

## EVIDENCE FOR THE DATE OF HERODOTUS' PUBLICATION

In this paper I contest the usually accepted terminus for the date of the publication of Herodotus' *Histories*, namely, just prior to the production of the *Acharnians* in February 425. I argue instead that Herodotus survived the Archidamian War—basically a return, this, to the position taken until the middle of the last century, especially in Germany, before the work of Schoell, Kirchoff and then Meyer and Jacoby.<sup>1</sup> Further, I suggest that he published at a date close to 414 B.C. or, at least, that his *Histories* reached the Athenian public at around that time. Since even the orthodox date for his publication (426 or so) figures in the constructions of modern scholars merely as a literary curiosity devoid of significance<sup>2</sup>—such are the preconceptions dominating our notion of Herodotus' 'era'—a reconsideration of this question needs no apology if it serves the purpose of directing attention to a matter vitally affecting our interpretation of this author.

First, a general observation. In seeking for external evidence to establish the date of the publication of Herodotus' *Histories*, we need to distinguish between possible and certain echoes of Herodotus in the works of others. The question must constantly be asked whether any allusion we have isolated presupposes and requires the knowledge of Herodotus' work on the part of the contemporary audience. For otherwise we could be misled by a coincidence<sup>3</sup> or we could reach a false conclusion because some point of specific knowledge eludes us. Of the latter the famous parallel in the *Antigone* of Sophocles (909 ff. with Herodotus iii 119) provides a notable example. If Herodotus had been just a little more strict with himself in avoiding allusions to his own time, who would not suppose that his work had been published prior to 441? What we require, therefore, is material which is calculated to evoke Herodotus himself—the special characteristics of the man and his *Histories*—so as to leave in no doubt a general familiarity with his work on the part of others.

Joseph Wells, among others, claimed precisely this when he argued that certain passages in the *Acharnians* represent 'humorous attacks on Herodotus'.<sup>4</sup> For such an attack would be a parody, and the whole point of a parody depends upon the audience's knowledge of the object of it. Let us therefore examine the crucial passage (68–92), bearing in mind the all-important distinction between a 'humorous attack' on Herodotus and a humorous passage containing details found also in Herodotus.

Πρ. καὶ δῆτ' ἐτρυχόμεσθα διὰ Καῦστρίων  
πεδίων ὄδοιπλανοῦντες ἐσκηνημένοι,  
ἐφ' ἄρμαμαξῶν μαλθακῶς κατακείμενοι,  
ἀπολλύμενοι. Δι. σφόδρα γὰρ ἐσωζόμεν ἐγὼ  
παρὰ τὴν ἑπαλξιν ἐν φορυτῶ κατακείμενος.

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<sup>1</sup> See Jacoby, PW Suppl. ii 235. 6 ff. O. J. Todd, *CQ* xvi (1922) 35 f. also placed Herodotus' death after the Archidamian War.

<sup>2</sup> N. G. L. Hammond, for instance, conceives of Herodotus as having written his account of Marathon about forty years prior to that date (*JHS* lxxxviii [1968] 28); Jacoby, PW Suppl. ii 358. 62 ff., supposed that the *Histories* embrace a point of view acquired twenty years before and faithfully maintained ever after, in spite of two decades of changing conditions. Wrong though Eduard Meyer, *Forsch.* ii 196 ff., seems to have been to make Herodotus a 'Wahl-Athener', at least he placed Herodotus in the proper chronological

context by assuming a correlation between the last-mentioned events in Herodotus' work and the time in which he was engaged in writing it.

<sup>3</sup> For example, R. Browning, *CR* n.s. xi (1961) 201 f., pointed out a possible echo of Herodotus v 4 in Euripides *fr.* 449N. If we knew that Herodotus was already published, this correspondence might reasonably suggest the dependence here of Euripides on Herodotus. But we cannot argue from a merely possible echo that Herodotus must have been Euripides' source.

<sup>4</sup> *Studies in Herodotus* (1923) 170. The word 'ridiculed' appears on page 171.

- Πρ.* ξενιζόμενοι δὲ πρὸς βίαν ἐπίνομεν  
 ἐξ ὑαλίνων ἐκπωμάτων καὶ χρυσίδων  
 ἄκρατον οἶνον ἠδύν. *Δι.* ὦ Κραναὰ πόλις  
 ἄρ' αἰσθάνει τὸν κατάγελων τῶν πρέσβειων; 75
- Πρ.* οἱ βάρβαροι γὰρ ἄνδρας ἠγοῦνται μόνους  
 τοὺς πλείστα δυναμένους καταφαγεῖν καὶ πιεῖν.  
*Δι.* ἡμεῖς δὲ λαικαστὰς τε καὶ καταπύγονας.  
*Πρ.* ἔτει τετάρτῳ δ' ἐς τὰ βασιλεί' ἤλθομεν·  
 ἀλλ' εἰς ἀπόπατον ὤχετο στρατιὰν λαβῶν,  
 κάχεζεν ὀκτὼ μῆνας ἐπὶ χρυσῶν ὀρῶν. 80  
*Δι.* πόσου δὲ τὸν πρωκτὸν χρόνου ξυνήγαγεν;  
*Πρ.* τῇ πανσελήνῳ· κᾶτ' ἀπῆλθεν οἴκαδε.  
 εἴτ' ἐξένιζε· παρατίθει δ' ἡμῖν ὄλους  
 ἐκ κριβάνου βοῦς. *Δι.* καὶ τίς εἶδε πώποπε  
 βοῦς κριβανίτας; τῶν ἀλαζονευμάτων.  
*Πρ.* καὶ ναὶ μὰ Δι' ὄρνιν τριπλάσιον Κλεωνύμου  
 παρέθηκεν ἡμῖν· ὄνομα δ' ἦν αὐτῷ φένας.  
*Δι.* ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐφενάκιζες σὺ δύο δραχμὰς φέρων. 90  
*Πρ.* καὶ νῦν ἄγοντες ἤκομεν Ψευδαρτάβαν,  
 τὸν βασιλέως ὀφθαλμόν. *Δι.* ἐκκόψει γε  
 κόραξ πατάξας, τὸν τε σὸν τοῦ πρέσβειως.

It is true that in this passage 'there are about a dozen words or expressions which can be well illustrated from Herodotus.'<sup>5</sup> That, however, is not equivalent to a 'humorous attack'. What does the humour consist of? Wells stated that however sceptical we may be of some of these resemblances 'two passages are so definitely parodies of Herodotus that their point can hardly be mistaken'—namely, 85–87 (with Herodotus i 133) and 92, 'the point of which depends on the Persian custom recorded in Herodotus i 114.'<sup>6</sup>

First, the alleged parody of Herodotus i 133.1. Here Herodotus mentioned the special importance attached by the Persians to their birthday: *ἡμέρην δὲ ἀπασέων μάλιστα ἐκείνην τιμῶν νομίζουσι τῇ ἕκαστος ἐγένετο. ἐν ταύτῃ δὲ πλέω δαίτα τῶν ἀλλέων δικαιοῦσι προτιθέσθαι· ἐν τῇ οἱ εὐδαίμονες αὐτῶν βοῦν καὶ ἵππον καὶ κάμηλον καὶ ὄνον προτιθέαται ὄλους ὀπτοὺς ἐν καμίνουσι, οἱ δὲ πένητες αὐτῶν τὰ λεπτὰ τῶν προβάτων προτιθέαται.* If one were to assert that Aristophanes' eye fixed upon this passage and that it suggested to him the possibility of making the jest he does, it would be impossible to refute the claim—though Aristophanes' use of the comparatively colourless word 'cow' when Herodotus provided more exotic alternatives does not speak in its favour. But that Aristophanes is parodying Herodotus, that there is any detectable humour in what is claimed to be an allusion to chapter 133, is far from obvious. Yet unless it is obvious it has no claim to be a parody. Humour is, to be sure, all things to all people. But what is funny about the supposed allusion to Herodotus? In fact, I suggest, it is Wells's formulation, not the supposed play on Herodotus, which provides a sort of humour. In stating that 'Aristophanes drags in the historian's story that the Persians were such feasters that they roasted their animals whole'<sup>7</sup> he suggests, illegitimately, first, that the poet 'dragged in' the allusion (i.e. that he went out of his way to fasten on a Herodotean point which otherwise he would have skipped), second, that Herodotus naïvely exaggerated (is not that an implication of Wells's word 'story'?) a Persian trait. But Herodotus did not say or even imply that the Persians were great feasters. He said that they had a feast on their birthday. I can only ask those who compare these passages whether they smile more broadly in virtue of that comparison, whether they believe that someone who had just read Herodotus, not a scholar who knows him intimately and who is on the watch for

<sup>5</sup> *Studies in Herodotus* (1923) 172.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.* 174.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

parallels, would think of that interesting but unsensational passage in 133 when watching the *Acharnians*, or, finally, whether it is in the manner of Aristophanes to make jocular reference to an author in so undistinctive a way. Not Herodotus but rather the generally prevalent belief—*cf.* the proverb *Μηδική τράπεζα*—that the Persians enjoyed unbounded affluence and lived the good life explains Aristophanes' comic remark.

It is even more difficult to see how *Acharnians* 92 can be, as alleged, a 'definite parody' of Herodotus i 114. That passage reads as follows: *καὶ ὅτε δὴ ἦν δεκαέτης ὁ παῖς, πρῆγμα ἐς αὐτὸν τοιόνδε γενόμενον ἐξέφηνέ μιν. ἔπαιζε ἐν τῇ κώμῃ ταύτῃ ἐν τῇ ἦσαν καὶ αἱ βουκολαὶ αὐταί, ἔπαιζε δὲ μετ' ἄλλων ἡλικίων ἐν ὁδῷ. καὶ οἱ παῖδες παίζοντες εἶλοντο ἑωυτῶν βασιλέα εἶναι τοῦτον δὴ τὸν τοῦ βουκόλου ἐπικλήσιν παῖδα. ὁ δὲ αὐτῶν διέταξε τοὺς μὲν οἰκίας οἰκοδομέειν, τοὺς δὲ δορυφόρους εἶναι, τὸν δὲ κού τινα αὐτῶν ὀφθαλμὸν βασιλέος εἶναι, τῷ δὲ τιμὴν τὰς ἀγγελίας ἐσφέρειν ἐδίδου γέρας, ὡς ἐκάστῳ ἔργον προστάσων. εἰς δὴ τούτων τῶν παίδων συμπαίζων κτλ.* The mode of Herodotus' reference to the 'King's Eye' could not be more casual or the reference itself less important to his narrative. Both facts make perfectly plain what we could already have assumed from Aeschylus, *Persae* 44 and 980: this officer, for obvious reasons, was one familiar to the Greeks. The title catches the imagination. If parody is, as one dictionary defines it, the 'humorous imitation of a serious piece of literature', then this is not a parody. Aristophanes made humorous use of a Persian term. He did not make humorous use of Herodotus' use of that same term.

Since both Herodotus and Aristophanes speak of Persia it would not be surprising if points of similarity are to be found. But no parody is indicated. Herodotus' work is not brought into the focus of Aristophanes' humour; his verses do not become funnier than they already are by the evocation of what Herodotus has written. What are believed to be the most definite echoes do not relate to what Herodotus made salient in either the *Persika* or the work as a whole; and what is most salient in Aristophanes' humorous sketch takes its departure from non-Herodotean elements. Suspicion that there is a literary connection between these works arises naturally because there is common ground—Persia—and because Aristophanes is funny. But the suspicion should vanish when the difficulty in substantiating it is perceived. To find possible allusions we have to ransack Herodotus' history.<sup>8</sup> But that is merely the first step. Granted that these verses in the *Acharnians* direct us to this passage and that in Herodotus. Are the passages that have been hunted down arguably of the type which would have incited Aristophanes to burlesque them? Are these the ones he would probably have chosen if he intended to poke fun at Herodotus? The comic poet would not have stumbled as badly as this.

It might be maintained, however, that the similarities between these authors at least imply the use of Herodotus if not a parody of him. But such an assumption, since it is unnecessary, cannot validly be used—as a parody could be used—to prove that Herodotus had already published his work. Herodotus need not be presupposed in order to account for the knowledge displayed by Aristophanes. Aristophanes' sketch, after all, is the kind of combination of fact and fancy that suggests not a treatise on Persia as its source but simply utilization of the partially informed and exaggerated thinking that the gigantic and wealthy Persian Empire must have excited among the Greeks. Persia was not shrouded in secrecy until Herodotus published his work. Relations between that land and Athens had existed for the past fifty years and more. There were embassies to-and-fro, Persian exiles (Zopyrus, for instance) came to Greece as did Ionian immigrants who were acquainted with Persian life. Athenians had fought in Phoenicia, some had taken service with the Persian. The very occasion of Aristophanes' humorous sketch was an embassy to Persia and it is clear that his intention was to point the contrast between Dicaeopolis and those who capitalized on the war. Neither Herodotus nor any special information his work must have provided figures in the passage.

<sup>8</sup> See Wells 173 f.

One other place in the *Acharnians* supposed to contain a reference to Herodotus is that celebrated explanation of the real cause of the Peloponnesian War (523–529 with Herodotus i 4):

καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ σμικρὰ κάπιχώρια,  
 πόρνην δὲ Σιμαίθαν ἰόντες Μεγαράδε  
 νεανῖαι κλέπτουσι μεθυσκοτόταβοι·  
 κᾶθ' οἱ Μεγαρῆς ὀδύνας πεφυσιγγωμένοι  
 ἀντεξέκλεψαν Ἀσπασίας πόρνα δύο·  
 κἀντεῦθεν ἀρχὴ τοῦ πολέμου κατερράγη  
 Ἑλλήσι πᾶσιν ἐκ τριῶν λαικαστριῶν.

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Perhaps, however, it would be truer to state that these lines are understood as a reference to Herodotus because of the prior assumption—based on 68 ff.—that Herodotus is in the play the object of Aristophanes' humorous attack. Thus Wilhelm Nestle, for example, who points to the obvious possibility that verses 523 ff. allude to the *Telephus* of Euripides, a play that is parodied in the *Acharnians*, nevertheless sees 'no obstacle in relating the parody of Aristophanes, with Stein, to Herodotus himself, who probably died not long before the year of the production of the *Acharnians*'.<sup>9</sup> Compare Van Leeuwen, who also asserted that this passage is a 'comic imitation' of Herodotus: 'Neque aliter opinor disputavit Telephus ille Euripideus, quem sedulo nunc imitatur Dicaeopolis.' Herodotus has, as it were, entered through the back door. The precondition of the usual interpretation is the belief that Herodotus had already published his work, not inference from these lines that he must have done so. For there is no trace of verbal similarity. Yet I think that we have a right to expect it in a case such as this. We are dealing, after all, with a common notion. Herodotus' judgment of Helen and the Greeks who fought for her is little more than a neatly phrased epitome of the prevailing view about the evils of the Trojan War and its ignoble cause. What, for an audience habituated to this view of Helen and already on the watch for allusions to Euripides, would direct attention here to Herodotus? If, perhaps, we could believe that Aristophanes invented the whole story about Simaetha's theft, then the assumption that he intended to parallel Herodotus' description, in his proemium, of the rapes of willing women might be plausible. We could infer that this invention was merely a means to permit him to write verses 528–9 to which he was incited by the substance of Herodotus' words. But surely we have no right to doubt that some scandal of the sort actually occurred, however irrelevant to the cause of the War. If so, it will have been this, not the model of Herodotus, which stimulated his comic imagination.

'Unlikely' here, 'unlikely' there—it is nevertheless difficult to banish the thought that without fire there is no smoke. Certainly these allusions can be accounted for without reference to Herodotus. But reference to Herodotus, all the same, remains a possibility. Aristophanes, after all, need not make his allusions with perfect point. Such objections would, I think, be unsusceptible of refutation were it not for the curious and fortunate fact that Aristophanes happened to write the *Birds* for production in March of 414: ὡσπερ τὸν χρυσὸν τὸν ἀκήρατον αὐτὸν μὲν ἐπ' ἑωυτοῦ οὐ διαγιγνώσκομεν, ἐπεὰν δὲ παρατρίψωμεν ἄλλω χρυσῷ, διαγιγνώσκομεν τὸν ἀμείνω.

The chief passage is 1124–1138:

Αγ.<sup>α</sup> ἐξωκοδόμηταί σοι τὸ τεῖχος. Πι. εὐ λέγεις.  
 Αγ.<sup>α</sup> κάλλιστον ἔργον καὶ μεγαλοπρεπέστατον·  
 ὡστ' ἂν ἐπάνω μὲν Προξενίδης ὁ Κομπασεὺς  
 καὶ Θεογένης ἐναντίω δὲ ἄρματε,  
 ἵππων ὑπόντων μέγεθος ὅσον ὁ δούριος,  
 ὑπὸ τοῦ πλάτους ἂν παρελασαίτην. Πι. Ἡράκλεις.

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<sup>9</sup> *Philologus* lxx (1911) 246.

- Αγ.<sup>α</sup> τὸ δὲ μῆκος ἐστὶ, καὶ γὰρ ἐμέτρησ' αὐτ' ἐγώ,  
 ἑκατοντόργυιον. Πι. ὦ Πόσειδον τοῦ μάκρους.  
 τίνες ὠκοδόμησαν αὐτὸ τηλικουτονί;  
 1130
- Αγ.<sup>α</sup> ὄρνιθες, οὐδεὶς ἄλλος, οὐκ Αἰγύπτιος  
 πλινθοφόρος, οὐ λιθουργός, οὐ τέκτων παρῆν,  
 ἀλλ' αὐτόχειρες, ὥστε θαυμάζειν ἐμέ.  
 1135  
 ἐκ μὲν γε Λιβύης ἦκον ὡς τρισμῦραι  
 γέρανοι θεμελίους καταπεπωκνῖαι λίθους.  
 τούτους δ' ἐτύκιζον αἱ κρέκες τοῖς ῥύγχεσιν.

The similarity and the parody need no belabouring. *Herodotus'* description of Babylon, i 179 (which probably he was the first to publish in detail), is brought into Aristophanes' play. It is not merely a matter of details in common. And though in the *Acharnians* Aristophanes' reference to Persia finds its complete and satisfactory explanation without dragging in the work of Herodotus, here it is plain that only the desire to parody Herodotus prompted 1127–1129. We cannot doubt it because the surrounding context is thoroughly Herodotean. Aristophanes did not risk that the point of his allusion might be missed. The detail from Book ii, where Herodotus claims to have measured a pyramid himself, clearly shows Aristophanes' identification of his author by reference to salient characteristics of his which could not but be obvious. Nothing comparable is provided in the *Acharnians*. What we looked for there in vain we find here—verbal similarities suggestive of a general parody. Consider that characteristically Herodotean phrase *κάλλιστον ἔργον καὶ μεγαλοπρεπέστατον* (1125), and *ὥστε θαυμάζειν ἐμέ* in 1135. Aristophanes has indeed evoked the nature of the man and his work.

The implication of this parody in the *Birds* deserves more attention than it has received. The general assumption that he had published some twelve years before and had already been parodied in the *Acharnians* makes Aristophanes' renewed attention to him now problematical. Yet the explanations offered to account for it, when explanations there are, could not be lamer. Wells indeed suggested that Herodotus had shortly before 414 published separately his account of Egypt.<sup>10</sup> Even were not Book ii as early a portion of Herodotus as we have—something I believe most scholars would today admit—the fact is that Aristophanes' allusion to Book ii is secondary, in the parody, to the allusion to Babylon in Book i. Other references as well (e.g. verses 961–2 with viii 77) indicate that the *Histories* as a whole, not a given portion, were in the mind of Aristophanes at the time. Wells, however, provided something that was an explanation. The same cannot be said for the mere assertion that 'even in 414 his work was much read'.<sup>11</sup> Allusions to Herodotus, when appropriate and convenient, could of course have been made by Aristophanes at any time. But here, in the *Birds*, he seems to have attempted a general parody. That fact alone provides sufficient reason to reject the usual and uncertain inference from the *Acharnians*. The very logic which has been invoked to fix the date of Herodotus' publication as prior to the *Acharnians* applies in all its force to the appearance of this parody in the *Birds*.

It may be objected, however, that the logic of this conclusion, if it is not assailable in its own terms, nevertheless is based on an insufficiency of certain fact to allow a certain judgment. Though it may be granted, perhaps, that the passages in the *Acharnians* do not necessarily imply the use of Herodotus, that possibility cannot definitely be excluded unless the inference I have made from the parody in the *Birds* is as inevitable as I suppose it to be. Yet our ignorance of Aristophanes' motives in 414 allows us to suppose that some special consideration may then have presented itself which, if it were known, would permit us to invalidate that very inference and explain in some other fashion the reason for the parody in the *Birds*. There is, however, further evidence, and in my opinion it turns the scales

<sup>10</sup> *Studies* 179 f.

<sup>11</sup> Schmid-Stählin i, 2. 591 n. 3.

decisively. For unless we prefer to believe in a series of astounding coincidences, there is unmistakable significance in the sudden and detectable turn in the dramaturgy of Euripides occurring in or around the year 414, the very year of the *Birds*.

Let us consider first that famous allusion to Helen in the *Electra* (1280–1283), a play which I would date to 414.<sup>12</sup> The following is said of Helen by the Dioscuri:

Πρωτέως γὰρ ἐκ δόμων  
ἦκει λιποῦσ' Αἴγυπτον οὐδ' ἦλθεν Φρύγας·  
Ζεὺς δ', ὡς ἔρις γένοιτο καὶ φόνος βροτῶν,  
εἴδωλον Ἑλένης ἐξέπεμψ' ἐς Ἴλιον.

The question that naturally arises is why, out of the blue, without the slightest necessity, Euripides should in such an offhand way say anything quite this startling. To say that it 'was a famous version' 'well enough known for him to be able to refer to it quite briefly in the exodos of the *Electra*'<sup>13</sup> minimizes unduly the sheer effrontery of Euripides' casually flung explosive. It is true enough that Stesichorus' palinode was famous. That is because it was so peculiar. But no proof exists, and I dare say none will emerge, to suggest that it was anything more than a famous curiosity until Herodotus utilized it for purposes of his own and Euripides thereafter, in the *Helen*, made it dramatically respectable. Let us not accept perfunctorily this odd and unnecessary slap to a monolithic dramatic tradition. Why, then, the allusion in the *Electra*?

The commentators are unanimous in seeing this remark as a kind of forecast of the *Helen* which was to follow in 412. That idea does not seem to me to be a very happy one. Certainly in one sense it is a forecast: we can see, in retrospect, that it foreshadowed another play that was to follow. But is it not clear that only our knowledge of the *Helen* permits us to 'explain' this remark as a forecast? Euripides' audience would not have understood it in such a way nor, obviously, did Euripides intend that they should. He gave no hint. The most that we can say, I believe, is that Euripides may already have been writing or thinking about the *Helen* and that he took a certain amusement in exciting a mystification that he knew would be dissolved in a year or two. Though by then who would remember?

An alternative explanation lies at hand. Let us reflect on the fact that what Euripides said of Helen in the *Electra* was directed to an audience which, though it knew nothing of any forthcoming play, had indeed around that very time been treated to a parody of Herodotus. Unquestionably the Athenians had his work fresh in mind. Therefore Stesichorus' myth by way of Herodotus' rationalization of it was current in 414. Thus the remark

<sup>12</sup> The *Electra* is generally dated to 413 on the strength of vv. 1347 ff., where the Dioscuri announce that they are going 'in haste to the sea of Sicily to save the prows of ships'. In spite of G. Zuntz, *The Political Plays of Euripides* (1955) 66 f., the reference is assuredly to the Sicilian Expedition. (For reactions to Zuntz and criticism of his treatment of the exodos of the *Electra* see A. Vögler, *Vergleichende Studien zur sophokleischen und euripideischen Elektra* [Heidelberg 1967] 53 n. 8, 55–62.) However, the usual date inferred from the passage, 413, may be less likely than the year before it, 414. The general view holds that since the reference cannot allude to the first expedition of 415 it must therefore refer to the second expedition sent in 413 under Demosthenes (Parmentier, Denniston) or to the slightly earlier contingent—winter 414/13—headed by Eurymedon (Schmid-Stählin i 3, 488 n. 4). But these verses do not imply that the Dioscuri are accompanying anyone. They are going in haste (σπουδῆ) to rescue ships already at

Sicily. That rules out Demosthenes' force and probably also Eurymedon's. On the other hand, the reference to Alcibiades, if it is that, in 1350, would be as understandable in 414 as it would be an irrelevancy a year later. The tone of the passage also better suits the condition of affairs in Sicily in winter 415/14. In fairness to Zuntz it should be added that the part of the play of concern to me, the exodos, is above all others the most likely to have been written with a view to the time of the play's presentation, and so at the very last. We do not know when the torso of the play was written or what Euripides' habits may have been in this respect. But Euripides probably did not present every play he wrote or stage every play he did present immediately on its completion. Only the exodos need have been geared to the date of production when, as here, some contemporary allusion was intended.

<sup>13</sup> A. M. Dale, in her commentary, xxiii, following Zuntz, *Political Plays*, 65 f.

of the Dioscuri would have been understood by the contemporary audience not as an unmotivated and unnecessary departure from orthodoxy but as an allusion, perhaps ironic, related to the current literary scene. We have no warrant to doubt that this was Euripides' intention. He wrote for his audience and played upon their reactions; he was not mystifying contemporaries in order to provide us with an example of a forecast, whatever his future plans about the *Helen*.

That these plans probably included the writing of the *Helen* naturally suggests a further inference. We are accustomed, in virtue of our perspective from modern times, to take for granted the particular plays written by the dramatists. Often we do not question why, in any specific case, Aeschylus or Sophocles or Euripides chose a given subject. It is not that they did not have their reasons; it is merely that in most cases it is impossible even dimly to conceive of what they may have been. It should be different with the *Helen*. Euripides chose to present a play in 412 which broke sharply not only with the general dramatic tradition but with his own prior characterization of Helen. If we take this fact and add it to the other ones—that Herodotus was *au courant* in 414 and that Euripides was evidently struck by Herodotus' adaptation of Stesichorus and made allusion to it at that time—it follows automatically that it was Herodotus who had directed Euripides' attention to the dramatic possibilities of the legend. Naturally he kept the *eidolon* and made his own innovations. We could expect no less: Euripides was a creative artist, not an automaton.

Any lingering doubt about the influence of Herodotus upon Euripides at the very period when, for other reasons, I have suggested that Herodotus' work was published should be removed by consideration of his reliance on Herodotus in his treatment of the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, a play which seems to have intervened between the *Electra* and the *Helen*. In this play too, but in a more substantive way than in the *Electra*, his reliance upon a portion of Herodotus' narrative is unmistakable. Herodotus' description of the Taurians (iv 103), their savage cult of Iphigenia, sacrifice of Hellenes, even their way of dealing with human trophies, is the basis of Euripides' treatment of these details, whatever he may have owed to local tradition in Halae.<sup>14</sup> I suggest, therefore, that it is here the same as with the *Helen*. His reading of Herodotus incited him to write this play too. A bare statement of this kind, if it stood alone, would perhaps appear no more or less likely than some conflicting one. Not, however, when due weight is given to the fact that the playwright chose for two plays of similar theme and construction subjects which Herodotus, parodied at that very time, had given space to in rudimentary but similar fashion. It seems unlikely, under the circumstances, that Euripides happened accidentally to choose precisely these themes at this time. Stesichorus and the *Cypria* were nothing new; Herodotus was. Surely he supplies what there necessarily must have been: contemporary reason and incitement for Euripides to adapt this material to dramatic form.

A few smaller details in the plays Euripides wrote at this time might similarly suggest his sudden awareness of Herodotus.<sup>15</sup> They, however, of little individual weight, will persuade no one who rejects my inference from the major points of contact already mentioned. Let us then pile upon these what for a sceptic must become the oddest coincidence of the lot. The creations of Euripides in the last seven years of his life—or six, if we date the *Electra* to

<sup>14</sup> The less we know, it seems, about a possible source, the more influence we ascribe to it (see, e.g. Gregoire's preface to the play in the Budé series, p. 97). Another factor inciting Euripides to write the play may have been Sophocles' *Chryses* (Pearson, *frags.* 726–30), though see Wilamowitz, *Hermes* xviii (1883) 257, for a cogent case against it. But we may well be cautious before changing in fragment 727 (schol. *Birds* 1240) the vulgate *Σοφοκλειον χρυσῆ* to *ἐν Χρυσῆ* (with Nauck and Pearson after Fritzsche) or

even in assuming that the scholiast correctly traced Aristophanes' parody to Sophocles rather than to Aeschylus, *Ag.* 530. On that assumption, of course, hangs the date or rather priority of Sophocles' *Chryses*.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., *Electra* 34–39, which Steiger, *Philologus* lvi (1907) 585, suggested was an echo of the Mandane story in Herodotus i 107. See also Denniston at the word *θερμάν* in *Electra* 740 and the two fragments of the *Andromeda* (412 B.C.) 152, 153N.

413—possess qualities common to each other which also distinguish them from the plays he wrote prior to that time. In order, however, to avoid the suspicion of having formulated these qualities so as to make them yield a desired conclusion, let me quote part of Schmid-Stählin's characterization of Euripides at this time. 'The opposition between Greek and Barbarian is found repeatedly in plays from the *Medea* on (*Andromache, Hecabe, Trojan Women,*) but in such a fashion that the poet directed his sympathy to the ill-treated barbarian who suffered at the hands of the Greeks. In the last six years of his life, on the other hand, he emphatically took the side of Greek culture.'<sup>16</sup> 'It is significant that from this time new ethical motives and techniques appear: the liking for the goodness of the common man (*αὐτουργός* in the *Electra*), of the *δοῦλος γενναῖος* (paedagogus in the *Electra*, messenger in the *Helen*) and the rescue of Greeks from barbarian captivity and surroundings . . . The position of the poet to the barbarians simultaneously was altered. They are now represented . . . as unsympathetic, almost distorted, figures, as illustrations for the famous saying of Iphigenia in Aulis (1400 f.): βαρβάρων δ' Ἑλληνας ἄρχειν εἰκὸς, ἀλλ' οὐ βαρβάρους, / μῆτερ, Ἑλλήνων, τὸ μὲν γὰρ δοῦλον, οἱ δ' ἐλεύθεροι. At the same time was renewed that Aeschylean joy in exotically coloured scenes . . .'<sup>17</sup> (Phrygian, Oriental, Phoenician, Egyptian and Scythian).<sup>18</sup> Under the circumstances, therefore, I do not think it a fanciful idea to attribute some of this change in Euripides to the impact of Herodotus' *Histories* upon him and to see in this relationship a momentous and pleasing example of the effect of one great artist upon another whose different cast of mind did not preclude him from the admiration and even emulation these plays attest.

Enough has been said, I hope, to justify the possibility, in terms of the external evidence, of the publication of Herodotus' work after the end of the Archidamian War, long enough before 414 to have become generally known but shortly enough before it to be still suitable for parody. It remains, now, to consider Herodotus himself. Three passages in Herodotus, I submit, point to a time late in the Archidamian War, two of them implying that this war was over when he wrote them. That they have been otherwise explained testifies primarily, as I hope the reader will agree, to the necessity of bringing them into line with a ruling dogma.

(1) vi 98. 2: καὶ τοῦτο (the earthquake at Delos) μὲν κου τέρας ἀνθρώποισι τῶν μελλόντων ἔσεσθαι κακῶν ἔφηγε ὁ θεός. ἐπὶ γὰρ Δαρείου τοῦ Ὑστάσπεος καὶ Ἐέρξεω τοῦ Δαρείου καὶ Ἀρτοξέρξεω τοῦ Ἐέρξεω, τριῶν τουτέων ἐπεξῆς γενεῶν, ἐγένετο πλέω κακὰ τῇ Ἑλλάδι ἢ ἐπὶ εἴκοσι ἄλλας γενεὰς τὰς πρὸ Δαρείου γενομένας, τὰ μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν Περσέων αὐτῇ γενόμενα, τὰ δὲ ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν κορυφαίων περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς πολεμομένων.

The 'war περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς' is assuredly the Peloponnesian War and not the battle of Tanagra. No Greek could have considered what we call the 'First Peloponnesian War' a struggle of *κορυφαῖοι* fighting for the control of Greece. The Archidamian War was exactly that, and it follows from Herodotus' mode of expression that he was looking back at it and the evils it brought in its train. The perspective is not one he could have taken early in the War but indicates, precisely as Herodotus implies, a date after the death of Artaxerxes. For although How asserted at the passage that 'The words do not imply that Artaxerxes' reign was over' it is impossible to agree. That implication would be unmistakable if the author were anyone but Herodotus, who is not supposed to 'refer clearly to an event so late.'<sup>19</sup> But it is a date that Herodotus is giving us. Normally, 'in the reigns of Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes' would mean 'in the sequence of time that elapsed from the beginning of the reign of the first till the end of the reign of the last'. Herodotus' addition that this period was 'three generations in a row' confirms that meaning here. Except when *γενεή* refers to birth, descendants, pedigree or nationality (to use Powell's lemmata)—and these meanings do not fit the present context—the term is a chronological one. 'Through three generations'

<sup>16</sup> i 3. 503.  
<sup>17</sup> *ibid.* 488.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.* 488 n. 2.  
<sup>19</sup> How *ad loc.*



should mean 'through the lifetimes of these three kings'. Secondly, Herodotus' comparison of the three generations with the prior twenty inevitably suggests that he was thinking in terms of complete units, as it were, which were mutually comparable. Herodotus' formulation implies, in other words, that he had made a mental comparison of one inclusive period of time with another. One of these periods ended only with the end of Artaxerxes. Finally, what of the tone of this passage? Is it not clearly retrospective? 'Those three generations yielded more evil than any comparable period of history because of the Persian and Archidamian War'. This statement would be singularly inept when the third generation had not ended and the war was still in its beginnings. Herodotus' words are like the statement of a man who looks at the sky after the storm clouds have been swept from it. This passage, therefore, was written after the death of Artaxerxes and very probably after 421, when the peace had come.

(2) vii 235. 2-3 (Demaratus to Xerxes): ἔστι δὲ ἐπ' αὐτῇ νήσος ἐπικειμένη τῇ οὐνομά ἐστ Κύθηρα, τὴν Χίλων ἀνὴρ παρ' ἡμῖν σοφώτατος γενόμενος κέρδος μέζον ἔφη εἶναι Σπαρτιήτησι κατὰ τῆς θαλάσσης καταδευκέαι μᾶλλον ἢ ὑπερέχειν, αἰεὶ τι προσδοκῶν ἀπ' αὐτῆς τοιοῦτον ἔσεσθαι οἶόν τοι ἐγὼ ἐξηγέομαι, οὔτι τὸν σὸν στόλον προειδώς, ἀλλὰ πάντα ὁμοίως φοβεόμενος ἀνδρῶν στολον. (3) ἐκ ταύτης τῆς νήσου ὀρμώμενοι φοβεόντων τοὺς Λακεδαμονίους. παροίκου δὲ πολέμου σφι ἐόντος οἰκῆιου οὐδὲν δειοὶ ἔσσονται τοι μὴ τῆς ἄλλης Ἑλλάδος ἀλίσκομένης ὑπὸ τοῦ πεζοῦ βοηθέωσι ταύτη. καταδουλωθείσης δὲ τῆς ἄλλης Ἑλλάδος ἀσθενῆς ἤδη τὸ Λακωνικὸν μῦνον λείπεται.

Herodotus would most improbably have made this allusion to the cardinal importance of Cythera unless some event justified it. We are not required to consider the possibility that Demaratus actually made this observation to Darius (or that Chilon had stated it well before). And those who choose to believe that Demaratus' remark is pointless are obliged, at the least, to find in Herodotus another example of a dire prediction—and this is one of the most fearful of them all—made by one of Herodotus' characters that is without issue.

The prophecy is usually explained in one of two ways. It is taken as an allusion to Tolmides' expedition (Macan) or as a reference to what we assume may have been a plan of Pericles (Stein). In 456/5 Tolmides ravaged the sea-coast of the Peloponnesus, set fire to the harbour at Gythium and captured Boae and Cythera (Pausanias i 27.5). Since Thucydides does not even mention the occupation of Cythera when he refers to that periplous, and since Pausanias himself alludes to it in last place, it is impossible to find in this exploit the explanation for Herodotus' exceedingly sombre vaticinium. The temporary occupation of Cythera cannot have prompted the idea that it would have been better for the Spartans for the island never to have been; what is required is something along the lines of the prophecy contained in 235.3. As to the hypothetical plans of Pericles, it should not be necessary to argue against what cannot be considered an authentic explanation. For it is surely an illegitimate procedure to infer Pericles' plans from this passage and then to explain the passage by reference to them. Nevertheless, it is easily refuted. If Pericles had had such a plan, we can see from the importance attached to it (ex hypothesi) by Herodotus that it was not merely 'a plan' but 'the plan', the final stroke for the subjugation of Sparta. It involved nothing less than the land conquest of Greece, to be achieved by keeping the Spartans at bay by constant incursions from Cythera. Nothing could be less Periclean than this.<sup>20</sup>

Both theories are united in one respect: they are based on the steadfast refusal to consider the one event occurring in the Archidamian War which completely justifies the contention that it had been better for Sparta if the island were sunk in the sea—the capture of that island by Nicias in 424. Thucydides describes the impact of this event (iv 55): 'The Lacedaemonians, seeing the Athenians masters of Cythera, and expecting descents of the

<sup>20</sup> Needless to state, the conception also implies that Herodotus was so credulous as to project this alleged plan into an inevitable and momentous success. Such

an assumption as this would be inadmissible even if we were guided by that persistent misconception of Herodotus as the naïve admirer of Pericles.

kind upon their coasts, nowhere opposed them in force, but sent garrisons here and there through the country, consisting of as many heavy infantry as the points menaced seemed to require, and generally stood very much upon the defensive. After the severe and unexpected blow that had befallen them in the island, the occupation of Pylos and Cythera, and the apparition on every side of a war whose rapidity defied precaution, they lived in constant fear of internal revolution, and now took the unusual step of raising four hundred horse and a force of archers, and became more timid than ever in military matters, finding themselves involved in a maritime struggle, which their organization had never contemplated, and that against Athenians, with whom an enterprize unattempted was always looked upon as a success sacrificed. Besides this, their late numerous reverses of fortune, coming close one upon another without any reason, had thoroughly unnerved them, and they were always afraid of a second disaster like that on the island, and thus scarcely dared to take the field, but fancied that they could not stir without a blunder, for being new to the experience of adversity they had lost all confidence in themselves'.<sup>21</sup> Thucydides' description is sufficient commentary upon this passage in Herodotus. And when we recall that it is not merely the capture of Cythera but the effects of that capture which are at issue for Herodotus as for Thucydides, and that one effect of it was to bring the Spartans to a peace they accounted unfavourable to themselves (as Thucydides vii 18. 2 implies), the likelihood is strong that Herodotus wrote this passage at the end of the Archidamian War.

(3) ix 73.3: τοῖσι δὲ Δεκελεῦσι ἐν Σπάρτῃ ἀπὸ τούτου τοῦ ἔργου (their service to Helen) ἀτελείη τε καὶ προεδρία διατελεῖ ἐς τόδε αἰεὶ ἔτι ἐοῦσα, οὕτω ὥστε καὶ ἐς τὸν πόλεμον τὸν ὕστερον πολλοῖσι ἔτεσι τούτων γενόμενον Ἀθηναίοισι τε καὶ Ἰελοποννησίοισι, σινομένων τὴν ἄλλην Ἀττικὴν Λακεδαιμονίων, Δεκελῆς ἀπέχεσθαι.

Not merely the aorist participle, *γενόμενον*, which requires that we translate the phrase as 'the war that took place', but the entire burden of the meaning in Herodotus' assertion that Decelea was unravaged during the war, make it clear that the war was over when he wrote the sentence. Otherwise he must have formulated differently. When the future course of events is uncertain you do not isolate something that has happened once but need not happen again and present it in language indicating that it was always the case. That is like an American saying in 1942 that although Pearl Harbor was bombed the Japanese refrained from attacking San Francisco in the war that took place between Japan and the United States. The usual assumption that Herodotus meant *ἐσβολή* when he wrote *πόλεμος* arises from a preconceived opinion, not from the natural implication of these words.

These three passages therefore, together with Aristophanes' parody of the work in 414 and Euripides' use of it at the same time should establish that the *Histories* were finished by Herodotus and introduced to the general public a little later than we have assumed. The chief objection to this hypothesis, I imagine, will be that Herodotus seems so unaffected by the Archidamian War that it is hard to believe that he lived through it. That objection is negligible, however, for its force is dissipated by the fact that he was equally silent (or allusive) about the early years of the war. It follows that for reasons that deserve more study than they have received, his silence is intentional—and perhaps not quite as absolute as is generally supposed.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Crawley's translation.

<sup>22</sup> See my *Herodotus* (Oxford 1971) 75-91.