

## Programmatic Unity in Herodotus and the Metaphor of the Marketplace (7.152)

By the time Herodotus shifts his focus to the Persian invasions of Greece in the *logoi* corresponding with books 6-9 of the *Histories*, his voice appears to shift as well. From then on, we are less likely to encounter Herodotus the intrepid eyewitness, the polemical scientist, or the inquisitive ethnographer than we are in books 1-5 where his critical faculties are so prominently displayed, especially in the accounts of Egypt and Scythia. Marincola attributes this apparent about-face to the fact that the Persian Wars were not as temporally, spatially, or culturally removed from the experiences of Herodotus' fifth-century Greek audience as the words and deeds of barbarians from far-off lands (Marincola 1987: 132). But while distance may help to explain the supposed division between the "ethnographic" and "historical" *logoi* corresponding with books 1-5 and 6-9 respectively, the methodological underpinnings of the latter are not altogether distinct from the former. One need only peruse the appendix of source citations collated from the entirety of the *Histories* in Shrimpton and Gillis (1997: 249 ff.) to discern the fallacy behind the remark, that "in the books other than II, Herodotus is still present but no longer participant" (Marincola 1987: 133). However, even in cases where Herodotus does not explicitly claim to rely on ὄψις ("autopsy"), ἀκοή ("hearsay"), or γνώμη ("judgment"), it is still possible to detect his authorial presence across the *Histories* (Dewald 2002: 275).

One of the best examples of this dichotomy of meta-narrative may be found in the discussion of the Argives' alleged overtures to the Persians prior to the battle of Thermopylae (i.e. 7.148-152), which prefaces the *logos* about the question of medism as it relates to the Syracusans (7.153-162), the Corcyreans (7.168), the Cretans (7.169-171), and the Thessalians (7.172). Beginning with the prophesy that Argos will be the "head that protects the body" (κάρη δὲ τὸ σῶμα σώσσει, 7.148.3) as the Hellenic League takes shape, a remark that recalls the

primacy of the theft of the Argive princess Io which set off hostilities between Greeks and barbarians (1.1), I contend that this episode recapitulates programmatic patterns established in the proem of the *Histories* (i.e. 1.1.0-1.5) and thereby extends the methodological continuum of the work beyond the *spatium mythicum* into the *spatium historicum*.

Fundamental to this argument is Herodotus' deferral of judgment until the accounts of the Argives' purported medism have been relayed via indirect speech (i.e. 7.148.2, 150.1, 151.1) in order to focalize competing perspectives and so indicate the omnipresence of bias in historical inquiry. This move squares with his decision to follow up on the Persian and Phoenician accounts of the abductions of Io, Europa, Medea, and Helen only after each side has said its piece in *oratio obliqua* (Dewald 1999: 224-225). In what amounts to a reprise of this opening priamel (i.e. Ταῦτα μὲν νῦν Πέρσαι τε καὶ Φοίνικες λέγουσι. Ἐγὼ δὲ κ.τ.λ., 1.5.3), Herodotus counters his lack of secure knowledge about the Argives' medism with something he *does* know (i.e. οὐκ ἔχω ἀτρεκέως εἰπεῖν...Ἐπίσταμαι δὲ τοσοῦτο, 7.152.1-2), namely, that all peoples (πάντες ἄνθρωποι, 7.152.2) would bring home their own evils (οἰκίη κακά, 7.152.2) from the marketplace if given the opportunity to exchange them with others. This emphasis on human beings and their individual viewpoints over the veracity of the matter at hand is significant in that it evinces much the same anthropological interest in mutability which Herodotus shows at the end of the proem (i.e. μικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα ἄστεα ἀνθρώπων, 1.5.3; Τὴν ἀνθρωπότην...εὐδαιμονίην, 1.5.4), when he looks beyond the question of who was ultimately responsible for Greeks and barbarians coming to war with each other and projects into the realm of possibility. The result in both cases is such that even when Herodotus cannot elucidate how something came to be, he can still find ways to advance knowledge in a manner that defies singular explanations and prompts us, the readers, to expand our own inquiries beyond the here and now.

## Bibliography

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