Pharaoh Dreamed: Notes on Herodotus 2.139,141' *CQ* 37 (1987), p.262, n.3.

<sup>9</sup> R. Finnegan, 'A Note on Oral Tradition and Historical Evidence' *H&T* 9 (1970), pp.99-201, M.I. Finley, 'Myth, Memory and History' in *The Use and Abuse of History*, London, 1975, pp.26-27.

<sup>10</sup> Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, (trans. H.M. Wright), Harmondsworth, 1965, p.77.

may be preserved by other groups. The tradition preserved depends upon the group and if this group then speaks to an inquirer, such as Herodotos, it is their version of events which is recorded. If Herodotos does not speak to the group, the information is lost to him (unless he hears it elsewhere).

I acknowledge that "oral information" and "oral tradition" are not identical. Oral traditions have been defined by Vansina as "verbal messages which are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation".<sup>11</sup> Henige<sup>12</sup> argues that to be "oral tradition" the information should be widely accepted by the society and have been handed down over at least several generations. These definitions stress the aspect of memory, that is, the repeating of oral information through more than one generation. Herodotos clearly used oral traditions as source material for the *Histories*. Yet "tradition" is usually linked with important themes and events, and does not readily encompass the gossip, innuendo and the general mimetic nature of much of the information preserved by Herodotos. In addition, Herodotos also used information which was not relayed through several generations and, indeed, he seems to have made no distinction between information he heard about events of 200 years previously and information within one generation.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, "oral tradition" is too restrictive a term to describe all Herodotos' source material. Instead, the term "oral information" is generally used in this study and the terms "oral

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<sup>11</sup> Vansina, p.27.

<sup>12</sup> D. Henige, *The Chronology of Oral Tradition. Quest for a Chimera*, Oxford, 1974, pp.2, 106.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 2.3.2.



tradition" and "oral history",<sup>14</sup> when used, have no technical meaning but occur as terms interchangeable with "oral information" to denote the oral nature of Herodotos' source material.

An oral society cannot and does not depreciate the value of oral information as source material; the traditions of a society mirror its values as researches into modern oral cultures illustrate.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that in the mind of most ancient historical writers, including Herodotos, oral information seems to have ranked first in terms of importance, well above written records.<sup>16</sup> This is confirmed a number of ways in the *Histories*. First, it is clear that Herodotos maintains the illusion that his work is presented as an oral account, even where it is likely to have been based on written sources.<sup>17</sup> Second, even when written evidence was available, Herodotos preferred to rely upon oral reports.<sup>18</sup> Third, the constant reference in the *Histories* to "the Athenians/Spartans/Persians say" means that the oral nature of Herodotos' information is repeatedly brought to the attention of his audience.

This repeated emphasis, stressing that the *Histories* was derived from oral reports, indicates a historical perspective which

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<sup>14</sup> For "oral history" defined see Thomas, p.12

<sup>15</sup> Vansina, pp.114-123. In essence, all societies preserve historical information and in an oral society its form is oral tradition: C.G. Thomas, 'Between Literacy and Orality: Herodotus' Historiography' *Mediterranean Historical Review* 3 (1988), p.55. For a recent study of the analogies with modern oral societies, see Evans, pp.113-120.

<sup>16</sup> Schepens, p.258; cf. B. Lacroix, *L'histoire dans l'Antiquité*, Montréal and Paris, 1951, pp.224-227.

<sup>17</sup> See footnote 8 above, the Introduction and Immerwahr, p.6.

<sup>18</sup> The inscriptions and records kept by the Egyptian priests are used as an adjunct to oral traditions: Hartog, pp.279-283.

considered oral accounts as a credible source of information. If a historian preserves the fiction that his work is based upon oral reports and relies upon oral information when written evidence is available, it shows that the author considered oral reports a credible source of material. It is thus unlikely that Herodotos would habitually depreciate oral information, consider it untrustworthy or indicate regularly to his audience that certain information of an oral nature should not be believed. As such, it is not the oral account which is intrinsically untrustworthy or, indeed, trustworthy. Rather, it is the source who provides the information who needed to be critically examined by Herodotos.

### 1.2: Herodotos' Purpose and Methodology

At the start of the *Histories* Herodotos outlines his purpose:

Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησσεὸς ἱστορίας ἀπόδειξις ἦδε, ὡς  
μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα  
γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θαυμαστά, τὰ μὲν  
Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ  
γένηται, τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν  
ἀλλήλοισι.

The researches of Herodotos of Halikarnassos are here set down so that the memory of what men have done should not be destroyed by the passage of time, and to preserve knowledge of the great and wonderful achievements of the Greeks and Barbarians; and especially the cause of the conflict between them.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> There are many translations of this statement of Herodotos' purpose and intentions: eg., T. Krischer, 'Herodots Prooimion' *Hermes* 93 (1965), pp.159-167,

From this first authorial statement of intention, Herodotos makes it clear that the *Histories* are intended to be a lasting record, preserving in the collective memory of mankind a knowledge of the achievements of both Greeks and non-Greeks. An inherent premise of this aim is that Herodotos' account is intended to be reliable and accurate, intended to settle the historical record in cases of disputed or inadequate oral accounts. In order to facilitate this aim, Herodotos seeks, through a dialogue with the audience, to indicate that his account was a reliable and accurate record, based on information from authoritative sources evaluated through a rational, objective, historical methodology.

As part of his dialogue with his audience, Herodotos provides information about his historical methodology although his information is fragmentary at best. Certain guidelines can, however, be ascertained from Herodotos' statements of methodology, or inferred from his practice. For example

- (1) Herodotos frequently advises that he will report what he has been told but that he does not have to believe everything he reports.<sup>20</sup>
- (2) As part of his dialogue with his audience Herodotos indicates how particular information should be interpreted; that is, he provides his own opinion about the reliability of information.
- (3) Herodotos advises the audience how he tested the reliability of information and evaluated informants.

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Drews, pp.86-87, Waters, p.2, G. Nagy, 'Herodotus the *Logios*' *Arethusa* 20 (1987), pp.175-184, Hartog, p.xvii, Lateiner, *Method*, pp.8-10.

<sup>20</sup> For example, 2.123.1, 3.9.2, 4.30.1, 4.195.2 & 7.152.3.

The evidence for items (1) and (2), and their effect on the narrative, is examined in detail in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively. Herodotos' advice to the audience about his evaluation of information, item (3), is considered below.

Herodotos stated that he evaluated information by means of certain criteria:

Μέχρι μὲν τούτου ὄψις τε ἐμὴ καὶ γνώμη καὶ ἱστορίη  
ταῦτα λέγουσά ἐστι, τὸ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦδε Αἰγυπτίους  
ἔρχομαι λόγους ἐρέων κατὰ τὰ ἤκουον· προσέσται δέ  
τι αὐτοῖσι καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ὄψις.<sup>21</sup> (2.99.1) (my  
underlining)

Thus far it is my own sight and judgment and inquiry which says this. From here I will record Egyptian accounts according to the things I heard. To these things will be added something of my observations.

Thus, Herodotos indicates that he evaluated stories in terms of personal observation, reason and further inquiries: ὄψις, γνώμη and ἱστορίη. As Schepens has observed, in the phrase

μέχρι μὲν τούτου ὄψις τε ἐμὴ καὶ γνώμη καὶ ἱστορίη  
ταῦτα λέγουσά ἐστι,

the terms "my own sight, judgement and inquiry" constitute the subject of the periphrastic and emphatic λέγουσά ἐστί which means that ὄψις, γνώμη and ἱστορίη are the active facilities utilised by Herodotos.<sup>22</sup> Clearly, these three criteria are not mutually exclusive

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<sup>21</sup> There are a number of variant mss for the last line of text. As elsewhere, I have adopted the readings of the *Oxford Classical Text*.

<sup>22</sup> Schepens, pp.260-261. T.S. Brown, 'Herodotus and His Profession' *AHR* 59 (1954), p.833, suggests three independent steps in this statement of method;

and, indeed, much of the information obtained by Herodotos is evaluated on the basis of a combination of them, each aiding and supporting the others. Examples of their use by Herodotos as criteria for the evaluation of informants and information are considered in Chapter Two. In this chapter, the factor considered is the physical limitations on both personal observation and inquiry.

### 1.3: The Availability of Knowledge

The limitations on personal observation imposed by distance are apparent; despite Herodotos' wide travels, to Egypt, Italy, the Hellespont and the Black Sea, Ionia and throughout Greece,<sup>23</sup> there were some places Herodotos did not visit. The geographical limitations upon the information available to Herodotos are most clearly shown through his frequent disclaimers that he could obtain no information about a particular region or event because he could find no-one who had accurate knowledge. Thus, if no-one has knowledge of something Herodotos' enquiries come to a complete halt. Herodotos brings this limitation of information to the attention of his audience on numerous occasions.<sup>24</sup> For example, Herodotos cautions that no one knows accurately what lies to the north (4.16.1) and he stresses the oral

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"seeing for himself, forming a tentative judgement, and then testing that judgement by investigation".

<sup>23</sup> Myers, pp.4-9, R.P. Lister, *The Travels of Herodotus*, London & New York, 1979; cf. O.K. Armayor, 'Did Herodotus Ever go to the Black Sea' *HSCPh* 82 (1978), pp.45-62, 'Did Herodotus Ever go to Egypt' *JARCE* 15 (1978), pp.59-73 & 'Sesostris and Herodotus' Autopsy of Thrace, Colchis, Inland Asia Minor, and the Levant' *HSCPh* 84 (1980), pp.51-74.

<sup>24</sup> See also Lateiner, *Method*, pp.69-75.

nature of the reports. This is highlighted even more strongly immediately afterwards where he notes:

ἀλλ' ὅσον μὲν ἡμεῖς ἀτρεκέως ἐπὶ μακρότατον οἴοί τε  
ἐγενόμεθα ἀκοῆ ἐξικέσθαι, πᾶν εἰρήσεται. (4.16.2)

Similarly, Herodotos advises his audience that he has not been able to hear from anyone who has seen the sea beyond Europe (3.115.2), that he cannot tell what lies to the north of the "Baldmen" because no-one can speak with accurate knowledge (4.25.1)<sup>25</sup> or how gold is mined in northern Europe (3.116.1) Nor can the Egyptian priests tell him anything about the reason the Nile floods in a different season to other rivers (2.19). Other limitations on available knowledge are less a result of geography than of the transitory character of oral information. For example, a certain tribe used to be islanders not paying Minos tribute

ὅσον . . . ἐγὼ δυνατός εἰμι . . . ἐξικέσθαι ἀκοῆ. (1.171.2)

as far as I am able to learn by hearsay.

On other occasions Herodotos merely indicates that he does not know some fact<sup>26</sup> or, more frequently, that he cannot say something accurately.<sup>27</sup> For example, Herodotos records that he cannot accurately report which language the Pelasgians spoke (9.84.1), details

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<sup>25</sup> The reason is that impassable mountains bar anyone from going there. 4.40.2 is another example.

<sup>26</sup> The phrase is also used in the negative, "I don't know": 2.23, 3.115.1, 4.46.1 & 4.195.2.

<sup>27</sup> That is, some variation of the phrase ἀτρεκέως οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν. See 1.57.1, 1.160.1, 1.172.1, 2.49.1, 2.103.2, 2.167.1, 3.115.1, 3.116.1, 4.16.2, 4.25.1, 4.81.1, 4.187.2, 4.187.3, 5.86.2, 6.14.1, 7.54.3, 7.152.1, 8.8.2, 8.87.1, 9.18.2 & 9.84.1. The phrase is also used in a positive sense "this much I can say accurately (e.g., 1.140.1 & 2, 4.25.2) although this, of course, still shows the limits of Herodotos' information.

of Libyan customs (1.57.1), who fought well at Lade (6.14.1) or why Xerxes cast offerings into the sea (7.54.3).<sup>28</sup>

A further limitation in knowledge is indicated by phrases such as

ὅσον ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν (as far as we know),

πρῶτος τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν<sup>29</sup> (the first of those we know), or

πάντων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν (of all we know).

These phrases express both temporal and geographical limitations in the availability of knowledge. For example, the land to the north of the Melanchlaioi, κατ' ὅσον ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν (4.20.2),<sup>30</sup> is marshy and uninhabited. The Ister is the greatest river πάντων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν (4.46.1).<sup>31</sup> Polykrates was πρῶτος τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν Ἑλλήων (3.122.2)<sup>32</sup> to aim for mastery of the sea. The Athenians πρῶτοι μὲν . . . Ἑλλήων πάντων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν (6.112.3) to charge at the run and to endure the sight of the Medes. The Karians, μῦνοι τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν (5.119.2), sacrifice to Zeus of Armies.<sup>33</sup>

These authorial statements assert a limitation in knowledge; beyond a certain point there is no oral information available which Herodotos can pass on to his audience. More importantly, Herodotos then confesses these limitations to his audience. In this way Herodotos both expresses the limitations in available knowledge to the audience

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<sup>28</sup> οὐκ ἔχω ἀτρεκέως, 6.14.1, 7.54.3, 8.8.2. See also 7.152.1, 8.87.1 & 9.18.2.

<sup>29</sup> For an examination of aspects of this phrase, see Shimron, pp.45-51.

<sup>30</sup> This phrase also occurs at 4.17.1, 4.18.3, 4.197.2 & 7.111.1,

<sup>31</sup> See also 1.142.1, 2.68.2, 4.42.2, 4.46.2, 4.152.3, 4.170.3, 8.105.1 & 9.37.2.

<sup>32</sup> See Shimron, p.47.

<sup>33</sup> Other examples, where Herodotos merely notes "of those we know", are at 1.94.1, 1.178.2, 1.193.2, 2.157, 3.94.2, 3.98.2, 4.58, 4.184.1, 4.187.3, 6.21.1, 7.20.2 & 8.124.3.

and also indicates that he was aware of the limitations. This dialogue is expected by Herodotos to establish a trust between himself and his audience. For if the inquirer is shown to be open and "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.

#### 1.4: Obscure Individuals in the *Histories*

When Herodotos did visit regions he could see things for himself and also converse with local Greek informants about their history and traditions or with non-Greeks through interpreters.<sup>34</sup> When he did not visit regions, it was still possible to obtain hearsay information

ἀλλὰ τοσόνδε μὲν ἄλλο ἐπὶ μακρότατον ἐπυθόμην,  
μέχρι μὲν Ἐλεφαντίνης πόλιος αὐτόπτης ἐλθών, τὸ δ'  
ἀπὸ τούτου ἀκοῆ ἤδη ἱστορέων (2.29.1)<sup>35</sup>

but about these other things I learnt as much as possible, by going and observing as far as Elephantine city, beyond by listening and enquiry

and there is no indication in the *Histories* that this hearsay information was intrinsically inaccurate. Indeed, information about unvisited

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<sup>34</sup> Herodotos refers to interpreters at 2.125.4, 3.140.2-3 & 4.24, although interpretation can clearly result in inaccuracy: Lloyd, *99-182*, p.70, on 2.125.4.

<sup>35</sup> The words αὐτόπτης ἐλθών do not appear in every manuscript and may be an interpolation: cf. Lloyd, *1-98*, pp.115-117. I have again followed the reading of the OCT.



regions was derived by Herodotos through conversing with people who had been there or who otherwise might be expected to have accurate knowledge. Even when Herodotos did visit a region or city there was still a limitation based on the availability of oral information because of its transitory nature and the fact that, even within a region or city visited by an inquirer, only a limited number of people would be informants.

The events and individuals included in an *Atthis* or the *Histories* depend to a large extent upon the circle the inquirer relied upon for information. In ancient Greece access to particular local information was likely to fall within a restricted circle because of the absence of mass media, such as radio, newspapers or television, which disseminates information to a wide audience. Television brings reports of events and people directly to the knowledge of millions of people in many countries. Newspapers receive wide circulation and, while the information may not necessarily be accurate, at least an individual in London and another in Sydney reading the same newspaper acquire the same information from the same source. Written accounts are tangible and, in the phraseology of Vansina, are both "messages and artifacts".<sup>36</sup> A television image or newsreader is more transient but at least different people in different locations receive the same message or image. The corpus of information "known" is accordingly far broader now than was the case in ancient Greece. The interpretation of the television image or newspaper is still the province of the individual receiving the message which does result in variances. However, in the case of oral

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<sup>36</sup> Vansina, p.195.

information two people hearing the same basic message in different places hear accounts filtered by different speakers.

In the ancient world some knowledge had wide circulation. The *Iliad*, for example, was widely known. In contrast, family, local or regional knowledge of events or traditions was more likely to be preserved by a select, limited group; the group, in general, which the information concerns. For while the deeds of prominent individuals such as Kroisos, Polykrates, Pausanias or Xerxes would be widely known, the names of more obscure individuals are more likely to be remembered only in their own city or family group. It would be unlikely that a person in Sparta, for example, would know of, or care about, the deeds of an obscure individual or family in Abydos, Thurii or Melos. Even within a city, or a family, information about non-prominent individuals would probably be remembered and relayed within a still more narrow group, such as a "minor" branch of a prominent family. If the inquirer speaks only to this minor branch, it is their history which is likely to be recorded as is shown, for example, by Herodotos' emphasis upon the family of the Philaidai in his account of Athenian history.<sup>37</sup> The limitation of available knowledge within a circle of informants, imposed by geography and the fragmentary character of oral traditions is reflected in the *Histories* by the individuals named by Herodotos in the course of his narrative.

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<sup>37</sup> As outlined by Thomas, pp.170-172. For some of the limitations of face to face "gossip" as "mass media", see J. Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People*, Princeton, 1989, p.148, V. Hunter, 'Gossip and the Politics of Reputation in Classical Athens' *Phoenix* 44 (1990), pp.300-307.

In the *Histories* many individuals are mentioned by name even though they are otherwise obscure and their historical importance is negligible.<sup>38</sup> Chileos of Tegea incites the Spartans to send their forces north of the Isthmos (9.9.1), Panites of Messene advises the Spartans how to decide which of the children of Aristodemos was the elder (6.52.5) and Theasides, son of Leoprepes, of Sparta counsels the men of Aigina on their suit against Leutyichides (6.85.2). Megakreon of Abdera makes a witty saying about feeding Xerxes' army (7.120), Polyas of Antikyra is a messenger with the Greek fleet at Artemision (8.21) and Antichares of Eleon counsels Doreios where to place his colony in Sicily (5.43). Each of these individuals is known to us only through his brief appearance in the *Histories*<sup>39</sup> and the mention of them by Herodotos adds little but colour to the historical narrative. What can the naming of these "obscure" individuals by Herodotos reveal about the sources he used for the *Histories*?

There are a number of possibilities. Herodotos could have derived names from an earlier written source, such as a local history, although the absence of evidence makes Herodotos' reliance on possible

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<sup>38</sup> Waters, p.100, notes that around 1000 individuals are mentioned by name in the *Histories*, of whom about 50 are either historically important or prominent. For the purpose of this study, an "obscure" individual is one known only through Herodotos (although other accounts may follow Herodotos) and who is unlikely to be remembered outside of his own family or city group. For example, Spartan kings, tyrants of various cities, lawgivers, famous poets, pre-eminent families such as the family of Miltiades of Athens, and well known men such as Aristeides and Themistokles are all likely to be known outside their own city and stories about them told by other people. Accordingly, they are not "obscure".

<sup>39</sup> Pape/Benseler, p.1683 (Chileos), p.1125 (Panites), p.484 (Theasides), p.1222 (Polyas) & p.101 (Antichares).

earlier logographers difficult to determine.<sup>40</sup> Alternatively, some individuals may appear in a tradition that was known outside of their own city. An example is Herodotos' naming of Ephialtes as the betrayer of the Greeks at Thermopylai (7.214.1); his guilt was announced in the Amphictyonic council.<sup>41</sup> Names can also be remembered in other ways. For example, Mandrokles of Samos is named as the builder of Dareios' bridge over the Hellespont when Herodotos quotes an inscription (4.88) Mandrokles set up in the temple of Hera at Samos and it is likely that Herodotos saw the inscription in the temple when he visited Samos and recorded the name and the claim it made. Individuals may also be remembered because of their friends or relations or because they performed a deed of interest beyond a single city. For example, of the three people named from Mytilene in the *Histories*, Charaxos is mentioned (2.135) as the brother of Sappho and Melanippos (5.95) as the friend of the poet Alkaios.<sup>42</sup> Athenades of Trachis, on the other hand, is remembered as the man who killed Ephialtes (7.213).

The naming by Herodotos of one family from within a city or of a preponderance of obscure individuals named from one city or region in a particular section of the *Histories*, could be taken as an indication of the identity of Herodotos' sources for that section. For example, those named from Salamis in Cyprus are all members of one family;

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<sup>40</sup> How/Wells, vol.1, pp.22-27. For possible borrowings from Hekataios, see Pearson, *op.cit.*, (n.6), pp.81-90, Marincola, pp.123-124, Lloyd, *Intro*, pp.128-131. For a bibliographical essay on this question see Hunter, pp.308-313. Lateiner, *Method*, pp.104-108, lists the passages where Herodotos opposes other authors or accounts.

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 2.3.2.

<sup>42</sup> The third is Koes who was tyrant of Mytilene before being stoned to death (4.97, 5.11, 38). Under the terms of reference outlined above, he was not "obscure".

Herodotos records only the names of Euelthon and his great, great grandsons Gorgos, Onesilos and Philaon. Euelthon, Herodotos notes, dedicated a censer at Delphi which stands in the treasury of the Corinthians (4.162) while the conflict between Gorgos and Onesilos, the position of Gorgos in Xerxes' fleet (5.104, 105, 110-115, 7.98) and the information that Philaon was captured by the Greeks after Artemision (8.11) complete the details of the family. There is no evidence in the *Histories* that Herodotos visited Cyprus and Salamis; indeed, it seems he obtained his limited information about Salamis, or at least about the one family, from a single source. The fact that Philaon was captured by the Greeks may explain how Herodotos obtained his information about the family.

Herodotos' account of the battle of Salamis is an example which shows the correlation between regional sources and obscure individuals named by Herodotos. In his report of Salamis Herodotos directly cites Athenian and Aiginetan sources<sup>43</sup> which makes it clear that he derived much of the information for the battle within these cities. It is no surprise, therefore, to find that the individuals named at Salamis (excluding prominent individuals like Themistokles, Aristides, Xerxes, Mardonios and Artemisia) are Mnesiphilos (Athens, 8.57.1), Dikaios, son of Theokydes (Athens, 8.65.1 & 6), Sikinnos (Athens, 8.75.1), Panaitios, son of Sosimenes (Tenos, 8.82.1), Ameinias of Pallene (Athens, 8.84.1), Theomestor, son of Androdamas and Phylakos, son of Histiaios (both Samos, 8.85.2-3), Polykritos, son of Krios, and Pytheas, son of Ischenoos (both Aigina, 8.92.1) and Eumenes of Anagyrasios (Athens, 8.93.1). In this section the predominance of

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<sup>43</sup> 8.84.2 & 8.94.1.

Athenian and Aiginetan names confirms the identity of Herodotos' informants. In addition, one of the other individuals named was known beyond his city. Thus, Panaitios of Tenos gained renown as the captain of the trireme which deserted to the Greeks bringing news that the Greek fleet was surrounded, for which Tenos was included on the serpent column (Herodotos. 8.82.1). The other named individuals are Samian, an island Herodotos visited and about which he shows a good knowledge.<sup>44</sup> In the report of the battle of Salamis, the individuals named merely confirm Herodotos' direct source citations.

Another effect of the physical limitation of oral information is that the achievements of certain cities which Herodotos visited are reported in the *Histories* whereas other cities' achievements are not reported, either because Herodotos did not visit that city or did not meet, in Athens or elsewhere, anyone from that city. For example, because Herodotos migrated to Thurii in Italy information about the conflict between Sybaris and Kroton of marginal relevance to the conflict between Persia and the Greeks was heard by Herodotos in Italy and included by him in the *Histories*.<sup>45</sup> Another example is the amount of information included in the *Histories* about Samos.

Samos and Samian history and achievements are reported at great length in the *Histories* although it seems Herodotos was aware of a possible imbalance; he twice apologised for the length of the Samian account (3.60.1 & 3.60.4) but excused it on the ground that the Samians had made the three greatest works to be seen in any Greek land. It is not clear why such extensive details of Samian history were

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<sup>44</sup> See below, especially footnote 52.

<sup>45</sup> Hdt. 5.85-87. See Chapter 4.1.1 & footnotes 14-16.

included in the *Histories*. Information about Samos was not essential to the account of East/West conflict nor the narrative thread of the *Histories*.<sup>46</sup> At best, the city was no more strategically important than the similarly located Naxos,<sup>47</sup> yet while details about Samian people and history abound in the *Histories*, only two individuals from Naxos are named<sup>48</sup> and details of Naxian history are absent. The lack of named individuals from Corinth, the other strong Greek naval power, is also in stark contrast to the wealth of information about Samos.<sup>49</sup>

Herodotos' record of Samian history and achievements is both detailed and varied. He twice gave information about dedications in the temple of Hera on Samos (2.182.1 & 4.88), mentioned a pillar erected in the market place at Samos on which were engraved the names of the eleven Samian captains who did not desert the Ionian cause at the naval battle at Lade in 494 BC (6.14.3), recorded the deeds and death of Polykrates (3.39-47, 120-125) and the legend of Dareios' capture of Samos as requital to Syloson for the previous gift of his red cloak

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<sup>46</sup> For example, J.E. Powell, *The History of Herodotus*, Cambridge, 1939, pp.48-49, notes that the Samian story is connected to the Persian narrative only chronologically and has nothing to do with Persian history while Myres, pp.97-99, notes that the Samian section is interposed between two main incidents in Persian history; the conquest of Egypt by Kambyzes and the accession of Dareios. Immerwahr, p.99, acknowledges that it is a minor *logos* placed in a pause in the scheme of Persian expansionism although he does find it "thematically significant".

<sup>47</sup> Waters, p.90. Naxos was an island of nearly equal importance to the Greeks both economically and strategically.

<sup>48</sup> Lygdamis, who aided Peisistratos gain tyranny at Athens, for which Peisistratos gave him control of Naxos (1.61 & 64), and Demokritos (8.46).

<sup>49</sup> Excluding the tyrants, only three Corinthians are named: Adeimantos, son of Okytos (8.5, 59 & 94), Aristetas (7.137) and Sokles (5.92).

(3.139-149). Two Samians are the only obscure individuals specifically named by Herodotos on the Persian side at Salamis<sup>50</sup> while the Samians are the first of the Ionians to come over to the Greek side before Mykale and their envoys are named (9.90.1). Samian failings are also treated benevolently; for example, Herodotos refrained from directly stating that they were the first to desert from the Ionian fleet at Lade, although the narration implies that this was the case (6.13-14).<sup>51</sup>

This detailed information about Samos in the *Histories* may be a result of Herodotos' visit to the island for a prolonged period.<sup>52</sup> Supporting this detailed information is the number of obscure Samian individuals named by Herodotos; it should be no surprise to find that named Samians occur more frequently than everyone other than Spartans and Athenians. The naming of individuals from Athens and Sparta is consistent with the above analysis on the physical limitations of oral information. These cities dominated Greek politics when Herodotos wrote and so we could expect that Herodotos would obtain information about their history. In addition, Herodotos visited both Athens and Sparta and citations of Athenians and Spartans occur throughout the *Histories*.<sup>53</sup> However, the Samian imbalance is shown

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<sup>50</sup> Theomestor, son of Androdamos, and Phylakos, son of Histiaios (8.85.2-3).

<sup>51</sup> H.R. Immerwahr, 'The Samian Stories of Herodotus' *CJ* 52 (1957), pp.320-322, points to Herodotos' consistently sympathetic treatment of the Samians.

<sup>52</sup> Jacoby, *RE*, cols.220-221, B.M. Mitchell, 'Herodotus and Samos' *JHS* 95 (1975), pp.75-91, Hart, p.57. For a bibliography see R. Tölle-Kastenbein, *Herodot und Samos*, Bochum, 1976, pp.118-120.

<sup>53</sup> Athenians: 5.57.1, 5.63.1, 5.85.1, 5.86.1, 5.87.1, 6.75.3, 6.137.3, 7.189.3, 8.41.2, 8.65.1 & 6, 8.84.2, 8.94.1 & 9.73.1 & 2. Spartans: 1.51.3, 1.65.4, 1.70.2, 3.47.1, 3.55.2, 4.77.1, 4.150.1, 5.49.1, 6.52.1, 6.52.8, 6.53.1, 6.84.1, 6.84.3, 7.137.1 & 7.239.4.



by the fact that while Athens and Sparta have approximately twenty-six and twenty non-prominent individuals named respectively,<sup>54</sup> eleven obscure individuals from Samos are named in the *Histories*.<sup>55</sup> Their naming, and the lengthy description by Herodotos of Samian history occurs, I believe, because Herodotos visited Samos and obtained information from Samian sources who, not surprisingly, spoke about Samos and Samian individuals.

The above illustrates both how sources for sections may be inferred and how limitations enforced on historical enquiry by oral information as source material affect the composition of the *Histories*. Limitations in source material is one factor which affects the *Histories*; another factor is the perceived authority of the informants in the mind of both Herodotos and the audience.

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<sup>54</sup> Spartans: Aeimnestos (9.64), Alpheos & Maron (7.227), Amompharetos (9.53-57, 71, 85), Anchimolios (5.63), Aneristos (7.137), Archias & Lykopos (3.55), Aristodemos (7.229-231, 9.71), Boulis (7.134-137), Euainetos (7.173), Euagoras (6.103), Eurytos (7.229), Kallikrates (9.72, 85), Keleas, Euryleon, Paraibates & Thessalos (5.46), Lakrines (1.152), Nikoleos (7.137), Pantites (7.232), Philokyon & Poseidonios (9.71, 85), Syagros (7.153, 159), Theasides (6.85). Athenians: Abronichos (8.21), Ameinias (8.84, 93), Dikaios (8.65), Epizelos (6.117), Eumenes (8.93), Hermolykos (9.105), Kallias (7.151), Kleinias (8.17), Kynegeiros (6.114), Leagros (9.75), Lykidas (9.5), Lykomedes (8.11), Melanthios (5.97), Mnesipilos (8.57), Olympiodoros (9.21), Phidippides (6.105-106), Phormos (7.182), Sophanes (6.92, 9.74-75), Stesileos (6.114) & Timodemos (8.125). This list does not include people named only as the father of somebody. The next best represented cities in terms of individuals are Aigina (8), Elis (6), Eretria (5), Thebes (5), Halikarnassos (3) and Delphi (3).

<sup>55</sup> Excluding references to the tyrants of Samos, Polykrates, Aiakes, Maiandrios and their families, obscure individuals from Samos named are Athenagoras, Lampon & Hegesistratos (9.90), Kolaios (4.152), Iadmon (2.134), Mandrokles (4.87-89), Rhoikos (3.60), Telesarchos (3.143), Theomester (8.85, 90), Phylakos (8.85) & Xanthes (2.135).

## **1.5: Who are Reliable Informants?**

To provide a rational explanation of events which would settle the historical record, Herodotos needed to indicate to his audience that his account was a reliable and accurate record, based on information from authoritative sources evaluated through a rational, objective methodology. The first part of this chapter considered Herodotos' methodology and the characteristics of his oral source material. The balance of the chapter focuses upon the informants themselves, rather than the information provided. In Chapter Two, some of the circumstances in which particular informants were considered by Herodotos to be authoritative are examined. The present chapter considers why certain informants were likely to be viewed by Herodotos, and his audience, as authoritative sources for the information they impart.

### **1.5.1: Local Informants**

Thucydides (1.20-21) objected, with some validity, that people do not know their own history. In a predominantly oral society, however, when knowledge is often retained within a small, local group, there is likely to be an expectation that local informants would have the most accurate knowledge about local events and people. It is certainly the case that locals were generally perceived by Herodotos as a credible source about themselves.<sup>56</sup> This is confirmed by the fact that

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<sup>56</sup> F. Jacoby, *Atthis*, Oxford, 1949, p.216, H. Verdin, 'Notes sur l'attitude des Historiens Grecs à l'égard de la Tradition Locale' *AncSoc* 1 (1970), p.194, Lateiner, *Method*, p.22. The principle of citing local sources as reliable informants,

Herodotos travelled in order to verify with locals accounts he heard elsewhere. In addition, Herodotos seldom disagrees with the accounts of locals.

On a number of occasions Herodotos states that he made a journey to consult with local sources. For example, he indicated that he took ship to Tyre in order to verify stories he had heard elsewhere about the antiquity of Herakles (2.44.1) and that he went to Buto to learn more about the winged snakes (2.75.1). This indicates that Herodotos believed the people on the spot had more reliable knowledge about local events. In his search for reliable informants Herodotos travelled to consult with locals in Tyre and Buto in the same way as he travelled to Memphis, Thebes and Heliopolis to verify stories he had heard elsewhere (2.3). The concept is the same whatever the scale; locals can relate reliable information about local events or local geography in the same way that Athenians, Persians or Egyptians can be expected to speak credibly about Athenian, Persian or Egyptian history, customs or geography.

Only seldom does Herodotos specifically disagree with information from locals; he does disagree with the account of the Gephyraioi that they originated in Eretria (5.57.1)<sup>57</sup> and information from Egyptians about the hands of an Egyptian statue.<sup>58</sup> In the vast

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intended to enhance the authority of Herodotos' account, was recognised by Fehling, p.10 and nn.35 & 36, pp.89-104.

<sup>57</sup> Herodotos learnt by enquiry (ὡς δὲ ἐγὼ ἀναπυθανόμενος εὕρισκω, 5.57.1) that they were originally Phoenicians and came to Boiotia with Kadmos. Another example is the story of the dual kingship of Sparta, told by the Spartans, which is contradicted by the rest of the Greeks (6.52-53.1).

<sup>58</sup> 2.131.1. The information in this instance is rejected by Herodotos because of personal observation. The passage is discussed in Chapter 2.1.

majority of passages, however, local information is considered more reliable by Herodotos than information from more remote informants. For example, in his account of Egypt, information from Egyptians about Egyptian customs, religion and events is cited by Herodotos to show that Greek accounts are incorrect. Thus, based on inquiries at Delphi and Egypt as well as personal observation, Herodotos disagreed with the story told by some of the Greeks that an Egyptian pyramid was built by the Thracian courtesan Rhodopis (2.134-135). Herodotos also rejected the story of the Greeks about the experiment conducted by the Pharaoh Psammetichos to find the most ancient race (2.2) and the Greek version about Herakles in Egypt (2.45). He also emphatically agreed with the information of the Egyptians, learned through enquiry (2.50.1-2), that most of the names of the gods came to Greece from Egypt and with the Egyptian version of the extent of Egypt (2.5-18).

Egyptians, however, are not the only locals cited with approval by Herodotos. For example, Herodotos noted (1.95.1) that he would be guided by the account of the Persians on Kyros although other stories existed.<sup>59</sup> He also rejected the Greek account, attributed by the use of the verb form  $\phi\alpha\sigma\acute{\iota}$ , that the custom of wives in common was Skythian in origin. This custom, stated Herodotos (1.216.1), relying on the extensive local information he obtained on Skythian customs and

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<sup>59</sup> Herodotos does not identify the sources for the other versions. Rather, he carefully stressed the reputable Persian origin of the version he recorded. Certainly, many different accounts of Kyros existed; A. Cizek, 'From the Historical Truth to the Literary Convention: The Life of Cyrus the Great viewed by Herodotus, Ctesias and Xenophon' *AC* 44 (1975), pp. 531-552. However, even though Herodotos attested that *his* version was the reliable one, it was firmly grounded in folk lore, not historical fact; R. Drews, 'Sargon, Cyrus and Mesopotamian Folk History' *JNES* 33 (1974), pp.389-393.

habits from various sources,<sup>60</sup> is not Skythian, but a custom of the Massagetai. Herodotos also agreed with the local tradition of the Macedonians who, according to what they themselves say (κατὰ περ αὐτοῖ λέγουσι, 5.22.1), are Greeks. Herodotos accepted their claim and adduced evidence to support it, stating that Alexander of Macedon had been allowed to compete in the Olympic games because the presiding Hellenodikai accepted his Greek descent.<sup>61</sup> Herodotos also accepted the account (7.167.1) told by the Carthaginians about the death of Hamilcar of Carthage instead of other versions.<sup>62</sup>

These passages suggest that, unless he had a good reason to think otherwise, Herodotos believed people are generally reliable when they relate information about their own history, culture, customs or geography. Persians, therefore, are the best sources for Persian history, Egyptians for Egypt.

### 1.5.2: The Egyptians

The Egyptians are a conspicuous example of sources frequently named by Herodotos in the *Histories* and merit further discussion. In Book Two Herodotos does describe Egyptian history, customs and culture at length and, if sources are to be cited at all, on the basis that local informants are likely to be more reliable we would

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<sup>60</sup> Book 4, chapters 2-117 contain an extensive record of the geography, customs, rites origins and religion of the Skythians. See also H. Kothe, 'Der Skythenbegriff bei Herodot' *Klio* 51 (1969), pp.15-88. For Herodotos' interest in similar marriage customs, see 4.104 (the Agathyrsi) and 4.172.2 (the Nasamones).

<sup>61</sup> The Hellenodikai were the citizens of Elis who presided over the games; Hdt. 2.160.1, Pausanias 5.9.4-6.

<sup>62</sup> See also Chapter 2.3 and 3.4.

expect them to be Egyptian. Yet, the repetition of source citations to Egyptians throughout Book Two<sup>63</sup> is not matched, for example, by constant source citations of Athenians in the section on Athenian history, Samians in the history of Samos or Skythians for the account of Skythian customs and geography. This suggests that the Egyptians are cited constantly for a number of reasons, not just because Egyptian customs and history are being recorded by Herodotos. Rather, I believe Herodotos' citing of Egyptians as informants is because of a combination of at least two other factors; the nature of the information recorded by Herodotos about Egypt and the historical methodology of the Egyptians.

The information Herodotos records about Egypt is often either marvellous, seemingly far-fetched or such that it would possibly be greeted with scepticism or disbelief by a Greek audience. In these circumstances it is possible that the Egyptians are cited constantly by Herodotos as sources to show his Greek audience that, although he records seemingly wondrous deeds and marvellous customs and contradicted other Greek accounts of Egypt, he had received his information from authoritative sources.

Descriptions of τὸ θαυμάσιον dominate Book Two.<sup>64</sup> Examples include the information that the Egyptians do things contrary to other peoples (2.35.2 & 2.91.1), that the behaviour of the

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<sup>63</sup> In Herodotos' account of Egypt, ἔλεγον (with or without οἱ ἱπῆρες) is constantly repeated: 2.3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 10.1, 13.1, 54.2, 99.2, 100.1, 101.1, 102.2, 107.1, 109.1, 111.1, 112.1, 113.1, 116.1, 118.1, 120.1, 122.1, 124.1, 127.1, 136.1 & 139.1. This does not include citation by means of other source-attributing words; Appendix B contains a complete list.

<sup>64</sup> Lloyd, *Intro*, pp.141-147.

Nile is the opposite of all other rivers (2.19.3), that nowhere in the world are there so many wondrous and great things (2.35.1), that the outer court of the temple at Sais surpassed all others in size, splendour and materials (1.175.1) or that the labyrinth near Lake Moiris is greater than the total of all the buildings constructed by all the Greeks (2.148.2). In addition, Herodotos constantly rejected other Greek accounts about Egypt. Greek accounts rejected by Herodotos, for example, include versions of the experiment of Psammetichos (2.2.5), the extent of Egypt (2.15.1, 16.1), why the Nile floods (2.20.1, 21, 23), Herakles in Egypt (2.45.1), the story of Helen (2.116.1, 118.1) or the pyramid of Rhodopis (2.134.1). These claims of superior knowledge may not have been accepted by a Greek audience without challenge. Also challenging the beliefs of a Greek audience would be the statements in which Herodotos asserts the primacy of Egypt over Greece. This occurs, for example, in connection with the antiquity and the naming of the gods (2.145-146), knowledge of the mysteries (2.49, 51, 81, 171), the measurement of land (2.109.3), the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul (2.123.3) and one of the laws of Solon (2.177.2). These descriptions of wonders, contradictions of other Greek accounts and assertions of the primacy of Egypt over Greece would result in Herodotos' Egyptian account being treated by a sections of his Greek audience with scepticism or disbelief. Indeed, Herodotos challenges the beliefs and credibility of his Greek audience and because of this, I believe, he is anxious to show his Greek audience that his version of Egyptian geography, customs and history is definitive. This was partly achieved by Herodotos' statements that he had seen many of the

marvels he described,<sup>65</sup> therefore attesting to the reliability of his account on the basis of personal observation. Another part of this process is to indicate through constant source citations to the Egyptian priests that his information was derived from impeccable sources who, moreover, had accurate knowledge. Thus, the audience is constantly reminded that knowledgeable Egyptians provided the information upon which Herodotos based his report and his assertions.

The Egyptians may have also been cited frequently as sources by Herodotos because they demonstrated a historical consciousness and methodology similar to his own. Because of this historical consciousness and methodology, through cultivated memories or because they kept written chronicles, the priests can provide accurate information about their past and are for this reason cited by Herodotos as reliable authorities. For example, Herodotos advises his audience that the Egyptians of the delta are the most careful of mankind to preserve the memory of the past and no-one Herodotos questioned had more chronicles

μνήμην ἀνθρώπων πάντων ἐπασκέοντες μάλιστα  
λογιώτατοί εἰσι μακρῶ τῶν ἐγὼ ἐς διάπειραν  
ἀπικόμην. (2.77.1)<sup>66</sup>

This information is repeated towards the end of Herodotos' description of Egypt where, as evidence that the Egyptian claims about the antiquity of the gods are reliable, Herodotos specifies that written records are kept

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<sup>65</sup> For example, 2.29.1, 2.75.1, 2.99.1, 2.127.1, 2.131.3, 2.143.2, 2.148.1 & 2.156.1.

<sup>66</sup> Hunter, p.58, suggests that "memory" here should be taken to mean records; cf. Evans, p.98 & n.50.



καὶ ταῦτα Αἰγύπτιοι ἀτρεκέως φασὶ ἐπίστασθαι, αἰεὶ  
τε λογιζόμενοι καὶ αἰεὶ ἀπογραφόμενοι τὰ ἔτεα.

(2.145.3)

And the Egyptians say they have certain knowledge of these things because they have always computed the years and put them down in writing.<sup>67</sup>

This authority is further enhanced by the demonstration by the Egyptian priests that they also possess a rational historical methodology, not unlike Herodotos' own.

This methodology is most clearly shown by the account in the *Histories* of Menelaos and Helen in Egypt. Herodotos recorded the story of Helen in Egypt as told to him by the priests

ἔλεγον δέ μοι οἱ ἱερεῖς ἱστοροῦντι τὰ περὶ Ἑλένην  
γενέσθαι ᾧδε. (2.113.1)

The priests said that Alexander and Helen were forced onto Egyptian territory by bad weather. Proteus, when he learned of the abduction of Helen, held her in Egypt and forced Alexander to leave the country. Herodotos again cited his source for this account, ἔλεγον οἱ ἱερεῖς (2.116.1), adding that he believed Homer knew the Egyptian version of the story but preferred to ignore it as unsuitable for epic poetry.<sup>68</sup> Herodotos' reason for his belief in the accuracy of the Egyptian version is clearly stated:

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<sup>67</sup> This statement illustrates Herodotos' position between oral and written methods of presentation and evidence, as he takes aspects of both. In this passage he recognises the relevance of written records but, as elsewhere, he uses them as an adjunct to oral traditions. See footnote 18 above, Introduction, footnote 4 and Chapter 1.1.

<sup>68</sup> 2.116.1. At 2.116.2-5, Herodotos quoted verses from both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to show that Homer knew that Alexander had been to Egypt. This, however, does not establish that Proteus had taken Helen from him there.

εἰρομένου δέ μεν τοὺς ἱρέας εἰ μάταιον λόγον λέγουσι  
οἱ Ἕλληνες τὰ περὶ Ἴλιον γενέσθαι ἢ οὐ, ἔφασαν  
πρὸς ταῦτα τάδε, ἱστορίησι φάμενοι εἰδέναί παρ'  
αὐτοῦ Μενέλεω. (2.118.1)

When I enquired of the priests if what the Greeks said about Troy was a fictional tale or not, in this connection they said thus, saying that they knew by enquiry from Menelaos himself.

Like Herodotos himself, the Egyptian priests sought information from a credible and reliable witness: Helen's husband Menelaos. Herodotos repeated that the priests say they learnt some of this "by inquiry" but of the things that occurred in their own country they spoke with precise knowledge

τούτων δὲ τὰ μὲν ἱστορίησι ἔφασαν ἐπίστασθαι, τὰ δὲ  
παρ' ἑωυτοῖσι γινόμενα ἀτρεκέως ἐπιστάμενοι λέγειν.

(2.119.3)

This both highlights the historical methodology of the priests<sup>69</sup> and also indicates why Herodotos believed they have reliable knowledge about events within Egypt; the Egyptians inhabit the land, they built the monuments, it is their history and customs and, finally, the priests have continuity of tenure plus a historical consciousness and rational methodology. Combined, these considerations make the Egyptian priests credible witnesses for events and information which is either wondrous, seemingly doubtful or contrary to other Greek accounts. Therefore, the priests can be regarded as authoritative sources by a Greek audience and are cited by Herodotos in order to

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<sup>69</sup> For another example of this "inquiry" methodology, see 2.54.2.

enhance the credibility and reliability of the information he recorded. It should be noted, however, that for all their historical awareness and acumen, only once are they cited as informants for events beyond Egypt.<sup>70</sup> This confirms that they are considered to be authoritative only when they speak of things Egyptian for which they are local sources. Despite their historical methodology, it is as local sources that they are authoritative.

### **1.5: Oral Information as Historical Evidence**

Herodotos did not downgrade oral information as historical evidence. His society was an oral society and much of the knowledge available to Herodotos was oral information. Instead, Herodotos established his historical methodology and enquiry techniques in order to evaluate oral accounts. Oral information is transient and often known to a fairly narrow group. The scope of Herodotos' work, as outlined in his proem, was not a local war or a description of an event which occurred only within the lifetime of his generation. His purpose was to describe the origins and events of a conflict whose causes seemingly stretched back into the earliest time and encompassed many peoples, countries and cities. Accordingly, to obtain authoritative information it was necessary for Herodotos to travel and to speak to

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<sup>70</sup> The Egyptians are cited as informants outside of Book Two on only ten occasions. In Book One, their citation is in connection with an Egyptian religious custom (1.182.2). The other citations are in Book Three and concern events which occurred in Egypt before and after Kambyzes' invasion (3.10.3, 12.2, 14.11, 16.5, 16.6, 28.2, 30.1 & 32.3). The single example of events outside of Egypt (3.2.2) concerns the identity of Kambyzes' mother and it is significant that Herodotos here rejects the Egyptian account in favour of a local, Persian version.

people who might be expected by his audience to possess reliable knowledge.

Herodotos' methodology did not long go unchallenged.<sup>71</sup> I believe, however, that much of the criticism was the result of subconscious assumptions made by his critics about the characteristics of the oral evidence available to Herodotos. The nature of some of these assumptions can be illustrated by the following quote:

"Historical knowledge in Herodotus moves on three levels: events, traditions about events, and the historical work which interprets these traditions."<sup>72</sup>

The distinction made in this statement between events and traditions about events is artificial in the context of any discussion about oral information as source material. This is because, in terms of the *Histories*, there is no difference between an event and a tradition about events. Because of the limitations of oral information as outlined in this chapter, events are known *only* to a group or a city or a people because they have been remembered and relayed. There are no events in the *Histories* to which Herodotos personally was a witness<sup>73</sup> and thus his record is derived solely through oral information, including oral

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<sup>71</sup> The criticism of Herodotos commenced with Thucydides. The nature of the attacks upon the credit of Herodotos are summarised by A. Momigliano, 'The Place of Herodotus in the History of Historiography' *History* 43 (1958), pp.1-13, B. Baldwin, 'How Credulous was Herodotos?' *G&R* 11 (1964), pp.167-177, J.A.S. Evans, 'Father of History, Father of Lies; The Reputation of Herodotos' *CJ* 64 (1968), p.14, O. Murray, 'Herodotos and Hellenistic Culture' *CQ* 22 (1972), pp.200-213.

<sup>72</sup> Immerwahr, p.6; also quoted with approval by Lateiner, *Method*, p.13.

<sup>73</sup> Although personal observation can be used as a criterion to test oral reports: see Chapter 2.1.

traditions and oral histories. Events in Herodotos do not have an existence independently of oral information and oral traditions, it is the traditions which carry the event into knowledge. To seek for "events" as seemingly immutable, as opposed to traditions, and to search for a fixed, unchangeable "knowledge" which does not exist in a world of oral information leads, I believe, to a misunderstanding of Herodotos' methodology and the function of source-attributing words in the *Histories*

Herodotos acknowledged that the nature of his oral information imposed problems but he showed his audience that he was both aware of and could control his source material. His use of source-attributing words to identify informants should, I believe, be seen as an integral part of his evolution of a historical methodology developed to address the problems imposed by the characteristics of his oral source material.

## Chapter 2:

### Herodotos' Evaluation of Information

I believe that Herodotos' use of source-attributing words to identify informants can be seen as an integral part of his evolution of a methodology developed to address the problems created by the unique characteristics of his oral source material. In Chapter One I argued that Herodotos did indicate to his audience, as part of his dialogue with them, that he evaluated information in terms of ὄψις, γνώμη or ἱστορίη. Following this evaluation, Herodotos sometimes specifically informs the audience that the information was untrue, or, alternatively, confirms that it was accurate. These authorial insertions by the *histor* are "reliability indicators", intended to guide the audience's perception of the narrative in a particular way. Suggestions about the incidence and possible function of reliability indicators are made in Chapter Five of this study. For the purposes of the present chapter, it is sufficient to say that these authorial insertions are direct and specific indications by Herodotos to his audience on whether he believes certain information was accurate or not. Sometimes, these direct authorial statements of reliability occur in conjunction with source-attributing words. An analysis of these passages is the first step towards any conclusions being reached about the function of source-attributing words in the *Histories*.

There are over 60 passages in the *Histories* when Herodotos specifically indicated his opinion, either positive or negative, about the reliability of material which was introduced by source-attributing

words. In most of these passages it is possible to show that Herodotos evaluated information in terms of ὄψις, γνώμη or ἱστορίη. However, overlapping inevitably occurs and evaluation is usually made by Herodotos on the basis of a combination of two or three of the criteria. Sometimes it is difficult to determine precisely where one criterion ceases as there is no obvious demarcation point. However, as the clearest examples of Herodotos rejecting information relate to his use of ὄψις, these passages are considered first, then passages where γνώμη is utilised and finally passages where ἱστορίη is the active ingredient in his evaluation process.

This examination reveals that source-attributing words do regularly occur in passages which are specifically stated by Herodotos to be true, and untrue. This suggests that when Herodotos wanted to provide the audience with authorial direction about whether he believed particular information or not, he recorded his opinion specifically and directly. The weight of guiding the perceptions of the audience is not carried by the source-attributing words but by the direct and unequivocal authorial statements. Further, the fact that source-attributing words occur in passages where Herodotos expressly confirms that information is true makes it unlikely that Herodotos habitually employs source-attributing words as indicators of reserve.

## 2.1: Evaluation by ὄψις

Herodotos certainly valued personal observation as a means of verifying information. For example, he often reported that he personally saw something<sup>1</sup> and he also informs the audience that he travelled in order to see certain things for himself.<sup>2</sup> The reason for Herodotos' journeys, like his travels to confirm accounts with local informants, is to certify to the audience that he, personally, could vouch for the reliability of the information he provided. A statement, affirming that personal observation was conducted by the inquirer and then relayed to the audience, was a personal certification of the accuracy of information.

An example where Herodotos indicates to the audience that ὄψις followed earlier ἱστορίη occurs in his account of the bones of those killed in a battle between Kambyses and Psammenitos fought near the Pelusian mouth of the Nile. Herodotos reported that at the mouth of the Nile he saw a greatly amazing thing, having learnt of it from the local inhabitants

θῶμα<sup>3</sup> δὲ μέγα εἶδον πυθόμενος παρὰ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων.

(3.12.1)

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<sup>1</sup> Marincola, pp.122-126, Dewald, pp.155-159. Marincola, p.122, n.5, identifies 21 statements of autopsy by Herodotos. In addition, autopsy by Herodotos is often assumed where not explicitly stated; A.J. Podlecki, 'Herodotus in Athens?' in K. Kinzl (ed.), *Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean: Studies Presented to Fritz Schachermeyr*, Berlin & New York, (1977), pp.260-263.

<sup>2</sup> For example, 2.3, 2.44.1 & 2.75.1. See also Chapter 1.3 & 1.5.1.

<sup>3</sup> θῶμα in the *Histories* does not show that Herodotos disbelieves things he describes but indicates his awe and wonder. The clearest examples occur in respect of Egyptian buildings and customs; see Lloyd, *Intro*, pp.141-147. Other



The bones of those killed in the battle were in two piles, the Persian bones in one place and the Egyptian in another.<sup>4</sup> 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 scarcely be broken by a blow from a rock. Herodotos repeats the citation of his sources and adds further information. The locals had said (ἔλεγον, 3.12.2) the Egyptian skulls were so hard because the Egyptians shaved their heads from birth and the bone thickened as a consequence of this exposure. The Egyptians did not go bald for the same reason, whereas the Persians wore felt caps throughout their lives and so their skulls were weak.

This amazing information, introduced by a source-attributing word, is expressly and repeatedly confirmed as true by Herodotos. First, he states unequivocally that he 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 supports this with the assertion that of all mankind (πάντων ἀνθρώπων, 3.12.3) one sees fewer bald men among the Egyptians. To further support the explanation of the locals, Herodotos repeats that he agreed with them

ταῦτα μὲν νυν τοιαῦτα [έόντα εἶδον] (3.12.4)

and then adds further evidence based on ὄψις. I saw (εἶδον, 3.12.4), he states, the skulls of the Persians killed with Achaimenes, son of

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examples of θῶμα occur at 9.65.2, 8.37.2, 7.99.1, 6.43.2, 6.121.1 & 6.123.1 in contexts which make Herodotos' view plain.

<sup>4</sup> Fehling, pp.28-30, argues that Herodotos' claimed personal observation cannot be correct. For a similar pile of bodies at Thermopylai, see Hdt. 8.25.2.

Dareios, by Inaros the Libyan at Papremis and they were brittle in the same way. It is clear from Herodotos' repeated support that he does not doubt the information for which he cited the locals as sources using ἔλεγον. Instead, the locals in this case are an authoritative source for some amazing information. To prove to his Greek audience that his account was accurate, Herodotos both indicated that his information was derived from local people and adduced additional evidence based on ὄψις to confirm their account. The ἔλεγον in this passage is a clear case where a source-attributing word cannot mean that Herodotos has reservations about the information.

On other occasions, source-attributing words do occur in connection with information specifically rejected by Herodotos. An example of a passage incorporating source-attributing words, where Herodotos uses ὄψις specifically to reject information, concerns the death of the daughter of the pharaoh Mykerinos. Herodotos' narrative is as follows. Mykerinos was a good ruler but suffered misfortune when his only child, a daughter, died. To preserve her memory, Mykerinos had her interred within an image of a cow made from gilded wood. This image was not buried and was still to be seen in Herodotos' time

ἀλλ' ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ τῆν φανερά (2.130.1)

in the palace at Sais. Nearby was another chamber containing twenty large wooden figures of naked women which were, as the priests of Sais said

ὡς ἔλεγον οἱ ἐν Σαῖ πόλι ἱρέες (2.130.2),

the statues of Mykerinos' concubines. Herodotos indicated his reservations about this information

αἴτινες μέντοι εἰσί, οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν πλὴν ἢ τὰ  
λεγόμενα (2.130.2)

but did not give his reasons. Another story about the gilded cow and the statues which οἱ δέ τινες λέγουσι (2.131.1) is also rejected by Herodotos. In this version, Mykerinos' daughter killed herself after she had been violated by her father. The informants also say (λέγουσι, 2.131.2) that Mykerinos interred her in the cow's image, but add that the girl's mother punished the attendants who had failed to protect her daughter by cutting off their hands; thus the statues of the women now have no hands. But, this story, Herodotos asserts, was foolish

ταῦτα δὲ λέγουσι φλυηρέοντες, ὡς ἐγὼ δοκέω (2.131.3)

especially as it concerns the hands of the statues. To support this assertion, Herodotos states that we were seeing<sup>5</sup> that it was time which had caused the hands of the statues to drop off and that these fallen hands were still to be seen in his time lying on the ground.<sup>6</sup>

In Herodotos' evaluation of the information presented in this passage, ὄψις is the dominant criterion; the presence of the image of the cow, the statues of the women and the hands on the ground are all confirmed on the basis of ὄψις. Part of the account may also have been disbelieved by Herodotos because the story that Mykerinos violated his daughter contradicts information Herodotos obtained through inquiry from the Egyptian priests, who characterised

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<sup>5</sup> καὶ ἡμεῖς ὠρώμεν (2.131.3). There seems to be no significance in the plural form ὠρώμεν although the singular is more common; Powell, p.285, items 2 & 3.

<sup>6</sup> ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμέ (2.131.3). How/Wells, vol.1, p.231, support the analysis of Herodotos and note that Egyptian wooden statues were made in pieces and were particularly liable to lose their arms.

Mykerinos as a pharaoh who ruled with clemency and generosity.<sup>7</sup> In this passage, accordingly, Herodotos indicates to his audience that he doubts one piece of information in which ἔλεγον occurs and expressly and specifically rejects an account in which λέγουσι occurs three times. Despite the presence of the source-attributing words, the audience is specifically made aware of Herodotos' doubts and disagreements through authorial insertions of opinion. It is the authorial statements, used as reliability indicators, which guide the audience, not the source-attributing words.

The above two examples, one negative and one positive, indicate that ὅψις is used by Herodotos to evaluate the reliability of information and that he was willing to express his opinion directly although source-attributing words occur in the passage. The evidence of the passage where information incorporating source-attributing words is specifically accepted as reliable by Herodotos shows that source-attributing words, in that instance at least, are not indicators to the audience that Herodotos has doubts about the information. A conclusion from the negative example is not as clear, although it does suggest that, when Herodotos has reservations about a passage, he is quite capable of disclosing his reservations to the audience directly and

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<sup>7</sup> The section on Mykerinos is introduced by ἔλεγον (2.129.1) and the rest of the chapter makes it clear that the priests were Herodotos' informants. Diodoros, who clearly draws on Herodotos, also represented Mykerinos as a just king (1.64.9) and the basis of his good reputation with the Egyptian priests is surely the tradition that he reopened the temples (Hdt. 2.128-129). This statement gains support from the revision of existing Egyptian religious texts in his reign as shown by the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* (Chapters XXXb & CXLVIII); E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, New York, 1960, p.14. The text of Chapter XXXb is at Budge, pp.440-442.

clearly. These conclusions gain support from an examination of additional passages in which source-attributing words occur in conjunction with clearly expressed statements of belief and disbelief by Herodotos.

## 2.2: Evaluation by Γνώμη

There are a large number of passages in the *Histories* incorporating source-attributing words where information is rejected by Herodotos as unreliable because he considered it was incompatible with common sense, human experience or the natural world: γνώμη. In these passages, Herodotos' disbelief is stated clearly. This suggests that it is not the role of the source-attributing words to imply disbelief; in the face of a overt statement of opinion, a covert implication seems superfluous.

The passage describing the desertion of Skyllias of Skione to the Greek forces at Artemision incorporates both source-attributing words and a specific expression of opinion by Herodotos. Herodotos, in this case, also provides the audience with his reasons for disbelieving the information. Herodotos began the account of Skyllias with a cautionary note. He could not report accurately, οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν ἀτρεκέως (8.8.2), how Skyllias deserted to the Greeks but he would be surprised if the story told was accurate. For it is said (λέγεται, 8.8.2) that Skyllias dived into the sea at Aphetai and did not surface again until he arrived at Artemision, a distance of about eighty stades. Herodotos added that other things are said about Skyllias, some having the appearance of lies, others truth

λέγεται μὲν νυν καὶ ἄλλα ψευδέσι ἴκελα περὶ τοῦ  
· ἀνδρὸς τούτου, τὰ δὲ μετεξέτερα ἀληθέα (8.8.3)

but on the matter of his desertion Herodotos' opinion (γνώμη μοι, 8.8.3) was that he arrived at Artemision by boat. Because of his deeds, Skyllias was an individual around whom oral traditions evolved.<sup>8</sup> Herodotos shows that he was unsure about the reliability of some of the information but he did know that a man could not hold his breath for the time needed to swim underwater from Aphetai to Artemision. Accordingly, in Herodotos experience this information about Skyllias was unreliable and he records his opinion. In this way the audience is left in no doubt about Herodotos' position on the swim, although his view is not implied by the presence of the source-attributing words but is expressly and directly stated by Herodotos.

Other stories are rejected by Herodotos on the grounds of incompatibility with the physical environment. For example, Herodotos explicitly rejected the story which the Skythians tell (λέγουσι, 4.31.1) that the air to their north was so full of feathers that no-one could see or travel across the land.<sup>9</sup> In Herodotos' reasoning, the feathers were snow, a conclusion he was confident anybody who had experienced snow falling thickly would accept. The story of the Thracians (ὡς δὲ Θρηϊκὲς λέγουσι, 5.10) that nobody

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<sup>8</sup> F.J. Frost, 'Scyllias: Diving in Antiquity' *G&R* 15 (1968), pp.180-181. Pausanias (10.19.1-2) saw a statue of Skyllias and his daughter Hydna raised by the Amphictyons at Delphi and reported the story that they both had dived and cut the cables of the Persian ships during the storm off Mt. Pelion. For the destruction of the Persian fleet, see *Hdt.* 7.188-192.

<sup>9</sup> This claim is first recorded at 4.7.3.

travelled beyond the River Ister because the land was full of bees was also rejected by Herodotos,

ἔμοι μὲν νῦν ταῦτα λέγοντες δοκέουσι λέγειν οὐκ οἰκότα. (5.10)

In this instance Herodotos again indicated his reasoning to the audience. Bees, Herodotos stated drawing on γνώμη and his knowledge of nature, are not able to bear the cold and for this reason do not exist beyond the Ister. Rather, it is the cold which made the region uninhabitable. Although source-attributing words are present in these two passages, Herodotos specifically stated his disbelief about the information and provided his reasons.

On other occasions, material which was clearly incompatible with nature was rejected by Herodotos on the basis of γνώμη without explanation. For example, the information of the bald men, who say (λέγουσι, 4.25.1) that in the mountains beyond their land dwell men who have goat's feet and men who hibernate for six months of the year, was expressly rejected by Herodotos.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the tradition that each member of the Neuroi turns into a wolf each year for a few days was disbelieved by Herodotos, although he indicated to the audience that this information was relayed by the Skythians and the Greeks settled in Skythia who, moreover, swear that the story is true

ἔμὲ μὲν νῦν ταῦτα λέγοντες οὐ πείθουσι, λέγουσι δὲ οὐδὲν ἦσσαν, καὶ ὄμνῦσι δὲ λέγοντες. (4.105.2)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> ἔμοι μὲν οὐ πιστὰ λέγοντες (4.25.1).

<sup>11</sup> The belief in werewolves was widespread in Greece (How/Wells, vol.1, p.339, Macan, IV-VI, vol.1, p.77) which makes Herodotos' own scepticism more commendable. Pausanias attacked the belief (6.8.2, on Damarchos of Parrasia)

Herodotos also specifically doubted the information, anonymously introduced by λέγεται (3.116.1), that there were men, normal in everything else, who had only one eye.<sup>12</sup> The information that no-one was killed during the rites in the temple at Papremis in Egypt, in which a battle with clubs occurred and heads were broken, was also rejected by Herodotos despite Egyptian claims (ἔφασαν, 2.63.3) to the contrary. The Phoenician tradition that they had circumnavigated Libya was not doubted by Herodotos (indeed, it proved his view that Libya was surrounded by sea except where it touched on Asia, [4.42.2]). Rather their statement that during the journey the sun was on their right hand was specifically rejected by Herodotos.<sup>13</sup> The story which the people of Abdera say, that Xerxes first loosened his girdle in Abdera in his flight from Athens, is also emphatically rejected by Herodotos

ὡς αὐτοὶ λέγουσι Ἀβδηρίται, λέγοντες ἔμοιγε  
οὐδαμῶς πιστά. (8.120)

All the passages incorporate source-attributing words but contain information which is expressly and specifically rejected by Herodotos through direct authorial insertions of opinion. The common factor is that information is in conflict with γνώμη; Herodotos' awareness of physical phenomena and events. Some of the informants, such as the

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but later stated that he believed men turned into wolves in heroic times and supported the belief that it still happened in Arcadia (8.2.3 & 6).

<sup>12</sup> In this case Herodotos doubts the information rather than rejects it outright. He notes (3.116.2-3) that he is not persuaded that one-eyed men exist but acknowledges that beautiful and rare things do occur in the distant parts of the world.

<sup>13</sup> καὶ ἔλεγον ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιστά (4.42.4). For discussion of this voyage, see How/Wells, vol.1, p.318, A.B. Lloyd, 'Necho and the Red Sea: Some Considerations' *JEA* 63 (1977), pp.142-155.



Skythians and the Greeks settled in Skythia, the Egyptians or people of Abdera, relaying stories about local events, might be expected to possess accurate information and I believe that this is why they are cited by Herodotos. When their information, however, was contrary to γνώμη it was rejected by Herodotos. It may be suggested that because Herodotos specifically rejects information in these passages, this supports the view that source-attributing words imply reserve. However, the evidence of the passages examined elsewhere in this chapter, especially where Herodotos supports information, militates against this conclusion. Indeed, I would argue that even in the passages considered above, Herodotos' negative opinion is not implicit in the source-attributing words at all but is an explicitly stated authorial position, clearly presented to the audience.

A more complex example of the application γνώμη and an awareness of the natural world is Herodotos' account of why the Nile floods. This is an example of γνώμη as an active ingredient of the inquiry process and comes about because ὄψις and ἱστορίη are initially unable to provide information. First, ὄψις is unavailable because Herodotos' travels had taken him no further than the Elephantine, well short of the source of the Nile.<sup>14</sup> Second, ἱστορίη also failed as the Egyptian sources Herodotos generally relied upon for information on Egypt had nothing to tell.<sup>15</sup> There were, however, other accounts explaining why the Nile floods of lesser authority of which Herodotos was aware; he referred to three explanations which the

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<sup>14</sup> 2.29.1. See Lloyd, *Intro*, pp.72-74, for Herodotos' itinerary in Egypt.

<sup>15</sup> Herodotos made an attempt to find out why the Nile floods from the Egyptian priests but they could tell him nothing (2.19.3).

Greeks gave (ἔλεξαν),<sup>16</sup> all of which he specifically rejects. The first explanation (2.20.2-3) was that the regular winds hold back the water and cause the flood. This was rejected by Herodotos on the basis of ὄψις, ἱστορίη and γνώμη. First, he knew that the Nile still floods when there are no winds and, second, that other rivers in Syria and Libya were not affected by the winds in the same way. The second explanation (2.21) was that the Nile flowed from the river Ocean. This explanation was rejected by Herodotos on the basis of γνώμη (2.23); he did not believe the river Ocean existed but considered it an invention of Homer or some other poet. The third explanation Herodotos (2.22.1) considered more plausible, although he stressed that it also must be rejected on the basis of γνώμη. This account maintained that the Nile floods because of melting snow. As Herodotos considered this third explanation the most plausible he carefully outlines to his audience his reasons for believing it to be untrue. First, Herodotos states that this explanation cannot be true, as a man who employs reason (ἀνδρὶ γε λογίζεσθαι, 2.22.2) understands, for the land to the south is hotter than the north. Herodotos supports this assertion by adducing further evidence: the winds that blow from the south are hot, the people there are black, no rain falls there, kites and swallows live there all year round and cranes fly there to escape the winter in Skythia. All this evidence is intended by Herodotos to prove to the audience that no snow could fall in the southern regions through which the Nile flowed.

Having rejected these explanations, Herodotos formulated his own based upon γνώμη; the sun in winter draws up less water from

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<sup>16</sup> 2.20.1. The source-attributing word which introduces each of the accounts is λέγει (2.20.2, 2.21 & 2.22.1).

the river than in summer and thus the river is higher and floods in that season.<sup>17</sup> In this instance, where enquiries from credible sources did not aid Herodotos, he used γνώμη and his knowledge of the physical world in order to reject other explanations and to advance his own hypothesis. The source-attributing words in the passages function to identify the source of the versions rejected by Herodotos, not imply Herodotos' disagreement. Rather, in each case, Herodotos seems anxious to identify the source of the explanations he rejects, possibly to assert the superiority of his version over those of the other Greeks. The source-attributing words, citing his sources, do not imply reserve. Instead, Herodotos' rejection of the various explanations of the Greeks, and his own contrary explanation, is indicated explicitly to the audience.

Herodotos' reasons for disagreeing with information he heard about Polykrates, tyrant of Samos, were less clear although his disagreement with particular information in the passage is indicated expressly. Herodotos first recorded (3.44) that Polykrates sent forty triremes containing the Samians he most suspected of opposing his rule to Kambyses, instructing that they not be allowed to return. Herodotos then recorded two traditions; some say (οἱ μὲν δὴ λέγουσι, 3.45.1) the Samians never arrived in Egypt but others say (οἱ δὲ λέγουσι, 3.45.1) that they had arrived but later escaped. Herodotos does not indicate specifically which account he preferred. However, the source-attributing words cannot indicate that *both*

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<sup>17</sup> 2.25-26. As Lloyd, *1-98*, pp.102-103, notes these arguments are elaborate, ingenious and credible. The fact that they were specious because they are based on a false premise does not mean that Herodotos' logic was flawed or that his contemporaries would not have found it compelling.

accounts are doubted by Herodotos for the continuing narrative accepts that they were not killed in Egypt but returned to Samos where they defeated the ships of Polykrates. They landed on the island but were defeated in a land battle and sailed to Sparta to obtain help. At this point Herodotos added that others say (λέγουσι, 3.45.3) the returning Samians defeated Polykrates. This version is, however, specifically rejected by Herodotos

λέγοντες ἔμοι δοκέειν οὐκ ὀρθῶς (3.45.3)

and his reasons, both involving γνώμη, explained to the audience. First, Herodotos applied γνώμη to argue that, if the exiles had defeated Polykrates, they would not have needed to ask the Spartans for help.<sup>18</sup> Second, γνώμη suggests that it was not reasonable that Polykrates, who had a great army of mercenaries, would have been defeated by a few exiles. In this instance, therefore, sections of the account incorporating source-attributing words were specifically rejected on the basis of γνώμη. Again, the source-attributing words in this passage do not carry the weight of showing Herodotos' disbelief for, when Herodotos does not believe information, he stated his disbelief specifically. In this passage there is another indicator that source-attributing words cannot imply reservations. This passage incorporates variant accounts, both including source-attributing words, which are recorded by Herodotos as mutually contradictory alternatives within the main narrative. Because of information contained in the narrative, it is clear that *both* alternatives cannot be doubted by Herodotos.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> The narrative (3.46-47, 54-56) details the Samian embassy to Sparta and the Spartan expedition launched against Polykrates.

<sup>19</sup> See Chapter Four for an analysis of variant accounts in the *Histories*.

Other passages incorporating source-attributing words are also rejected by Herodotos, although he does not always make his reasons clear. For example, Herodotos states that he does not believe the Egyptians when they say (λέγουσι, 3.16.5) that the corpse desecrated by Kambyses at Sais was not that of the pharaoh Amasis; they say (λέγουσι, 3.16.6) that Amasis learnt from an oracle what would happen to his corpse and substituted another body in his tomb. This tradition Herodotos states is a story fabricated by the Egyptians (ἄλλως δ' αὐτὰ Αἰγύπτιοι σεμνοῦν, 3.16.7). Herodotos also did not believe the story the Egyptians of Heliopolis said (λέγουσι, 2.73.3) that the phoenix brings his father's corpse to the temple encased in a ball of myrrh<sup>20</sup> or the most foolish tale<sup>21</sup> that the Spartans were bribed by Polykrates with worthless coins to lift the siege of Samos after forty days. In these passages, although source-attributing words are present, Herodotos rejects information and directly states his rejection.

The above passages are examples where Herodotos rejected information on the basis of γνώμη. Although source-attributing words are present, it is the direct statement of opinion which guides the audiences' response to the information, not the source-attributing words. This view gains support from a passage describing the death of Hamilcar in Sicily in which γνώμη and direct authorial comment affirm information in the narrative where source-attributing words are present. Herodotos first states that the account of the Carthaginians about the death of Hamilcar had the appearance of reasonableness

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<sup>20</sup> For the sources of the phoenix myth including Hekataios (*FGrH* 1, F324), see Lloyd, *1-98*, pp.317-322.

<sup>21</sup> ὁ ματαιότερος λόγος ὄρηται λέγεσθαι (3.56.2). The MSS have λέγεται but Hude accepts Wesseling's emendation to λέγεσθαι.

ἔστι δὲ ὑπ' αὐτῶν Καρχηδονίων ὅδε λόγος λεγόμενος,  
οἰκότι χρεωμένων. (7.167.1)

Their story was as follows. Throughout the battle Hamilcar remained in the camp offering sacrifice by fire to obtain favourable omens. When he realised that his army had been defeated, he threw himself onto the fire which consumed his body. Herodotos supported their account with additional information: sacrifices are now offered to Hamilcar in all the Carthaginian colonies and in Carthage itself. In this instance, ἱστορίη from the Carthaginians had produced information which was affirmed by Herodotos through γνώμη, aided by additional information.<sup>22</sup> Despite the presence of the source-attributing word, the information is stated by Herodotos to be accurate.

This analysis of the above passages suggests that γνώμη, in the guise of common sense, reason and judgment of what is possible in the physical world, were used by Herodotos in order to evaluate different traditions. The world of human endeavour follows certain rules which are unchangeable; a human cannot hold his breath while swimming eighty stades, have goat's feet or turn into a wolf. Herodotos knew that this information did not conform with nature and specifically rejected it. Although most of these passages are negative examples, I believe that it is the authorial statements of disbelief, not the source-attributing words, which are intended to guide the audience. The positive example and the passage in which both variant accounts cannot be doubted by Herodotos support the view that source-attributing words cannot habitually imply reserve.

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<sup>22</sup> Although Macan, *VII-IX*, vol.2, p.238, cites evidence that Herodotos has confused the details of the sacrifice with those in other temples.

### 2.2.1: Γνώμη, Religious Centres and the Gods

In the passages considered above, it seems clear that γνώμη was employed by Herodotos to evaluate information in a consistent manner. The result of his evaluation was then revealed by Herodotos to his audience by direct authorial comments, not source-attributing words. When the activities of the supernatural intrude into the human world, however, the usual unchangeable, logical patterns of the physical environment are altered. It has been noted, for example, that Herodotos' critical acumen is weakest when the activities of the gods are involved.<sup>23</sup> This has an effect upon Herodotos' evaluation of information and source-attributing words because it means that he does not apply γνώμη in evaluating supernatural information in the same way as secular information. It is necessary, however, to make a distinction between material in the *Histories* in which the gods are directly involved and material about the activities of religious centres and their attendants. For while the activities of the gods are beyond natural explanation, information about the shrines and the god's earthly representatives is not sacrosanct and was evaluated by Herodotos in the same way as he evaluated secular material. Thus, while Herodotos did believe that the gods intervened in human affairs through oracles, dreams and the like,<sup>24</sup> it is clear that he did evaluate

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<sup>23</sup> Hart, p.43, P.B. Georges, 'Saving Herodotos' Phenomena: The Oracles and the Events of 480 BC' CA 5 (1986), pp.16-17, W. Burkert, 'Herodot als Historiker fremder Religionen' in *Hérodote et les Peuples non Grecs* [Fondation Hardt 35 (1988)], pp.1-32, B. Shimron, 'Politics and Belief in Herodotus' *Historia Einzelschriften* 58 (1989), pp.26-53.

<sup>24</sup> For example, 2.120.5, 6.27.1, 7.129.4, 7.134.1 & 7.137.1 & 8.13.

the information of the earthly representatives of the gods, the priests and oracles, through ὄψις, γνώμη and ἱστορίη. The evaluation process, and the function of source-attributing words in these passages, does not change.

For example, Herodotos specifically rejected as unreliable stories, said by both the Khaldaioi in Babylon (φασί, 1.182.1) and the Egyptians at Thebes (λέγουσι, 1.182.2),<sup>25</sup> that the god came to the temple to sleep with a woman. In this instance, Herodotos' opinion about the information is indicated to the audience by a specific statement

ἔμοι μὲν οὐ πιστὰ λέγοντες. (1.182.1)

The same explicit statement of disbelief is employed by Herodotos (4.5.1 & 5.86.3) to indicate specifically to the audience his rejection of both the tradition of the Skythians (ὡς δὲ Σκύθαιλέγουσι, 4.5.1), that the founder of their race, Targitaos, was descended from a god,<sup>26</sup> and the information of the Aiginetans who say (λέγουσι, 5.86.1), that the statues of Damia and Auxesia fell to their knees simultaneously while being dragged away by the Athenians.<sup>27</sup> All these stories are contrary to γνώμη and are specifically rejected by Herodotos.

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<sup>25</sup> G. Rawlinson, *History of Herodotus*, London, 1880, vol.1, p.303, notes that this is contrary to Egyptian belief and maintains that it was an idiomatic expression, not intended to be taken at face value. The Khaldaioi were the professional religious class of Babylon and were compared to the priests of Egypt (Diodoros 2.29.2).

<sup>26</sup> The reason may have been Herodotos' suspicion of genealogies involving divine ancestors. See Hdt. 2.43-45 & 2.142-146.

<sup>27</sup> This particular statement forms part only of a long account of Athenian/Aiginetan conflicts which is examined in Chapter 4.2.3.



A more extensive example is the passage about the origins of shrines in Greece and Libya (2.54-57). This passage presented many difficulties for Herodotos as the stories involved conflicting claims made by different religious centres and contained information which was contrary to γνώμη. In these circumstances, it seems that Herodotos' solution was to document carefully through citation his informants for the different accounts, thus making the audience aware of the identity of the source for each part of the narrative.

The details recorded by Herodotos, including the frequent source-attributing words, are as follows. The Egyptians say (λέγουσι, 2.54.1) this about the oracles in Greece and Libya. The priests of Zeus at Thebes (Egypt) said (ἔφασαν, 2.54.1) that two priestesses were abducted by Phoenicians. One was taken to Greece and the other to Libya and from these women all the places of divination in those two countries were founded.

This claim by the Egyptians made Egyptian Thebes the genesis of all Greek religious centres, a claim which was likely to have been questioned by Herodotos' Greek audience. Accordingly, Herodotos carefully indicated to his audience the basis of his information. He stated that

εἰρομένου δέ μευ ὀκόθεν οὕτω ἀτρεκέως ἐπιστάμενοι  
λέγουσι, ἔφασαν πρὸς ταῦτα ζήτησιν μεγάλην ἀπὸ  
σφέων γενέσθαι τῶν γυναικῶν τουτέων, καὶ ἀνευρεῖν  
μέν σφεας οὐ δυνατοὶ γενέσθαι, πυθέσθαι δὲ ὕστερον  
ταῦτα περὶ αὐτέων τά περ δὴ ἔλεγον. (2.54.2)

when I asked them how it was that they could speak with so accurate knowledge, they said they had searched earnestly for what had become of

these women but had been unable to discover them, and that they had later learnt those things they now say.

Like other Egyptian priests,<sup>28</sup> the priests at Thebes indicated that they possessed a methodology that was similar to Herodotos' own. They too had made inquiries and their repeated citation by Herodotos, plus his stressing of their methodology, seeks to enhance the credibility of the account in the mind of the audience. Indeed, such is Herodotos' anxiety to ensure that the informants are identified that he repeated his citation of them, before indicating that a variant existed;

ταῦτα μὲν νῦν τῶν ἐν Θήβησι ἰρέων ἤκουον, τὰδε δὲ  
Δωδωναίων φασὶ αἰ προμάντιες. (2.55.1)

These things I heard from the priests in Thebes, while this the prophetesses at Dodona say.

The tradition in Dodona, as recorded by Herodotos, is as follows. Two black doves flew from Thebes, one to Dodona in Greece and one to Libya. The dove which came to Greece settled in a tree and in a human voice instructed the people of Dodona to establish an oracle. They say (λέγουσι, 2.55.3) that the other dove in Libya gave a similar instruction.

This supernatural information emanated from a source which, to the Greek mind, would possess a high degree of authority.<sup>29</sup> It is for this reason, I believe, that Herodotos again precisely identifies his source for this information and, in addition, stresses the intrinsic

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<sup>28</sup> See 2.118.1-119.3 and Chapter 1.5.2.

<sup>29</sup> Dodona was an important shrine in Homer: *Iliad* 16.233, *Odyssey* 14.327, 19.296; see also Lloyd, 1-98, pp.246-247.

authority of the informants. First, Herodotos repeated that the priestesses at Dodona had said (ἔλεγον, 2.55.3) these things. Second, to add verisimilitude, he specifically names the priestesses in order of age. Third, he stated that others at Dodona confirmed that the story told by the priestesses was true. All these factors function to enhance the authority of the account; it is the accepted tradition of a pre-eminent and respected shrine dealing with their own history. Yet, in Herodotos' opinion, two factors mitigate against the account's reliability despite the authority of the priestesses. First, the information was contrary to γνώμη. Second, it was contradicted by ἱστορίη; that is, information which emanated from another reliable source, the Egyptian priests at Thebes who had made enquiries of their own.

In view of this conflict between usually authoritative sources Herodotos was not as explicit in his rejection of one of the stories as usual. Rather than the explicit statement of disbelief he provides elsewhere,<sup>30</sup> Herodotos merely noted that he did have an opinion based upon γνώμη

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

If, he states, the Phoenicians did carry the priestess away from Thebes, it was reasonable that she would establish a shrine and, as soon as she understood Greek, teach divination. Herodotos added that the people at Dodona referred to her as a dove because, when she spoke in her own language it sounded like the twittering of birds, but as soon as she

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<sup>30</sup> For example, variations of οὐδαμῶς ἔμοιγε πιστός or οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγοντες are at 1.51.3, 2.134.1, 3.2.2, 3.45.3, 4.5.1, 4.42.4, 5.86.3, 7.214.1, 8.119 & 8.120.

learnt Greek they said that the dove spoke in a human voice. For how, asked Herodotos, could a dove speak the speech of men?

ἐπεὶ τέψ τρόπψ ἂν πελειᾶς γε ἀνθρωπηίῃ φωνῇ  
φθέγγεται; (2.57.2)

Herodotos added yet further evidence in support of the Egyptian version, stating that the fact the dove was black indicated the woman was Egyptian.<sup>31</sup>

Throughout this passage, therefore, Herodotos continuously indicates the identity of his informants to the audience through source-attributing words while expressing his own conclusions about the accuracy of the accounts. In this case the rival stories emanated from ostensibly credible sources. To resolve the conflict, Herodotos proposed a rational explanation rather than accept the unnatural story of a dove speaking with a human voice, thus using γνώμη as a method of reconciling conflicting stories. Because of the supernatural nature of the information and the perceived authority of the informants, Herodotos carefully outlined for the audience the source for each statement and marshalled evidence which supported the version he favoured. Yet, such was the authority of Dodona that Herodotos adduced still further evidence based on γνώμη and ἱστορίη in support of the Egyptian tradition he believed was accurate. First, he stated that the rites at Thebes in Egypt and Dodona were similar and that the practice of divination originated in Egypt. Second, he asserted that the Egyptians were the first to have religious ceremonies and

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<sup>31</sup> Herodotos (2.22) believes that, because of the hot sun, the people in the lands to the south of the Mediterranean are black.

processions which the Greeks learnt from them. Third, Herodotos confirmed the antiquity of the Egyptian ceremonies

ΤΕΚΜΗΡΙΟΝ ΔΕ ΜΟΙ ΤΟΥΤΟΥ ΤΟΔΕ· Αἱ μὲν γὰρ φαίνονται ἐκ πολλοῦ τευ χρόνου ποιούμεναι, αἱ δὲ Ἑλληνικαὶ νεωστὶ ἐποιήθησαν. (2.58)

This is my evidence for this. Their ceremonies clearly have been conducted for a very long time, whereas those of the Greeks are newly formed.

Therefore, γνώμη dictates that, if the rites are similar and the Egyptian the more ancient, the Greeks must have learnt their customs from the Egyptians in the manner the priests at Thebes said.<sup>32</sup>

In this passage, the account of the priestesses at Dodona, attributed by φασί, λέγουσι and ἔλεγον, was rejected by Herodotos on the basis of ἱστορίη at Thebes, attributed by λέγουσι, ἔφασαν and ἔλεγον, and supported by γνώμη. At the conclusion of the passage, Herodotos indicates his own opinion and explains his reasoning to the audience. In these circumstances, the view that each source-attributing word was intended to show that the account was doubted by Herodotos would lead to the conclusion that all the accounts were doubted and make a nonsense of Herodotos' support through γνώμη. Instead, the audience is guided by Herodotos' direct expression of opinion and his rational explanation. This passage is

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<sup>32</sup> Herodotos advances a similar line of argument in respect of the rites of Dionysos. Herodotos will not accept that similar Greek and Egyptian ceremonies are a coincidence; if it was, Herodotos argued, the Greek ritual would have been more Greek in character and less recent in origin (2.49.2-3). The argument of Herodotos was flawed but it was not confined to him alone; see Lloyd, *Intro*, pp.147-149 (Herodotos) and pp.49-60 (other Greeks).

another clear example which shows that the view that source-attributing words indicate reserve is incorrect.

Other passages incorporating source-attributing words but where the gods are directly involved, not their earthly representatives, even more clearly illustrate that source-attributing words do not function as indicators that Herodotos has doubts about a passage. For example, in the following passages source-attributing words are used to identify the Poteidaians, the Thessalians and the Spartans as informants where Herodotos expressly stated his agreement with the information they provide.

The first passage concerns the Persian siege of Poteidaia in 480 BC. Herodotos records that when Poteidaia had been besieged for three months a great ebb-tide occurred leaving a marsh around the city. The Persians tried to bypass Poteidaia into the Pallene<sup>33</sup> but they were drowned when partly across, as the locals say (ὡς οἱ ἐπιχώριοι λέγουσι, 8.129.2), by a greater flood tide than any that had previously happened. Herodotos expressed no specific opinion about whether the flood tide was the largest that had occurred but he had no doubts about why the Persians were destroyed by the sea. The cause of the flood tide, according to the people of Poteidaia

αἴτιον δὲ λέγουσι Ποτειδαιῆται τῆς τε ῥηχίης

(8.129.3)

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<sup>33</sup> The town of Poteidaia reached across the isthmus of one of the fingers of the Chalcidicean peninsula. The region of Pallene incorporates the finger from Poteidaia down (Hdt. 7.123.1) and thus the Persian plan was to besiege Poteidaia from both sides.

was that these same Persians had desecrated the temple and image of Poseidon in a suburb of Poteidaia. This statement is affirmed specifically by Herodotos

αἴτιον δὲ τοῦτο λέγοντες εὖ λέγειν ἔμοιγε δοκέουσι

(8.129.3)<sup>34</sup>

thereby directly attesting to both his belief in divine intervention and affirming his view that the information, for which the Poteidaians were cited by means of λέγουσι, was accurate. This express statement of belief by Herodotos means that the λέγουσι in this passage is a further example where source-attributing words cannot signify that he has reservations or doubts about the passage.

In another passage information relayed by the Thessalians is supported by Herodotos through both γνώμη and ὄψις. It is said (λέγεται, 7.129.3) that in ancient times Thessaly was a lake because the passage through which the river Peneios runs to the sea did not exist. Yet, it is clear to Herodotos that, when the Thessalians say (φασί, 7.129.4) that Poseidon made the passage through which the river Peneios flows through the mountains, this was a reasonable opinion: οἰκότα λέγοντες (7.129.4). For, in Herodotos' view, earthquakes are the work of Poseidon and from the sight of the river's passage it was clear to Herodotos

ὡς ἐμοὶ ἐφαίνετο εἶναι (7.129.4)

that it was created by an earthquake. Herodotos also specifically agreed with the Spartans' account (λέγουσι, 7.137.2) that the wrath of the gods settled upon them because they had illtreated the

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<sup>34</sup> Poseidon was the deity of Poteidaia and his image was on the city coins; for examples, see D.R. Sear, *Greek Coins*, vol.1 (2nd ed.), London, 1975, p.132, nos.1282-1283.

ambassadors of Dareios.<sup>35</sup> In these passages, it can be seen that Herodotos directly expressed support for the information for which informants were cited through source-attributing words. Thus, the presence of the source-attributing words in these passages cannot signify reserve as this would make a nonsense of Herodotos' expressly stated authorial position.

A more complex example of Herodotos' approval in a passage incorporating source-attributing words is his account of the madness and death of Kleomenes of Sparta. Herodotos records that Kleomenes was confined in the stocks by his relatives because of his madness but obtained a knife, mutilated himself and died. The cause of Kleomenes' madness was the subject of many explanations which are reported by Herodotos. According to the story of the majority of the Greeks

ὥς μὲν οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσι Ἑλλήνων (6.75.3)

Kleomenes went mad because he bribed the Pythia to lie about the true father of Demaratos.<sup>36</sup> In contrast, as the Athenians say (ὥς δὲ Ἀθηναῖοι [μοῦνοι] λέγουσι, 6.75.3), Kleomenes' madness was due to his destruction of the temple at Eleusis. The Argives say (ὥς δὲ

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<sup>35</sup> The Spartans had cast the ambassadors from Dareios into a well. For this impious act Herodotos twice expressly stated (7.137.1 & 2) that they were punished by heaven because of the anger of Talthybios, Agamemnon's herald, who had a shrine at Sparta. Athens also mistreated the heralds sent to them; Herodotos cannot recount any specific punishment they suffered for this act but he does note (7.133-134) that the Athenians' land and city were laid waste.

<sup>36</sup> Hdt. 6.61-66. Kleomenes challenged Demaratos' right to succeed and the matter was referred to Delphi by the Spartans. The Pythia's adjudication favoured Kleomenes because, Herodotos asserted, he had bribed the Pythia through the agency of Kobon, son of Aristophantos.



Ἄργεῖοι, 6.75.3),<sup>37</sup> in turn, that it was because Kleomenes had previously destroyed the sacred grove of the temple at Argos.

Following these various citations of sources Herodotos devoted seven chapters of the *Histories* (6.76-83) to an elaborate and detailed description, including quoted oracles, of how Kleomenes destroyed the sacred grove.<sup>38</sup> He concluded his account by repeating the identification of the informants for this version: the Argives say (φασί, 6.84.1) that this was the reason for Kleomenes' madness. There was, however, yet another story and this is recorded by Herodotos with frequent source citations. The Spartans themselves say (αὐτοὶ δὲ Σπαρτιῆται φασί, 6.84.1) that Kleomenes lost his reason because, they say (λέγουσι, 6.84.3), he mixed with the Skythians and learned to drink undiluted wine. From that time, as the Spartans themselves say (ὡς αὐτοὶ λέγουσι, 6.84.3), when they want undiluted wine they say (λέγουσι, 6.84.3) they want it "Skythian-wise". If the frequent citation of the Spartans was not sufficient to identify the source for this story, Herodotos reaffirmed that this is indeed what the Spartans say concerning Kleomenes:

οὕτω δὲ Σπαρτιῆται τὰ περὶ Κλεομένεα λέγουσι. (6.84.3)

Herodotos, accordingly, recorded four explanations of the cause of Kleomenes' madness. Through source-attributing words Herodotos identified the source for the different versions as the

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<sup>37</sup> The λέγουσι is understood from the preceding Athenian account.

<sup>38</sup> Immerwahr, pp.192-193, considers that this version is given in great length in order to stress the theme of impiety. This seems unlikely as it is ultimately rejected by Herodotos.

Spartans, the Argives, the Athenians and the majority of the Greeks.<sup>39</sup> Three of the four stories postulate divine retribution as the cause and one of the three, the version of the Argives, is recorded in the narrative in substantial detail. As Herodotos did believe that the gods intervened in the affairs of mankind, none of these versions could be excluded through γνώμη. The secular Spartan version also had claims to be reliable as it was the version of locals about their own king. Each version had a claim to be accepted as reliable and for this reason Herodotos, by means of source-attributing words, carefully identified for the audience the source for each account. After reporting all the versions, Herodotos finally gave his own view

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

but it seems to me that Kleomenes was punished in retribution for what he did to Demaratos.

Despite the claims of the other versions, Herodotos states his opinion that the version of the majority of the Greeks, who were cited as sources by means of λέγουσι, was reliable. In doing this he consequentially rejected the other versions he reported which incorporated citations by means of λέγουσι and φασί. In this passage, accordingly, source-attributing words introduce information which either is approved specifically or rejected by Herodotos. If nothing else, this indicates that the source-attributing word λέγουσι

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<sup>39</sup> It is not possible to say who the "majority" of the Greeks are in this context. The Argives, Spartans and Athenians are excluded, and it difficult to see who else would have an opinion.

which introduces the tradition of the majority of the Greeks cannot indicate Herodotos' reservations, for he accepts that the tradition is accurate.

In a number of the passages considered above source-attributing words are used by Herodotos in respect of material which he believed was accurate. These passages, together with passages where Herodotos specifically indicates his disagreement although source-attributing words are present, are further evidence that the presence of source-attributing words in a passage do not suggest that the information is doubted by Herodotos. The evidence of the passages also show that Herodotos applied γνῶμῃ and an awareness of his physical environment to evaluate his sources and their information. When accounts transgressed against natural laws, they were rejected by Herodotos unless the gods were directly involved. The accounts of the religious centres were not exempt from this rational analysis but in some cases their credibility was such that Herodotos was careful to cite his informant to indicate to the audience that the information he recorded was derived from an authoritative source.

### **2.3: Evaluation by Ἱστορίη**

On many occasions when Herodotos specifically rejects information there is an unstated premise behind that rejection; other information had been derived by Herodotos from a source which he believed was more reliable. As noted in Chapter 1, information from local informants and the Egyptian priests is likely to be considered by Herodotos to be reliable. Thus, if he heard more than one version of an

account and one of the versions emanated from an informant Herodotos considered inherently reliable, it seems likely he would be more ready to believe that story unless evaluation by ὄψις or γνώμη led to its rejection.

A passage which incorporates source-attributing words and provides evidence of Herodotos' evaluation of information by means of ἱστορίη is Herodotos' narrative of the wondrous works done by the Egyptians around Lake Moiris and Crocodile City. Initially, ὄψις and γνώμη are evoked by Herodotos. First, he noted (2.148.1) that he visited the region of Lake Moiris and saw the labyrinth and the huge artificial lake with the two large pyramids in the center. Second, he reasoned (2.149.2-4) that the lake was artificial because of the pyramids in the centre and because the region was exceedingly dry.<sup>40</sup> His acceptance that the lake was artificial led Herodotos into further inquiries. He was curious to learn why the earth excavated when the lake was dug was nowhere to be seen. He asked the local inhabitants; they related (ἐφράσαν, 2.150.2)<sup>41</sup> that the earth had been dumped into

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<sup>40</sup> Strabo (17.1.37), believed the lake was natural but that engineers had placed locks on the canal to the Nile in order to regulate the floodtides. Diodoros (1.51.5-1.52.1) and Pliny, *HN* (5.9), agreed that the lake was artificial and had been excavated by Moiris. The lake is, however, not artificial but natural; A.H. Gardiner & H.I. Bell, 'The name of Lake Moeris' *JEA* 29 (1943), pp.44-45. J.A.S. Evans, 'Herodotus and the Problem of the 'lake of Moeris'' *CW* 59 (1963), p.277 considered that Herodotos had misunderstood his informants when they said that the earth excavated went into the Nile; cf. O.K. Armayor, *Herodotus' Autopsy of the Fayoum: Lake Moeris and the Labyrinth of Egypt*, Amsterdam, 1985, esp. pp.19-36, for the view that Herodotos did not in fact visit the area or the lake.

<sup>41</sup> Of the occurrences of φράζω in the *Histories* listed by Powell (p.375), only two are source-attributing words. The only other source-attributing use, at 8.55, referred

the Nile. Herodotos specifically expressed his acceptance of this reply (καὶ εὐπετέως ἔπειθον, 2.150.2) and referred to a similar deed where thieves dug a tunnel into the palace of King Sardanapallos of Nineveh and disposed of the earth by night into the Tigris. In this instance, the function of the additional ἱστορίη was to support the credibility of the Egyptian account and, indeed, Herodotos adds that the only difference was that in Egypt the earth was scattered into the Nile by day. The narration and Herodotos' specific expression of agreement thus support information introduced by a source-attributing word, ἔφρασαν, and to show that there is no doubt of the basis of Herodotos' information, he repeats that the lake is said (λέγεται, 2.150.4) to have been dug in this way. In this passage, λέγεται and ἔφρασαν are source citations, identifying local informants as Herodotos' sources. In this instance also these source-attributing words occur in connection with information Herodotos expressly accepts is true and thus they cannot indicate that Herodotos considers the information to be untrue.

Belief in the credibility of local informants is implicit in Herodotos' evaluation of the reliability of three explanations of why Kambyzes invaded Egypt. At the start of Book Three Herodotos records that Kambyzes led an army against the pharaoh Amasis for the following cause (δι' αἰτίην τοιήνδε 3.1.1). Kyros had asked the pharaoh Amasis to send an eye-specialist to Persia. The specialist resented leaving his family in Egypt and persuaded Kambyzes to request a daughter of Amasis as a wife. Amasis dare not refuse but sent

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to information about the shrine of Erechtheus at Athens. In this case, Herodotos also expressly indicated that he agreed with the information.

Nitetis, who was not his own daughter but the daughter of the pharaoh Amasis had deposed. Nitetis, not surprisingly, revealed her true identity to Kambyses. The deceit and the insult perpetrated by Amasis caused Kambyses to invade Egypt. At the very end of this explanation, Herodotos identified the source of the story as the Persians using a source-attributing word: οὕτω μὲν νυν λέγουσι Πέρσαι. (3.1.5)

Immediately after this Persian explanation, Herodotos reported that the Egyptians claim Kambyses was part Egyptian, saying (φάμενοι, 3.2.1) that he was the son of Nitetis.<sup>42</sup> According to the Egyptians, it was Kyros, not Kambyses, who requested a dynastic marriage alliance with Amasis. Herodotos explicitly rejects this story

λέγοντες δὲ ταῦτα οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγουσι (3.2.2)

and outlines his two reasons based upon ἱστορίη and γνώμη. Herodotos states, first, that no bastard can become king of Persia if there is a legitimate son to succeed and, second, that Kambyses was truly the son of Kassandane, daughter of the Achaimenid Pharnaspes, and not an Egyptian.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps because he considers that the

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<sup>42</sup> Kambyses' "marriage" to Nitetis, daughter of the pharaoh from whom Amasis had usurped the throne of Egypt, in fact gave him a greater claim to the Egyptian throne than Amasis and some of this claim to legitimacy could rest behind the rejected Egyptian story; Aly, pp.76-77, Balcer, p.73.

<sup>43</sup> Herodotos twice confirmed that Kambyses was the son of Kassandane when giving details of his succession to the throne of Persia (2.1.1 & 2). Despite the certainty of Herodotos about the accuracy of his information, different stories about the mother of Kambyses continued to circulate. For example, the story that Kambyses was part Egyptian continued despite Herodotos' attack: Dinon (*FGrH* 690 F11), Lyceas of Naucratis (*FGrH* 613 F1) and Ktesias (*FGrH* 688 F13) are said to have referred to it (according to Athenaios, 560d). Ktesias (*FGrH* 688, F9.1) also recorded the story that Kambyses was the son of Kyros and Amytis, the daughter of the Median king Astyages who had been overthrown by Kyros (Hdt

Egyptians are usually reliable in their research, Herodotos seems offended and perhaps disappointed by their explanation. The Egyptians, Herodotos states, know Persian laws better than anybody else

εἰ γὰρ τινες καὶ ἄλλοι, τὰ Περσέων νόμιμα  
ἐπιστέαται καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι (3.2.2)

and so it follows, in Herodotos' opinion, that they had deliberately twisted the true story in order to claim kinship to their Persian conquerors. The final explanation, introduced by λέγεται, is also rejected by Herodotos

λέγεται δὲ καὶ ὅδε λόγος, ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιθανός. (3.3.1)

According to this story, Kassandane, wife of Kyros and mother of Kambyses, told an unnamed Persian woman that she was being neglected by Kyros because of an Egyptian woman. Kambyses, then ten years old, overheard his mother's complaint and vowed that when he became a man he would turn Egypt upside down.

Two of these three explanations are expressly rejected by Herodotos. He provides his reasons in one case only: the Egyptian explanation was rejected because of information which Herodotos derived from Persian sources and γνώμη. He does not indicate why the third version is untrue although it is clearly contrary to the information he had previously reported (2.1.1) that Kyros mourned Kassandane deeply after her death. More importantly, it was inconsistent with the first explanation, attributed to the Persians. In

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1.127-130). This story has been regarded as a Median invention (T.S. Brown, 'Herodotus' Portrait of Cambyses' *Historia* 31 (1982), p.394, n.20) but it is equally likely that it formed part of the campaign by Dareios to discredit Kambyses by suggesting that he was not the rightful king of Persia.

this case, the Persian story is the version Herodotos accepted as accurate<sup>44</sup> as is shown by αἰτίη, cause, to frame the information.<sup>45</sup> Only at the end of the story did Herodotos reveal that it is the account told by the Persians and, indeed, the position of the source-attributing word λέγουσι at the end of the passage is both an emphatic reminder to his audience of his source and contrary to Herodotos' usual practice.<sup>46</sup> In this instance, the presence of the source-attributing word

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44 It has been argued that a personal motive for the invasion is typical of Herodotos' failure to grasp proper cause and effect; How/Wells, vol.1, pp.45-46, 256. Yet, the account, suggesting a request for a dynastic marriage as part of diplomatic manoeuvring to provide an excuse for an invasion, is plausible (Waters, *Tyrants*, p.54; Brown, *ibid.*, p.391). Sayce, p.228, considered that a pretext for the invasion can be found in the alliance between Egypt and Lydia (Hdt 1.77.2) which went back to the time of Gyges and Psammetichos. Xenophon (*Kyropaidia* 6.2.10) indicated that Egypt did furnish troops to Kroisos for his invasion of Persia. Herodotos has linked the reason for other Persian invasions to a desire for revenge (4.1.1, Skythians; 5.105, 6.94.1, 7.8β-γ, Athenians) but occasionally no reason is given (1.201, Massagetai).

45 αἰτίη (cause) is at 3.1.1 and 3.1.5. It should not be doubted that Herodotos accepted this story as the real reason: contrast his use of αἰτίη with πρόφασις which indicates an alleged reason or pretext; Powell, p.326, L. Pearson, 'Prophasis and Aitia' *TAPhA* 83 (1952), pp.91-109, H.R. Immerwahr, 'Aspects of Historical Causation in Herodotus' *TAPhA* 87 (1956), pp.243-247.

46 Herodotos' usual practise is to introduce information by means of source-attributing words (there are many instances of this, for example 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 1.51.5, 1.182.1, 2.13.1, 2.45.1, 2.174.1, 3.45.3, 4.13.1, 4.35.1, 4.195.1, 6.61.4, 7.229.1 & 8.94.1) or to "frame" information by using a word before and after the information (e.g., 1.5.1 & 3, 4.5.1 & 7.1, 5.44.2 & 45.1, 6.52.1 & 53.1, 9.16.1 & 5, 9.82.1 & 3). The existence and purpose of these "framing" words and phrases have been explained: see Immerwahr, pp.12-15, 54-58. The instance of a single source-attributing word at the end of an account is very unusual. For a similar instance, see 8.39.1, which is an account where Herodotos stressed the miraculous nature of the deliverance of Delphi from the Persians.



in the passage does not indicate that Herodotos disbelieved the story. Rather, it serves two functions. First, the λέγουσι clearly marks the demarcation point between the information in the first story and the other stories Herodotos goes on to record, and expressly reject. Second, by citing a source which Herodotos believes has credibility, he attests that this version of the story is authoritative. This account is the story of the Persians about their own history and although both Egyptians and Persians were involved in the events of Kambyses' invasion of Egypt, the invasion was a result of events in Persia, not Egypt. Thus, for this information, the Persians are the local informants. The alternative versions of the story, recorded incorporating the source-attributing words φάμενοι and λέγεται, are rejected through evaluation based on ἱστορίη and γνώμη. However, in each case, Herodotos' rejection of the information is not indicated by the source-attributing words but by direct authorial assertions of disagreement.

Book Two provides many examples of Herodotos' citation of the Egyptians as sources. As indicated (in Chapter 1.5.2), the Egyptians are both local informants for their own history and possess a rational methodology. This is particularly relevant where they are cited as informants by means of source-attributing words in instances where their information is adduced by Herodotos to prove that particular Greek information about Egypt is inaccurate. For example, Herodotos rejected the story of the Greeks about the experiment conducted by the Pharaoh Psammetichos to find the most ancient race on the basis of information he heard, and believed, from the Egyptian priests at

Memphis.<sup>47</sup> Herodotos also specifically agreed with the information of the Egyptians, learned through enquiry

πυνηθανόμενος οὕτω εὐρίσκω ἔδν· . . . λέγω δὲ τὰ  
λέγουσι αὐτοὶ Αἰγύπτιοι (2.50.1-2)

that most of the names of the gods came to Greece from Egypt. Another passage involved a story about Herakles in Egypt. Herodotos states that among many other ill-considered stories told by the Greeks

λέγουσι δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλα ἀνεπισκέπτως οἱ Ἕλληνες  
(2.45.1)

is a story about Herakles in Egypt. They say (λέγουσι, 2.45.1) that when Herakles came to Egypt the Egyptians attempted to sacrifice him to Zeus. Herakles, at first, was compliant but when they began the rites of the sacrifice he resisted and killed them all. Herodotos stated that this story is incorrect for two reasons and he based his evaluation on *ἱστορίη* and *γνώμη*. First, Herodotos asked, why would the Egyptians seek to sacrifice a man when their religion prohibits them from sacrificing anything except unblemished pigs, bulls or geese?<sup>48</sup> Second, how could Herakles alone and still a mortal, as indeed they say (ὡς δὴ φασι, 2.45.3),<sup>49</sup> have been able to defeat so many Egyptians?

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<sup>47</sup> This passage is analysed in Chapter 6.2.

<sup>48</sup> This knowledge of Egyptian customs clearly was derived by Herodotos from the Egyptians. Lloyd, *1-98*, pp. 213-214, summarises the evidence for human sacrifice in Egypt and concludes that there is no evidence that it was practised after the 1st dynasty; cf. Diodoros 1.88.5, Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 73. Manetho (fr.85) indicated that human sacrifice continued until the time of Amasis.

<sup>49</sup> "They" are the Greeks. Here Herodotos used the account of the Greeks to prove his own point: as the Greeks themselves say, Herakles was still a mortal and could not have been victorious against so many.

In this case, Herodotos rejected the account of the Greeks on the basis of ἱστορίη about Egyptian customs derived from the Egyptians, supported by γνώμη and an understanding of what a mortal could achieve. In these passages Herodotos' disagreement with information again is indicated directly and specifically. The occurrence of the source-attributing words, λέγουσι and ἤκουον<sup>50</sup> citing the Egyptians as informants, cannot signify reserve on the part of Herodotos as they introduce information with which he specifically agrees.

In other instances, Herodotos' reliance upon information from the Egyptians to contradict Greek traditions may be supported by other evidence based upon a combination of ὄψις, γνώμη and ἱστορίη. An example is the passage about the extent of Egypt. Herodotos begins by asserting that most of the land of Egypt has been reclaimed from the sea by soil washed down by the River Nile.<sup>51</sup> The priests said this, Herodotos confirms, and he has reached the same conclusion

κατά περ οἱ ἱρέες ἔλεγον, ἐδόκεε καὶ αὐτῷ μοι εἶναι  
ἐπίκτητος Αἴγυπτίοισι. (2.10.1)

Herodotos then describes the extent of Egypt and specifically repeats his agreement with what he had been told

τὰ περὶ Αἴγυπτον ὧν καὶ τοῖσι λέγουσι αὐτὰ πείθομαι  
καὶ αὐτὸς οὕτω κάρτα δοκέω εἶναι (2.12.1)

before twice again citing the priests as sources

ἔλεγον δὲ . . . οἱ ἱρέες and

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<sup>50</sup> A discussion of ἤκουον as a source-attributing word is at Chapter 6.1.

<sup>51</sup> Herodotos had stated previously that the Egyptian account about the reclamation of the land was accurate: καὶ εὖ μοι ἐδόκεον λέγειν περὶ τῆς χώρης(2.5.1). Lloyd, 1-98, pp.59-60, summarises the geological evidence supporting Herodotos' opinion.

ὅτε τῶν ἱρέων ταῦτα ἐγὼ ἤκουον. (2.13.1)

With his own position made plain to the audience, Herodotos then expressly disagreed with the account of the Ionians who say (φασί, 2.15.1) that Egypt is the Nile Delta alone, maintaining (λεγόντων, 2.15.1) that the rest is partly Libya and partly Arabia.

To establish the primacy of his own account and opinion over the account of the Ionians, Herodotos shows the audience that he rejected their information on a number of grounds, based on γνώμη and ὄψις, in addition to the information he obtained from the Egyptians. Herodotos' first proof is based on γνώμη and ἱστορίη. Herodotos reasoned that the Delta was alluvial land of relatively recent origin, as the Egyptians themselves say and Herodotos judges,

ὡς αὐτοὶ λέγουσι Αἰγύπτιοι καὶ ἐμοὶ δοκέει (2.15.2)

for, if the Delta alone was the total extent of Egypt, the Egyptians would not have needed to conduct the experiment to find the oldest race.<sup>52</sup> Herodotos' own explicitly stated belief was that the Egyptian race had existed prior to the forming of the Delta and had expanded into the Delta as it was reclaimed from the sea. Thus, Herodotos argued, once more on the basis of γνώμη, if his own opinion and that of the Egyptians was correct, the Ionians must be wrong. Even if the Ionians are right, Herodotos continued, they cannot calculate correctly, for they divide the world into three parts, Europe, Asia and Libya, and thus ignore the Delta.<sup>53</sup> Herodotos (2.17) then repeated his view that the Ionian opinion is incorrect and summarised his own conclusion;

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<sup>52</sup> That is, the experiment of Psammetichos (Hdt. 2.2).

<sup>53</sup> 2.16. In other words, if the Ionians are correct they should divide the world into four parts, not three, adding the Delta separately. Lloyd, *1-98*, pp.82-83, summarises the logical inconsistencies in this argument.

Egypt is the land inhabited by the Egyptians. And, so adamant is he to dispute the Ionian account, he adduced still further evidence based on ἱστορίη. Herodotos states that after he had formed his own opinion about the extent of Egypt it was confirmed by a reply he learnt (ἐπιθύμητον, 2.18.1) had been given by the oracle at Ammon. When the people of Marea and Apis, which border on Libya, went to Ammon asking if they were Libyans because they lived outside the Nile Delta, the oracle replied that they were Egyptians because all the land that was watered by the Nile was Egypt.

This passage is further support for the view that source-attributing words do not indicate reserve as it shows that Herodotos used source-attributing words in connection with information he accepted. In this passage Herodotos reported information derived from the Egyptian priests incorporating λέγουσι and ἔλεγον, the oracle of Ammon and his own powers of deduction, in order to dispute an account of the Ionians incorporating φασί and λεγόντων. Source-attributing words, therefore, are present in both affirmed and rejected information. Instead, it is Herodotos' direct authorial statements of opinion, based on ὄψις, γνώμη and ἱστορίη, which clearly indicate his position on the information to his audience.

In other passages, Herodotos' reliance upon information from the Egyptians is implied. For example, Herodotos disagreed with the story, told by some of the Greeks (φασί Ἑλλήνων, 2.134.1) that a pyramid was built by the Thracian courtesan Rhodopis. Herodotos stated that the Greeks are in error and adduced as evidence proofs based on ἱστορίη, ὄψις and γνώμη. First, Herodotos highlighted a chronological difficulty; he believed that Rhodopis lived in the reign of

the pharaoh Amasis, long after the pyramid was built<sup>54</sup> and although his source for this information is not specifically indicated it was almost certainly the Egyptian priests.<sup>55</sup> Second, he stated that Rhodopis did not have the large sums needed in order to construct the pyramid because she had dedicated at Delphi a tenth part of her wealth in the form of the iron ox-spits which could still be seen there in Herodotos' time.<sup>56</sup> In this case ὄψις supplied the evidence and, applying γνῶμη, Herodotos calculated that if these ox-spits represented a tenth of her wealth she did not have sufficient funds to build the pyramid.<sup>57</sup> In this instance Herodotos probably relied upon information derived from locals in the form of the Egyptian priests, supported by specific information from Delphi, to reject the version of the Greeks. His disagreement with the Greek story was again directly stated, not implied by the source-attributing words.

Herodotos also explicitly accepted that Egyptian information was reliable in his account of the origins of the Kolchians. This passage details the campaigns of the Pharaoh Sesostris into Thrace and

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<sup>54</sup> 2.134.2. The difference is around 2000 years. Amasis is a 26th Dynasty Pharaoh, Mykerinos, 4th Dynasty (C. Aldred, *The Egyptians*, London, 1961, pp.84, 150). There are many accounts about Rhodopis. The version Herodotos attacked was preserved by Diodoros (1.64.13-14) as an alternative; Diodoros reported that the third pyramid was built for Inaros. Manetho (fr.21 a & b), indicated it was the work of Queen Nitokris of the 6th Dynasty.

<sup>55</sup> See Lloyd, *Intro*, pp.89-100, and especially pp.90-91, 186-187, for a summary of the information Herodotos attributes to the Egyptian priests.

<sup>56</sup> 2.135.4. This reference to ὄψις and the precise detail of the account indicate that Delphi was Herodotos' source. Athenaios (13.596b), however, stated that Herodotos was wrong as the spits at Delphi were not dedicated by Rhodopis.

<sup>57</sup> Strabo (17.1.33) explained this difficulty. He accepted Herodotos' account but stated that the pyramid was built by her lovers.

Skythia based upon information, Herodotos indicated, from the Egyptian priests.<sup>58</sup> Their account is as follows. When Sesostris turned back towards Egypt, some of the Egyptian soldiers remained on the River Phasis. Herodotos first identifies the limits to his information and notes that he cannot say accurately how the soldiers came to remain behind

οὐκ ἔχω τὸ ἐνθεῦτεν ἀτρεκέως εἰπεῖν. (2.103.2)

However, he did identify them as the ancestors of the Kolchians, a view Herodotos asserts he formed before he heard it from others

νοήσας δὲ πρότερον αὐτὸς ἢ ἀκούσας ἄλλων λέγω.

(2.104.1)

Herodotos then provides the audience with evidence based on ἱστορίη, γνώμη and ὄψις in support of his opinion. First, Herodotos states that the Egyptians said (ἔφασαν Αἰγύπτιοι, 2.104.2) they considered the Kolchians to have been part of the army of Sesostris. Second, Herodotos notes that the Kolchians, like the Egyptians, are dark skinned and woolly headed, although he concedes that this is not sufficient proof of his opinion because other dark skinned peoples exist.<sup>59</sup> Better proof, continues Herodotos, can be found in the

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<sup>58</sup> 2.102.2 (ἔλεγον οἱ ἱρέες) and 2.102.3 (κατὰ τῶν ἱρέων τὴν φάτιν).

Here also Herodotos supported the information of the priests through ὄψις. They said that Sesostris set up pillars in the lands he conquered and Herodotos (2.103.1) confirmed that the pillars could still be seen in Thrace and Skythia.

<sup>59</sup> Herodotos previously stated that the Egyptians are black skinned (2.57.2). F.M. Snowden, Jr, 'Bernal's 'Blacks,' Herodotus, and other Classical Evidence' *Arethusa* Special Issue (Fall 1989), pp.83-95 argues that Herodotos was well acquainted with the differences between the various dark-skinned races; cf. Hippokrates (*Airs, Waters, and Places* 15) described the "dwellers on the Phasis" without mentioning anything about their Egyptian origins. They are tall, gross of

similarity between particular customs of the Egyptians and Kolchians. For example, the Egyptians, Ethiopians and Kolchians are the only races who have practised the custom of circumcision from the beginning. Other races now practise this custom, but the Phoenicians, Syrians and Makrones acknowledge that they learnt it from others; the Phoenicians and the Syrians in Palestine acknowledge that the Egyptians are the source of their custom, while other Syrians and the Makrones say (φασί, 2.104.3) they had learnt it recently from the Kolchians. Herodotos adduces still further evidence: the Egyptians and Kolchians alone work linen in a particular way, have similar speech and some similar customs. In Herodotos' mind, a similarity in customs was a result of either contact between the races<sup>60</sup> or a shared ancestry. In this passage, accordingly, Herodotos agreed with the information of the Egyptians in which ἔφασαν occurred, confirming it through γνώμη and ὄψις. In addition, the source-attributing word φασί, citing the Syrians and Makrones as sources, clearly introduces information which supports Herodotos' own opinion. While the categories of evaluation may be very fluid in this instance, it is clear that in this passage the source-attributing words at 2.102.2 & 3 and 2.104.3 cannot signify reserve as the Egyptian and Syrian information is accepted as accurate by Herodotos.

While the Egyptians provide the most numerous examples of Herodotos stating his agreement with the accounts of local informants,

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body, with a yellow complexion and deep voices. The extreme variance in the two descriptions indicates different sources for their accounts.

<sup>60</sup> For example, the notion that the Greeks derived the method of worship of their Gods from Egypt (2.50-51) or the shield and helmet (4.180.4). See also Hdt. 2.167.1.



other examples have already been mentioned in Chapter 1.5.1. Some of these passages were the account of the Persians on Kyros (1.95) and the local tradition of the Macedonians who say they are Greeks (5.22.1). These passages are other examples where source-attributing words cannot indicate reserve as they occur in connection with information which is accepted by Herodotos as being accurate.

The section in the *Histories* which details the presence of Helen of Sparta in Egypt serves as a summary of the points raised in this section; namely, the application of γνώμη and ἱστορίη by Herodotos to evaluate information, his constant citation of informants and his direct authorial insertion of opinions on the reliability of information although source-attributing words are present.

Throughout this section, Herodotos keeps the identity of his informants in front of the audience. First, Herodotos notes the Egyptian priests said (ἔλεγον, 2.112.1) that Egypt was ruled by a man named Proteus from Memphis who had a temple precinct at Memphis where there was a shrine to the "Stranger Aphrodite" which Herodotos concludes (συμβάλλομαι, 2.112.2) was a shrine to Helen of Sparta. Herodotos again specifies that the information he records was the account of Helen as told to him by the priests

ἔλεγον δέ μοι οἱ ἱερεῖς ἱστοροῦντι τὰ περὶ Ἑλένην  
γενέσθαι ᾧδε. (2.113.1)

They said that Alexander and Helen were forced onto Egyptian territory by bad weather. Proteus, when he learned of the abduction of Helen, held her in Egypt and forced Alexander to leave the country. Herodotos again indicates his source for this account, ἔλεγον οἱ ἱερεῖς (2.116.1), before showing his awareness of the contrary version of

Homer. Indeed, the disagreement between the account believed by Herodotos, derived from the Egyptian priests, and that of Homer is made explicit by Herodotos as he states (2.116.1) he believed Homer knew the Egyptian version of the story but preferred to ignore it as unsuitable for epic poetry.

The conclusion reached by Herodotos, that Helen was not at Troy as the *Iliad* maintains, is an opinion which might be expected to be questioned by a Greek audience raised on Homer. To counter their objections and doubts, Herodotos indicated to the audience that the Egyptians were credible informants because they had inquired and obtained information from a authoritative source. Herodotos notes of the Egyptian priests:

εἰρομένου δέ μευ τοὺς ἱρέας εἰ μάταιον λόγον λέγουσι  
οἱ Ἕλληνες τὰ περὶ Ἴλιον γενέσθαι ἢ οὐ, ἔφασαν  
πρὸς ταῦτα τάδε, ἱστορίησι φάμενοι εἰδέναί παρ'  
αὐτοῦ Μενέλεω..(2.118.1).

When I enquired of the priests if what the Greeks said about Troy was a fictional tale or not, in this connection they said thus, saying that they knew by enquiry from Menelaos himself.

The Egyptian priests had thus sought out the most credible and reliable witness available: Helen's husband Menelaos. The information they said they derived from Menelaos was as follows. The Greeks went to Troy to seek the restitution of Helen but the Trojans told them that Helen was in Egypt. The Greeks did not believe this until they captured Troy; thereupon, finding Helen was not present, Menelaos came to Proteus in Egypt who returned Helen to him. The Egyptians added that Menelaos abducted and sacrificed two Egyptian children before fleeing

from Egypt to Libya. Where he went after this the Egyptians could not say. Herodotos repeated that the priests say they learnt some of this "by inquiry" but the things that occurred in their own country they spoke of with precise knowledge:

τούτων δὲ τὰ μὲν ἱστορίησι ἔφασαν ἐπίστασθαι, τὰ δὲ  
παρ' ἑωυτοῖσι γινόμενα ἀτρεκέως ἐπιστάμενοι  
λέγειν. (2.119.3)

At the end of the account, Herodotos yet again confirmed that the Egyptians were his source before indicating his explicit approval of the Egyptian story:

ταῦτα μὲν Αἰγυπτίων οἱ ἱερεῖς ἔλεγον, ἐγὼ δὲ τῷ λόγῳ  
τῷ περὶ Ἑλένης λεχθέντι καὶ αὐτὸς προστίθεμαι.  
(2.120.1)

Herodotos' specific agreement with the account of the Egyptian priests, cited by means of repeated ἔλεγον, is based on ἱστορίη and γνώμη. Ἱστορίη, on this occasion, meant that Herodotos obtained information from the Egyptian priests. This information was supported by γνώμη: it was Herodotos' belief that, had Helen been in Troy, the Trojans would have given her up rather than risk the destruction of their city. For, Herodotos reasoned, even if Helen had been the wife of Priam himself, the massive losses in battle among the Trojans, as reported by the poets, were such that Helen would have been surrendered. However, Herodotos also believed that divine forces were at work and he declared that the Greeks would not accept that Helen was not in Troy because the gods had ordained that Troy would be utterly destroyed. The passage ends with an emphatic restatement of belief by Herodotos:

καὶ ταῦτα μὲν τῇ ἐμοὶ δοκέει εἶρηται. (2.120.5)

Herodotos does not consider the Trojan war ahistorical;<sup>61</sup> rather, it is the detail that Helen was at Troy which is rejected on the basis of ἱστορίη and γνώμη. Herodotos based his opinion on a number of factors, and ensured that the audience was aware of his inquiries, his sources and his reasoning. First, Herodotos showed the audience that he was in receipt of information which was likely to be credible because it was derived from locals who, moreover, had made inquiries from a knowledgeable informant. Second, the criterion of reason led to the rejection of Homer's version of events. To persuade his audience that his own version of events was authoritative and superior to Homer, Herodotos needed to show the audience why they should believe his version. Accordingly, he indicates repeatedly that his account was drawn from sources who, through location, position as priests and a conscious methodology, could be expected to have reliable knowledge. It was for this reason, I believe, that Herodotos repeatedly stressed the authoritative source of his information, detailed the care with which the Egyptian account was constructed and supported their information through reason. The Egyptian role as informants is repeatedly brought to the attention of the Greek audience by Herodotos utilising a number of different source-attributing words, ἔλεγον, λέγουσι and ἔφασαν. In the face of Herodotos' emphatic acceptance of their version of the story, this passage is further evidence that

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. J.W. Neville, 'Herodotos on the Trojan War' *G&R* 24 (1977), p.3. Herodotos only rejected Homer's claim that Helen was in Troy. Elsewhere, Herodotos indicated that the conflict was historical; 2.145.4, 7.91 & 7.171.1. Herodotos (4.29) also quoted evidence from Homer in support of one of his own opinions.

source-attributing words are highly unlikely to carry any implication of disbelief or reserve.

### **2.3.1: Ἱστορίη and Religious Centres**

A further category of information which is often expressly accepted by Herodotos is material he derived from religious centres. Much of the Egyptian material falls into this category but other examples involve information derived by Herodotos from Delphi and Delos. For example, Herodotos specifically accepted information relayed by the Delians. As the Delians said (ὡς ἔλεγον Δήλιοι 6.98.1) the only earthquake that had shook Delos occurred just as Datis sailed against mainland Greece.<sup>62</sup> Herodotos stated that he considered this earthquake was sent by the gods as an omen of the ills that were coming to Greece and supported his opinion of the singularity of the occurrence by quoting an oracle that Delos would suffer an earthquake only once.<sup>63</sup> In this passage, affirmed by Herodotos, the source-attributing word ἔλεγον cannot indicate reserve.

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<sup>62</sup> In 490 BC. Thucydides (2.8.3) also noted that a unique earthquake occurred on Delos, but put it at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. This statement of Thucydides has been variously explained: see How/Wells, vol.2, p.104, Fehling, p.91. Pindar, in a work that is dated not before 472 (*To Delos* v.3 [f.87]) calls Delos ἀκίνητον τέρας.

<sup>63</sup> Although some MSS omit this line and the words of the oracle; Hude, *OCT*, on VI.98. How/Wells, vol.2, p.105 accept this as an interpolation on the grounds that the phrase ἐν χρησμῷ ἦν γεγραμμένον (6.98.3) is un-Herodotean. The fact that the actual oracular response is probably an interpolation does not negate the fact that Herodotos states his belief in the event as told by the Delians.

A passage recording Kroisos' gifts to Delphi involves the application of γνώμη and ὄψις to affirm information. Herodotos (1.46.2-49) reported that Kroisos of Lydia conducted a test into the veracity of Greek and Libyan oracles. Delphi emerged triumphant and Kroisos sought to win the favour of the god by means of gifts and sacrifices. Among his gifts was a silver bowl which, the Delphians say (φασί, 1.51.3), was the work of Theodoros of Samos. Herodotos utilised γνώμη to agree expressly with this claim because of the bowl's superior workmanship:

καὶ ἐγὼ δοκέω· οὐ γὰρ τὸ συντυχὸν φαίνεται μοι  
ἔργον εἶναι. (1.51.3)<sup>64</sup>

Herodotos then adds more details of Kroisos' gifts. He notes that Kroisos also sent four silver flasks and silver and gold sprinkling basins, although the Spartans claim (φαμένων, 1.51.3) the latter is their gift. Their claim is supported by other evidence; Herodotos states that the gold basin had "a gift of the Spartans" engraved on it. However, Herodotos asserted, the claim of the Spartans is false (οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγοντες, 1.51.3) and he reveals his belief that the inscription was engraved by a Delphian, whom Herodotos declined to name, in order to gain favour with the Spartans. This passage, accordingly, contains information attributed to the Delphians by the source-attributing word φασί which is expressly accepted by Herodotos and information attributed to the Spartans by φαμένων which is expressly rejected. The same word is both affirmative and recusant and thus, again, it seems illogical to suggest that the occurrence of φασί in

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<sup>64</sup> Theodoros, son of Telekles, enjoyed a high reputation in antiquity. For his other achievements, see Hdt. 3.41.1, Pausanias, 3.12.10, 8.14.8, 9.41.1 & 10.38.6, Athenaios, 12.515a, Pliny, *NH*, 35.152, 36.90.

the account implies that Herodotos had reservations about all the material.

### 2.3.2: Ἱστορίη and the Recent Past

Other than the geographical passages, the previous examples involved events which occurred in a period beyond the personal experience of Herodotos' informants. It has been suggested that Herodotos was more wary of this "older" material and used a different method of evaluating this kind of information from that he used in connection with material about his own century.<sup>65</sup> However, the examples considered below illustrate that Herodotos' methodology of reliance upon the criteria of ὄψις, γνώμη and ἱστορίη was applied to all periods for which there are "reliable" informants; the epoch of man, ἡ ἀνθρωπηίη λεγομένη γενεή (3.122.2).<sup>66</sup> The relevant period for historical inquiry is thus the period for which knowledge is known, demarcated in the *Histories* by such statements as πρῶτος τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν.<sup>67</sup> This "historical" period began, for example, with Kroisos because he was the first man about whom Herodotos

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. Shrimron, pp.48-49, suggests that Herodotos divided time into three separate periods (first, a mythical period, second, a period 100-150 years before his time to the recent past and, third, the present) and that, in terms of the reliability of information, each is treated differently. See also Lateiner, pp.123-124; cf. O. Murray, 'Herodotus and Oral History' *AchHist II*, pp.95-96. Hunter, pp.86-87, argues that, for Egyptian information at least, any distinction between a mythical period and a historical one is false. Nevertheless, she postulates (p.88) a period in Greece of "genuine knowledge" of a "historical period" that occupied a few hundred years before Herodotos.

<sup>66</sup> Lateiner, *Method*, pp.62-63.

<sup>67</sup> For this phrase, see Chapter 1.3 & Chapter 5.1.

could obtain reliable information (1.5.3).<sup>68</sup> From Kroisos to Herodotos' time, reliable oral information was available and can be obtained and evaluated using a consistent methodology. Beyond Kroisos, however, the trail of information became lost in mythology and invention..

The passages considered earlier in this chapter show how Herodotos applied ὄψις, γνῶμη and ἱστορίη to evaluate information from periods beyond the lifetimes of his informants. The following two examples illustrate that when Herodotos rejected information he used the same criteria in respect of the recent past, such as Xerxes' invasion of Greece in 480-479 BC, as he does for information about earlier periods.

Following the Persian defeat at Salamis, Xerxes entrusted command of the forces remaining in Greece to Mardonios and retreated towards Asia. Herodotos indicated that Xerxes marched through Thrace to the Hellespont where, discovering that the bridge of boats had been broken by a storm, he crossed to Abydos by boat.<sup>69</sup> This information is recorded by Herodotos without indicating his source but he then added that another story is told

ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλος ὅδε λόγος λεγόμενος. (8.118.1)

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<sup>68</sup> The information about Egypt may go back further than Kroisos because the Egyptian priests possessed chronicles and written records. Yet, even though their methodology and interest in the past was exceptional, Herodotos stays faithful to his oral roots and identifies the period in which reliable knowledge was available: it was not, he states (2.154.4), until Karians and Ionians settled in Egypt during the reign of Psammetichos that the Greeks have accurate knowledge of the history of Egypt.

<sup>69</sup> 8.117. There was a story that the bridge was intact (Aischylos, *Persians* 734-736). Herodotos (9.106.4) indicates that, at least until after Plataiai and Mykale, the Greeks thought that the bridge was intact.



This story is as follows. Xerxes left his army at Eion on the Strymon and embarked with his immediate retinue on a Phoenician ship. During the crossing to Asia the ship was in danger of sinking in a violent storm and Xerxes asked the ship's captain how they could survive. The captain replied that the ship needed to be lightened and so Xerxes, it is said (λέγεται, 8.118.3), asked his Persian retainers to leap overboard. They obeyed and the newly lightened ship reached Asia safely where Xerxes rewarded the Phoenician captain with a gold crown for saving his life and then cut off his head for causing the death of so many noble Persians. Herodotos immediately and emphatically stated that he disbelieved this story

οὗτος δὲ ἄλλος λέγεται λόγος περὶ τοῦ Ξέρξεω  
νόστου, οὐδαμῶς ἔμοιγε πιστός, οὔτε ἄλλως οὔτε τὸ  
Περσέων τοῦτο πάθος (8.119)

and outlined his reasons. First, Herodotos applied γνώμη and stated that, if the ship had been required to be lightened, not one person in ten thousand would consider that Xerxes would not have cast Phoenician sailors into the sea rather than Persian nobility. Second, ἱστορίη confirmed that Xerxes had indeed marched with the army through Thrace. This fact had previously indicated in the narrative and Herodotos now adds that it is known (φαίνεται, 8.120) that when Xerxes arrived at Abdera, which is nearer the Hellespont than the Strymon and Eion where they say (φασί, 8.120) he took ship, he gave the people of Abdera a golden sword and a gilt tiara. This information, derived from the local people, confirmed that Xerxes had marched as far

as Abdera.<sup>70</sup> In this case, accordingly, Herodotos rejected information introduced by λέγεται and φασί because it was contrary to other information he obtained, and because it seemed unreasonable. His rejection was again specifically expressed and the process of ἱστορίη from local informants, together with γνώμη, is the same as he applied to information he recorded about earlier periods.

Another passage involving source-attributing words occurs in Herodotos' account of Thermopylai. Herodotos (7.213) asserts that the man who showed the Persians the path around Thermopylai was Ephialtes, son of Eurydemos of Malis.<sup>71</sup> For this act of treason he was banished and a reward offered for his death by the Amphictyonic council. He was later killed, for another reason entirely, by Athenades of Trachis, who was honoured for this deed by the Spartans. Herodotos clearly believed the version he recorded was true: he included Ephialtes in the narrative of events as the Persians forced the path (7.218.2 &3) and expressly stated that Ephialtes was the guilty person:

ἀλλ' Ἐπιάλτης γάρ ἐστι ὁ περιηγησάμενος τὸ ὄρος  
[καὶ] κατὰ τὴν ἀτραπὸν, τοῦτον αἴτιον γράφω.(7.214.3)

Herodotos was aware of other stories (ἔστι δὲ ἕτερος λεγόμενος λόγος, 7.214.1) which accused Onetes, son of Phanagoras, of Karystos and Korydallos of Antikyra of the treachery and he emphatically stated

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<sup>70</sup> Herodotos recorded and specifically rejected the tradition, which the people of Abdera themselves say (λέγουσι, 8.120) that Xerxes first loosened his girdle there in his flight from Athens. The source of Herodotos' information is thus the Abderans and, although part of the account is rejected, this does not mean that the information about the gifts or the fact that Xerxes came to Abdera is doubted by Herodotos.

<sup>71</sup> I have capriciously adopted the more familiar "Ephialtes" rather than the Ionic form used by Herodotos.

that he did not believe this (οὐδαμῶς ἔμοιγε πιστός, 7.214.1) and gave his reasons based upon ἱστορίη and γνώμη. First, Onetes and Korydallos were clearly not guilty as this is contrary to the information that the Amphictyonic council had posted a reward for Ephialtes. The council, Herodotos confidently asserts, would have made every attempt to discover the truth before posting the reward. Second, it was common knowledge that this was the reason Ephialtes was banished

τοῦτο δὲ φεύγοντα Ἐπιάλτην ταύτην αἰτίην οἶδαμεν.

(7.214.3)<sup>72</sup>

In this passage, accordingly, Herodotos based his rejection of information on the results of other enquiries and the citation of a local source which, in both secular and religious terms, could be considered to be authoritative.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, his disagreement was again directly and specifically stated.

The evidence of the passages considered above is that Herodotos' criteria for evaluating the reliability of information about events within his own century, his use of source-attributing words to identify informants and his specific and explicit rejection of unreliable

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<sup>72</sup> There is no other record of this alternative tradition so vigorously attacked by Herodotos and the men accused are otherwise unknown (Pape/Benseler, p.1063 [Onetes], p.701 [Korydallos or Korydalos]). The existence of this alternative account indicates that the blame for the betrayal of the Greek force at Thermopylai was quickly spread around. The guilt of Ephialtes, however, seems to have been widely accepted (Pausanias 1.4.2, Diodoros 11.8.4) although Ktesias (*FGrH* 688 F13.27) gave another version and stated that Thorax of Thessaly, Demaratos of Sparta, Hegias of Ephesos and Kalliades and Timaphernes of the Trachinians showed Xerxes the path.

<sup>73</sup> The Amphictyonic Council was the board of the league of the local states with both secular and religious duties; Macan, *VII-IX*, vol.1, part 1, pp.316-317, How/Wells, vol.2, pp.224-225.

information are the same as for earlier periods. All events, it seems, within the historical time span are subjected by Herodotos to evaluation in terms of the same criteria and methodology.

#### **2.4: Source-attributing Words and Explicit Comment**

In this chapter a large number of passages have been examined. Part of the reason for the seemingly repetitious nature of the results is that, in order to counter the view that source-attributing words signify reserve, it is necessary to show that passages where source-attributing words cannot signify reserve are not isolated cases but occur in substantial numbers. In all the passages considered in this chapter Herodotos specifically stated his opinion, whether positively or negatively, about the veracity of the information he recorded. In reaching his opinion, Herodotos was guided by ὄψις, γνώμη and ἱστορίη and by his own perception of who were likely to be credible sources. The passages where Herodotos rejected information show that when Herodotos wanted to indicate his own opinion about information to his audience, he was prepared to express this opinion directly and unequivocally. Furthermore, the numerous passages where source-attributing words occur in conjunction with information which Herodotos indicates is true strongly support the view that source-attributing words cannot imply that Herodotos doubts that information.

A previous table (Table A in the Introduction) indicated that source-attribution words occur in excess of 470 times in the *Histories*. There are a number of different source-attributing words but the

passages examined in this chapter show that no particular source-attributing word functions exclusively as a negative indicator. Instead, each source-attributing word considered so far, λέγουσι, λέγεται, φασί and ἔλεγον, does occur in passages which are explicitly accepted and rejected by Herodotos. This is summarised in the following table.

**Table B:**

**Source-attributing Words With Explicit Comment**

<p><u>λέγουσι</u> passages supported: 2.12.1, 2.15.2, 2.50.2, 2.54.1, 3.1.5, 5.22.1, 5.57.1, 6.75.3, 7.129.4, 8.129.2 and 8.129.3</p> <p><u>λέγουσι</u> passages rejected: 1.75.6, 1.182.2, 2.2.5, 2.20.2, 2.21, 2.22.1, 2.45.1, 2.55.3, 2.73.3, 2.131.1, 3.2.2, 3.16.6, 3.45.3, 4.5.1, 4.25.1, 4.31.1, 4.155.1, 5.10, 5.57.1, 5.86, 6.75.3, 6.84.3, bis and 8.120</p> <p><u>λέγεται</u> passages supported: 2.150.4 and 7.167.1</p> <p><u>λέγεται</u> passages rejected: 1.75.4, 3.3.1, 3.56.2, 3.116.1, 4.105.2, 7.214.1, 8.8.2, 8.118.1, 8.118.3 and 8.119</p> <p><u>φασί</u> passages supported: 1.51.3, 2.45.3, 2.54.1, 2.104.2, 2.104.3, 7.129.4 and 8.120</p> <p><u>φασί</u> passages rejected: 1.51.3, 1.182.1, 1.216.1, 2.15.1, 2.55.1, 2.63.3, 2.134.1, 3.2.1 and 6.84.1</p> <p><u>ἔλεγον</u> passages supported: 2.10.1, 2.13.1, 2.54.2, 2.112.1, 2.113.1, 2.116.1, 2.120.1, 3.12.2 and 6.98</p> <p><u>ἔλεγον</u> passages rejected: 2.55.3, 2.130.2 and 4.42.4.</p>
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