

## Τοιόσδε and Truth in Herodotus' *Histories*

Indefinite demonstrative adjectives like τοιόσδε and τοιοῦτος, which describe deeds or speeches as being “of such a kind,” occupy an intriguing liminal position in Greek historiographical discourse. Their use seems to imply a mitigated truth claim: what they describe is not represented as factual, literal truth, but something resembling it, something “truth-like” or “truth-adjacent.”

In this talk I will explore Herodotus' use of the demonstrative adjective τοιόσδε and its possible implications for the nature of Herodotean truth claims. According to Griffiths (1999), use of the adjective in phrases that introduce a narrative (such as that of Evenius the nightwatchman, 9.92-6) implicitly alerts the reader to a shift in Herodotus' narrative mode from *logos* to *mythos*, from straightforwardly reported ‘historical fact’ to a kind of traditional discourse where “less strict standards of verisimilitude apply.” My analysis of Herodotus' 212 uses of the adjective seeks to determine how often and in what (additional?) contexts Griffiths' claim proves valid. Examples of other narratives or episodes of “mythodic” (Baragwanath 2019) nature and symbolic truth, introduced by a form of τοιόσδε, include the stories of Cleobis and Biton (1.31.2-5), the chance revelation of Cyrus' true royal lineage (1.114-9), and the tragic alienation of the Corinthian tyrant Periander from his son Lycophron (3.50-3). It should be noted that this use of τοιόσδε appears to be context-sensitive, however, since Herodotus also uses the adjective in his introduction to the Persian ethnography at 1.131-40—a catalogue of *nomoi* practiced by the Persians, as Herodotus claims repeatedly to “know” (οἶδα 131.1, cf. εἰδώς 140.1). In an ethnographic (as opposed to narrative) context, therefore, Herodotus apparently uses τοιόσδε without compromising his claim to know what customs the Persians practiced.

A second issue of special interest is the introduction and summary of speeches in the *Histories*, for which Herodotus makes no truth claim: does Herodotus in any way anticipate the distinction drawn by Thucydides (Rawlings 2021) between the demonstratives used to summarize *erga*—the definite demonstratives οὗτος and οὕτως—and those used for introducing and concluding *logoi*—the indefinite demonstratives τοιόσδε, τοιοῦτος, and τοσοῦτος, which implicitly acknowledge the author’s less-than-verbatim rendition of speeches?

In fact (and *pace* Thucydides), Herodotus frequently introduces the description of deeds or events with a form of τοιόσδε. Moreover, he shows a marked tendency to describe particular types of deeds or events in this way—e.g., dreams, clever ruses or stratagems, and cultural practices. The question that remains to be explored is whether, or to what extent, this tendency reflects the narrator’s implicit questioning of the factual accuracy of what he reports—a possibility that seems plausible enough in the case of dreams, at least, as psychic events known to be true only to the dreamer him/herself.

#### Works Cited

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