# Language and Difference in Herodotus

by

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines Herodotus' representation and understanding of languages, including but not limited to Greek itself. I argue that language reveals significant aspects of the *Histories* that relate to ancient ideas about ethnicity, cultural interaction, and conflict. I suggest that language also plays an important role in Herodotus' historical methodology and literary techniques. Language in the *Histories* functions not just as a marker between traditional categories like Greek and barbarian or human and animal, but as a heuristic device to examine some of these traditional categories, reinforcing them in some places but also questioning them in others. Herodotus also uses this device to explore beyond these categories, such as when he makes arguments about events in the distant past or relationships between different non-Greek cultures by incorporating linguistic evidence.

The first chapter examines the connection between language and ethnicity in the *Histories*. Language, I argue, plays a key role in Herodotus' critical engagement with the contested subject of identity. For example, despite the Athenians' talk about a shared language uniting the Greeks, Herodotus highlights the Caunians' ethnic distinction from the Carians despite their linguistic similarity to them (1.142.2–4). Emphasizing the role of language over other factors in ethnogenesis, as well as the mutability of language, provides a counterpoint to ancient views which treated ethnicity as fixed.

The second chapter investigates Herodotus' observations about language contact. More specifically, the chapter examines the relationship these observations bear to modern theories about these phenomena. Not only does Herodotus appear (if sometimes vaguely) to describe real

phenomena, but there is frequently also external evidence for language contact in the geographic and cultural areas that he describes. He does not present language contact monolithically, but in situation-specific terms. Although these terms cannot usually be easily mapped onto modern categories, they are specific enough to invite comparison. I apply six concepts from contact linguistics to Herodotus' linguistic descriptions: imperfect learning, diglossia, convergence, mixed languages, borrowing (specifically, loanwords), and language death.

The third chapter focuses on animal and divine language in the *Histories*. Herodotus' conception of language is not limited specifically to human beings. I argue that Herodotus' views on nonhuman language reveal a great deal about the ways he thinks language is learned and how he conceptualizes the origins of language. In the end, Herodotus' treatment of human and animal language falls into a larger pattern in which the author makes distinctions between human, animal, and divine speech that both echo and diverge from earlier and later Greek cultural assumptions.

The fourth chapter covers translation and interpreters. I argue that the presence of interpreters is not meaningless, but generally serves to support broader themes relating to cultural difference. Herodotus plays the role of interpreter at various points in his narrative, telling us accurately what the Egyptian word for "crocodile" or "gentleman" is and providing some questionable etymologies for the names of Persian kings (Hdt. 2.69.3, 2.143.3, 5.98.3). Interpreters and translation emphasize distance, both physical and metaphorical. This distance is not merely that of exotic situations, but it may also increase dramatic tension or lend emphasis. Still, it is through translation and interpreters that these differences are sometimes overcome, revealing a common humanity. In the process, interpreters help Herodotus comment on geography, ethnicity, and the vicissitudes of all human life.

## Introduction

Classical Greeks often made a fundamental distinction between themselves and all other ethnic groups. They used this dichotomy to justify war and slavery. Yet I argue that Herodotus, sometimes considered the first Greek historian, did not partake in these prejudices to the same extent as other contemporary thinkers. He argues repeatedly that fundamental aspects of Greek culture came about as the result of 'barbarian' influence: the Greeks received their gods from the Egyptians, their alphabet from the Phoenicians. For Herodotus, language can create, unmake, or change ethnic categories and blur the lines between humans and gods or animals. Herodotus' emphasis on the role of language over other factors in creating and marking ethnic boundaries, as well as his view of the mutability of language, contests ancient views that treat ethnicity as fixed and inherent.

Scholars have frequently turned to Herodotus when developing contemporary literary and linguistic theories, such as narratology and semiotics. They have also noted how his rich account of the history and cultures of the ancient Mediterranean world between c. 750-450 BCE shows a much greater interest in foreign languages than later Greek works do. Nevertheless, they have failed to answer several questions: How did Herodotus approach ethnicity and language differently from his contemporaries, and what connections did he make between the two? What modern approaches to language and identity find analogs in Herodotus? What is his relationship to current discussions? Why was he ultimately unsuccessful in promoting his views and what does that tell us about our own efforts to change social narratives surrounding identity? Only

through these questions can we understand the Greek / 'barbarian' antithesis and its modern incarnations.

My dissertation focuses on Herodotus' representation and understanding of Greek and non-Greek languages. I examine how Herodotus' representation of language relates to his larger themes and project. This examination includes how his thinking about language relates to his views on ethnicity, religion, cultural interaction and change, and cultural difference. I also consider how his approach to language helps the author construct a vivid and compelling narrative. I argue that language reveals significant aspects of the *Histories* that depict and subvert ancient ideas about ethnicity, cultural interaction, and conflict. Herodotus shows that, while he understands language to determine ethnicity in some contexts, it is only because the parties involved have chosen to view ethnicity in linguistic terms. I suggest that language also plays an important role in Herodotus' historical methodology and literary techniques. While sometimes Herodotus uses language to draw a line between Greek and barbarian or human and animal, more often he uses it as an instrument for probing these boundaries, sometimes strengthening them but often subverting them. Herodotus also uses language in his investigation beyond these categories, using linguistic evidence to make arguments about the distant past or connections between different non-Greek cultures.

Much like Herodotus' *Histories* itself, my approach to language in Herodotus' work is somewhat kaleidoscopic. I draw on methods and theories from diverse fields, including social linguistics, anthropology, and philological and literary studies. I borrow from different approaches as appropriate to the subject of each chapter. For instance, in the first chapter on language and ethnicity I bring in scholars engaged with anthropological approaches to the subject (J. M. Hall 1997; 2002) as well as historical linguists who, like Herodotus, use language

as a way of asking questions about the distant past (Janko 2018). In the second chapter on language contact, I draw on scholarship by contact linguists (among others Adams, Janse, and Swain 2002; Ángeles Gallego et al. 2004; Baptista 2016a; P. Bakker and Matras 2013; Thomason 2001; 2003; Meakins 2013; Mous 2003; Mufwene 2001; Oksaar 1984). In the third chapter, in which I cover human and animal language in Herodotus, I instead make use of a variety of scholarship on animals in antiquity and on the ways animals and gods were seen to communicate in ways similar to or differently from humans in Greek thought (e.g. Ax 1986; Mynott 2018; Watkins 1970; Zirin 1980). In the chapter on interpreters and translation, I make use of various works of literary analysts (e.g. Abbott 2002; de Jong 2002; Munson 2005).

*General Background*

Herodotus wrote his *Histories* at a time when the regions he describes were characterized by a linguistic diversity that would, by the end of the Roman Empire, disappear in favor of Greek and Latin (Clackson 2015, 2). The diversity of this world can be seen on the map above, which. though it reflects epigraphic and literary sources as accurately as possible, still reflects much conjecture (Clackson 2015, 3). Importantly, there is no secure way of knowing what people spoke before the advent of writing, and while the knowledge and use of script spread rapidly from the east to the west of the Mediterranean basin after 1000 BCE, "the practice of writing in local languages on an imperishable material such as stone or metal only took hold in a very limited number of communities before the Roman Empire" (Clackson 2015, 3). Thus, the impression we have of the linguistic diversity of Herodotus' day is, if anything, an underestimation of the actual situation.

Herodotus mentions a large number of different languages in his *Histories*, especially if we consider the fact that he does not readily distinguish in terminology between language and

dialect. Among others, he mentions Greek, Scythian, Lydian, Persian, Arab, Assyrian, Dorian, Athenian, Carian, Caunian, Egyptian, Libyan, Ethiopian, Ammonian, Colchian, Argippaen, Sauromatian, Amazon, Gelonian, Pelasgian, and Troglodyte, as well as various Ionian languages, various unnamed Indian languages, and an unknown language spoken by small men living in the Libyan desert. Herodotus' interest in linguistic and cultural diversity should perhaps also not be surprising, given the linguistic diversity of Herodotus' birthplace of Halicarnassus, a city of mixed Dorian and Carian identity within the Persian Empire, and the relationships both of conflict and intermixture between the Dorians, Carians, and neighboring Ionians (Mac Sweeney 2013; Rumscheid 2009). Thus, even though all the characters of Herodotus' history speak to each other in Greek, for the most part Ionic Greek, Herodotus still reflects a world of linguistic diversity.

Herodotus' interest in language takes many forms. The simplest is that of various glosses given throughout the *Histories*, in which he gives translations, both correct and patently false, for various non-Greek words. He gives several glosses for unfamiliar Greek words over the course of his *Histories* as well. Herodotus is also interested in language as a potential window onto the past. For instance, he recounts Psammetichus' linguistic experiment to determine the world's oldest people, and he reasons about the Athenians' ethnic origins based on the probable language of their ancestors. He recounts incidents of language change, such as when the Sauromatians came to speak a different dialect of Scythian due to the imperfect learning of their Amazonian foremothers. He recounts Greek oracles that give mysterious responses in Libyan or in Carian. Like language, Herodotus is also interested in writing, and he describes the different scripts used by the Egyptians and correctly attributes the origins of the Greek alphabet to the Phoenicians. Herodotus was not interested only in non-Greek languages, but also in Greek dialects. He often

invokes language in moments of cultural contact, describing several neighboring peoples who have languages that have affected or mixed with each other. In sum, Herodotus is interested not only in language in its own right but also as a tool of historical inquiry and a means of understanding the formation of ethnic identities.

*Map 1: Tentative map of languages around the Mediterranean Basin in c. 500 BCE from Clackson (2015)*

*Previous Approaches to Language in Herodotus*

Let me briefly put my current study in its scholarly context, to showcase how it innovates upon previous scholarship and the relevance of these innovations to the field at large. The modern study of language in Herodotus began with two foci (Miletti 2008, 145).[1] On the one hand, scholars attempted to use Herodotus as a source for the study of ancient languages about which less was known than Greek and Latin. On the other hand, scholars sought to establish

[1] My discussion of previous scholarship owes much to Miletti, and I follow his understanding of the trajectory of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarship on Herodotus (Miletti 2008, 145–51).

Herodotus' linguistic competence to determine his reliability as a source. Ultimately, the discrepancy between Herodotus' linguistic observations about the Persian, Phrygian, and Egyptian languages and what comparative philologists were then reconstructing led many ancient historians to adopt a skeptical attitude towards the so-called father of history (e.g. Rawlinson 1880; Miletti 2008, 145). The most representative and influential of these sceptics, Eduard Meyer, assembled a list of various errors made by Herodotus in his description of the Egyptian, Persian, and Scythian languages (Meyer 1892, 192–95). Characteristic of Meyer's treatment is his scathing remark that Herodotus shows his total ignorance of the Persian language through his misplaced pride in his "discovery" that, unbeknownst to the Persians themselves, all Persian names end with sigma.[2]

Meyer summarizes his own position (Meyer 1892, 195):

> Herodot ist zu beurtheilen wie die zahlreichen modernen Orientreisenden, welche ihre totale Unkenntniss der einheimischen Sprache gleich am Eingang ihrer Werke durch die Behauptung verrathen, das muslimische Glaubensbekentniss laute „allah ill allah" was sie womöglich noch durch die unsinnige „Uebersetzung" Gott ist Gott wiedergeben. … Wie sie ist auch er hier völlig von ungebildeten Dragomännern und von seinen im Lande ansässigen Landsleuten abhängig, die ihm nicht weniger Absurditäten und Fabeln aufgebunden haben, wie jenen.
>
> Herodotus is to be judged like the numerous modern travelers to the Orient, who betray their total ignorance of the native language right at the beginning of their works by claiming that the Muslim confession of faith goes "allah ill allah", which they may additionally "translate" nonsensically "God is God." … Like the travelers, he too is completely dependent on uneducated interpreters and on fellow countrymen residing in the area, who have fed him no fewer absurdities and fables than those travelers.[3]

[2] Ueber die persische Sprache glaubt Herodot eine Entdeckung gemacht zu haben, auf die er nicht wenig stolz ist (I 139): alle ihre Eigennamem gingen auf *s* aus. Mit Recht bemerkt er, dass die Perser selbst davon nichts wüssten; die Entdeckung zeigt uns, dass Herodot kein Wort persisch kannte. Denn sie ist von den griechischen Formen der Eigennamen abstrahirt; im persischen haben nur die i- und u-stämme im Nominativ ein s, aber nicht die unter den Eigennamen weit überwiegenden a-stämme, bei denen der Nominativ vielmehr vocalisch ausgeht.
[3] This and all following translations are my own.

Meyer's position is not without warrant. The turn against Herodotus in the late nineteenth century reflects pride in the real advances of linguistics over the course of that century and the position of superiority that they put modern scholars in vis-à-vis the ancients (Miletti 2008, 145). Just as importantly, the shortcomings pointed out by Meyer were real, even if his focus upon them obscured both what Herodotus got right and the ways in which his views on language were interesting and important beyond the question of accuracy.[4]

While Meyer's views have predominated in Herodotean scholarship to this day (he is quoted approvingly by Harrison (1998, 4) and Munson (2005, 27, 29)), Calderini (1908) and Diels (1910) already questioned whether his view of Herodotus might be too narrow. Whereas Meyer focused on errors that Herodotus made in describing non-Greek languages specifically, Diels took a broader approach that considered Herodotus' approach to languages both Greek and non-Greek and, most importantly, placed Herodotus among Heraclitus, Hecataeus, Theagenes, Parmenides, Xenophanes, Empedocles, Leucippus, Democritus, Protagoras, Gorgias, and Hippias as a key contributor to the development of literary and linguistic study among the Greeks. Diels insists on viewing Herodotus not merely as the father of history, but also as a philological pioneer.[5] He also points out the places where Herodotus' understanding of foreign languages do appear to be accurate (Diels 1910, 14). The precedents set by Meyer on the one hand and Diels on the other brought it about that, for a long time, monographs on Herodotus, influenced by Meyer, tended to dismiss Herodotus' views on language, while it was not

[4] For the question whether Herodotus' lying is the wrong question and reflects a modern perspective on historical research, see Luraghi (2001).
[5] This philological pioneering extends to literary as well as linguistic questions (Diels 1910, 13)

Wann lebte, was schrieb der Mann, den man Homeros heißt? So hieß damals wie heute das Problem, und der, der zuerst die Lebenszeit der alten Dichter Homer und Hesiod zu bestimmen und mit Glück den echten von dem unechten Homer abzugrenzen versuchte, war kein anderer als Herodot, den wir mit Recht als den Vater der Geschichte verehren, der aber, wie ich nun zeigen möchte, auch ein Pionier unserer philologischen Wissenschaft gewesen ist.

uncommon for Herodotus to find mention in works on the history of ancient linguistic and literary scholarship (Miletti 2008, 146; Borst 1957; Gambarara 1984; Pfeiffer 1973). Overall, scholars throughout the 20th century tended to see the question of language in Herodotus as relating first and foremost to the accuracy or lack thereof of his observations on foreign languages. Some examples include Armayor (1978), Evans (1991, 139), Lateiner (1989, 101), Schmitt (1967; 1971; 1977). The tendency continues into the twenty-first century (Hinge 2006; Schmitt 2007; 2011; 2015).

Harrison's 1998 article on Herodotus' conception of foreign languages inaugurated a new era in scholarship on language in Herodotus, in which interest in Herodotus' conception of language has been heightened by a growing interest in the use of language as a vehicle for expressing identity and its relationship to social and political integration or marginalization (Harrison 1998; Miletti 2008, 147). Harrison follows Meyer in assigning a low level of linguistic competency to Herodotus and in emphasizing his many errors, but what differentiates Harrison is his connection of these errors to Greek society at large. According to Harrison, Herodotus' errors result from a lack of interest by Greeks in foreign languages, which was in turn fueled by a sort of cultural chauvinism (Harrison 1998, 40–41). Ultimately, according to Harrison, Herodotus' linguistic observations do little more than provide occasional flavor to his descriptions of foreign lands.

Munson's *Black Doves Speak: Herodotus and the Languages of Barbarians* does not take issue with Harrison's premise that Herodotus' actual understanding of barbarian languages may have been poor (Munson 2005, 27). It does, however, argue that Herodotus was at pains to present himself as one who was an expert on them. One of only three monographs on language in Herodotus (the others being Campos Daroca's *Experiencias del lenguaje en las* Historias *de*

*Heródoto* and Miletti's *Linguaggio e metalinguaggio in Erodoto*), the work argues that language provides Herodotus with a "special opportunity to instruct his audience" (Munson 2005, 6). According to Munson, linguistic translatability implies the translatability of other cultural practices as well, which allows Herodotus to advocate for a sort of cultural relativism to teach a culturally relativist ethnographic lesson: different people may have differing customs, but ultimately all are equally bound by their own compelling customs (Munson 2005, 77). Ultimately, per Munson, this allows Herodotus to question traditional and Hellenocentric Greek ideas about barbarians, language, and culture. This is in stark contrast to Harrison's reading of Herodotus, in which the author merely reproduces these same traditional ideas.

The most recent additions to scholarship on language and identity in Herodotus are two chapters in the edited volume *Language and Identity in Herodotus* (Figueira and Soares 2020). In one of these, "Language as a marker of ethnicity in Herodotus and contemporaries," Figueira argues that, contrary to certain recently-popular ideas, language did constitute an important factor differentiating Greeks from barbarians as well as differentiating Greek ethnic groups, like Dorians and Ionians, from each other. Moreover, Figueira argues that evidence shows that ethnogenesis should not be viewed as "mere arbitrariness" but rather reflects a "fundamental cultural distinction dividing Greeks and non-Greeks" (Figueira 2020, 55). In the same volume, Brandwood's "Herodotus' *Hermēneus* and the translation of culture in the Histories" attempts to expand upon the model of cultural translation proposed by Munson, explaining Herodotus' interpreters within this paradigm, but ultimately arguing that episodes featuring interpreters in the *Histories* tend to reveal the limitations of interpreters. In the end, their function is "to mark

points in the narrative of cultural translation that require the intervention of the work's arch-translator, Herodotus himself" (Brandwood 2020, 32).[6]

Besides the strands inaugurated by Meyer and Harrison, it is important to acknowledge a third line of scholarship which continues in some respects the work of Diels in showing that, despite notable errors, language was of deep interest to Herodotus, plays an important role in his narrative, and is a subject about which he made some valuable observations. This is the line taken by Campos Daroca, whose *Experiencias del lenguaje en las* Historias *de Heródoto* was the first monograph dedicated to the subject of language in Herodotus. A similar line is also taken by Miletti in his book, *Linguaggio e metalinguaggio in Erodoto* (2008), which emphasizes the essential unity of Herodotus' concept of language. In particular, he shows the use of technical vocabulary in the *Histories* to be quite well developed through his analysis of Herodotus' metalinguistic lexicon (2008, 39–70). The overall effect of the work of Miletti and Campos Daroca is to show that an understanding of Herodotus' ideas about language is important for a full appreciation of the author, and that such an understanding must include other lenses besides that of identity alone.

Miletti and Campos Daroca also differ from works in the tradition that follows Meyer and Harrison in that they consider Herodotus' conception of language to include the Greek language as well as foreign ones. In this aspect, Chamberlain (1999) agrees with Miletti and Campos Daroca. Chamberlain examines translation in Herodotus, working outside Meyer's positivistic frame. According to Chamberlain, Herodotus' conception of language, borrowed from Democritus, imagines language as having a *rusmos* (ῥυσμός, Attic ῥυθμός, 'a flowing shape'). Thus, Herodotus is not constrained by a style of translation that seeks to arrive at equivalent

[6] On translation in Herodotus see also De Luna (2003).

terms in two different languages, but rather crafts words into whatever shape makes them most meaningful to his audience (Chamberlain 1999, 266). Thus, according to Chamberlain, Herodotus' famously bad etymologizing of the names of Persian kings is only incorrect if viewed through the lens of modern philology. From Herodotus' perspective, it is an example of the total reshaping of words into similar forms with different meanings that better suit their new context.

With all this having been said about Herodotus, what can the current study add to the conversation? First, it addresses several specific subtopics that have never been treated and which add valuable new angles to the study of language in Herodotus. While the words "language contact" appear occasionally in studies on language in Herodotus and the work is often connected with issues of multilingualism (e.g. Miletti 2008, 45–60), this is the first study to compare Herodotus' descriptions of what appear to be, from a modern perspective, contact phenomena with modern linguistic understandings of language contact. This comparison is fruitful in that it puts Herodotus' nuanced approach to language in a new light. Animal and divine language in Herodotus is another topic studied here which has not been investigated in previous scholarship, but which further illuminates Herodotus' understanding of the "other", beyond the dichotomy between Greek and barbarian, which has been so focused upon the distinctions between humans and animals or gods. Finally, interpreters have received scant mention in previous scholarship, with the recent exception of Brandwood (2020), but receive a full treatment here, which shows how key they are to understanding Herodotus' narrative art. While Brandwood does also examine interpreters, the current study takes a broader look at the issue to include other episodes where barriers to communication between speakers of different languages are acknowledged. Further, this study considers all passages featuring interpreters, whereas Brandwood selects a few most representative passages. I conclude that interpreters are a

literary device that conveys meaning. They play a key role in emphasizing the theme of cultural difference. Thus, one aspect in which this study addresses meaningful gaps in current scholarship is by addressing language contact, non-human language, and interpreters in Herodotus.

The second way in which the current study adds to current discussion on Herodotus is by bringing the connection between language and ethnicity in Herodotus into conversation with works like those of Hall (1997; 2002) that consider ethnicity in Greek antiquity. Like Figueira, the current study aims to show that, at least judging from Herodotus, definitions of Greek ethnicity that treat language as peripheral fail to explain important facts. On the other hand, the current study does not aim to show that language is always correlated with ethnicity nor that there is some objective truth behind it. Rather, by considering the ways in which Herodotus is able in some cases to see language as so close to ethnic identity that a change in language can change ethnicity, while in other cases emphasizing the lack of correspondence between these two factors, it emerges that Herodotus' views of ethnicity are more nuanced than admit of any simple explanation. Rather, Herodotus seems to be able to see different factors as constituting ethnicity depending on the groups involved and the ways in which they seek to define themselves. Importantly, Herodotus' acknowledgement that language does not always pattern with ethnic identity does not prevent him from making observations based on the general tendency of the two to correlate, for instance by making suppositions about the past based on the assumed identity of language and ethnicity.

### *Summary of Chapters*

The first chapter focuses on the connection between language and ethnicity in the *Histories*. Discussions of Greek ethnicity frequently cite the definition that Herodotus' Athenians give. The Athenians say that they are bound to the rest of the Greeks by kinship, language, a

shared way of life, shrines, and sacrifices (Hdt. 8.144.2). Moreover, it is often observed that Herodotus reflects the creation of a new Greek identity, following the Persian Wars, that divided the world oppositionally between Greeks and barbarians. On the other hand, Herodotus frequently subverts the Athenians' claims about Greek unity, either to challenge new ideas about Greek identity or because Herodotus preserves older traditions that predate the Greek-barbarian antithesis. Language, I argue, plays a key role in Herodotus' critical engagement with the contested subject of identity. For instance, despite the Athenians' talk about a shared language uniting the Greeks, Herodotus emphasizes the Caunians' ethnic distinction from the Carians despite their linguistic similarity to them (1.142.2–4). Emphasizing the role of language over other factors in ethnogenesis, as well as the mutability of language, provides a counterpoint to ancient views which approached ethnicity as fixed.

The chapter relates my work to Jonathan Hall's influential *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (1997) and *Hellenicity* (2002). Using anthropological theory, Hall perceives ethnicity to be based primarily upon putative shared descent and a shared homeland (J. M. Hall 1997, 25). Other elements that may be associated with ethnicity, such as language or religion, are not constitutive of ethnicity but are simply *indicia*: while they may distinguish ethnic groups from each other in some situations, they do not play an essential role in defining ethnic groups (J. M. Hall 1997, 32). Hall's is a good model, but like all models, it does not capture the whole picture. I explore the ways in which Herodotus in particular does not fit with Hall's model, as is clear from his belief that the Athenians' non-Greek ancestors became Greek by switching to the Greek language (Herodotus 1.57.3). I also evaluate, to a more limited degree, to what extent Herodotus might be brought into dialogue with scholarship on and theories about the intersection of language and identity more broadly, including but not limited to those from linguistics, history,

anthropology, and literary criticism (D. Evans 2016b; Fishman and García 2010; Lippi-Green 2013).

The second chapter examines observations that Herodotus makes about language contact. More specifically, the chapter examines the relationship these observations bear to modern theories about these phenomena. Not only does Herodotus appear (if sometimes vaguely) to describe real phenomena, but there is frequently also external evidence for language contact in the geographic and cultural areas that he describes. He does not present language contact monolithically, but in situation-specific terms. While these terms cannot usually be easily mapped onto modern categories, they are specific enough to invite comparison. I will identify six concepts from contact linguistics that Herodotus' linguistic descriptions approximate and relate them to modern linguistic theory: imperfect learning, diglossia, convergence, mixed languages, borrowing (specifically, loanwords), and language death.

The second chapter addresses some scholars' doubts about the Greeks' knowledge of and interest in foreign languages. These doubts have led to the conclusion that Herodotus was no pioneer in the study of languages because the general level of interest and knowledge among Greeks was so low. Herodotus does not get everything right, as has been amply demonstrated (Harrison 1998, 9). However, regardless of the situation among Greeks more generally, Herodotus' treatment of language contact shows a nuanced approach to language. He does not present language contact monolithically, but in situation-specific terms. While these terms cannot usually be easily mapped onto modern categories, they are specific enough to invite comparison. The overall impression is of an author capable of treating language in sophisticated ways, both as a tool and as a subject of study in its own right. While Herodotus' descriptions of

contact phenomena are not always very detailed, they give enough information to suggest, based on what we know about these types of situations in general, that he is describing real situations.

The second chapter also shows how Herodotus' conceptualization of language change challenges traditional Greek ideas about ethnic differences. Among other incidents in Herodotus, I consider an example in which Amazonian warrior women come into contact with the nomadic Scythians of the Eurasian steppe (4.414-417). The new people thus created, the Sauromatae, are said to speak a Scythian influenced by the speech of their Amazonian foremothers, who never learned Scythian "correctly." I argue that Herodotus captures a linguistic process that may reflect a deliberate self-fashioning more than an inability to learn.

The third chapter explores animal and divine language in the *Histories*. Herodotus' conception of language is not limited specifically to human beings. I assert that Herodotus' views on nonhuman language reveal a great deal about the ways he thinks language is learned and how he conceptualizes the origins of language. Ultimately, Herodotus' treatment of human and animal language falls into a larger pattern in which the author makes distinctions between human, animal, and divine speech that both echo and diverge from earlier and later Greek cultural assumptions. Most significantly, he does not collapse the distinction between humans and animals; rather he insists that apparent examples of speaking animals can be explained by rational analysis. By contrast, he echoes contemporary assumptions that the language of non-Greek peoples sounds animal-like, without necessarily accepting the negative connotations that other writers impute. Herodotus marks divine speech as distinct through style, dialect, and diction, and by alluding to the gods' universal command of human language. In doing so, he builds on earlier Homeric ideas about a divine language and about the linguistics expression of the gods' superhuman knowledge. Overall, Herodotus approaches questions of language origins,

language learning, and ethnography in ways that put his critical faculties on display, demonstrate his intellectual independence, and parallel his inquires elsewhere in the *Histories*.

The fourth chapter covers translation and interpreters. I argue that the presence of interpreters is not haphazard, but generally serves to support broader themes relating to cultural difference. Herodotus plays the role of interpreter at various points in his narrative, telling us accurately what the Egyptian word for "crocodile" or "gentleman" is, as well as giving some questionable etymologies for the names of Persian kings (Hdt. 2.69.3, 2.143.3, 5.98.3). Herodotus the interpreter, as described by Munson, translates more than words for his Greek audience: he extends "the linguistic paradigm to non-linguistic paradigms of culture," by translating, for example, the names of Egyptian gods into Greek equivalents (Munson 2001, 78; Hdt. 2.69.3, 2.143.3). In this expanded frame of translation, Herodotus does more than provide a gloss for many words, also working to make unfamiliar objects, names, institutions, and concepts intelligible to his audience. Ultimately, moments of translation in Herodotus defy a simple reading. Sometimes the presence of interpreters or the use of translation serves to emphasize a gulf between different peoples in the narrative or to highlight a dichotomy between Greeks and others. Herodotus is not, however, the only interpreter in his text. While much of the *Histories* follows the Homeric (and dramatic) practice of having Greek and non-Greek characters alike speak to each other in Greek, Herodotus sometimes disrupts this practice by explaining that a conversation happened through interpreters.

In the *Histories*, interpreters and translation emphasize distance, both physical and metaphorical. This distance is not merely that of exotic or foreign situations, but it may also increase dramatic tension or lend emphasis. Nevertheless, it is through translation and interpreters that these differences are sometimes overcome, revealing a common humanity. In the

process, interpreters help Herodotus comment on geography, ethnicity, and the vicissitudes of all human life. Interpreters and translation forge bonds across boundaries not only of culture or of space but also of time, since they sometimes take place as part of Herodotus' rationalization of myths, a process that is itself one of bringing the world of myth nearer to the present by explaining myth according to the rules of everyday reality. Moreover, this expanded form of translation occurs not only in the numerous places where Herodotus gives Greek equivalents for non-Greek words, but also when providing glosses for Greek words that are particular to a certain dialect or place, another way in which his work blurs the distinction between Greek and non-Greek.

## Chapter 1: Language and Ethnicity

The oft-cited definition of Greek identity given by Herodotus' Athenians provides a useful jumping-off point for understanding Herodotus' conception of ethnic identity. When their Spartan allies fear that the Athenians might make a separate peace with the Persians, the Athenians respond that it is shameful to think that they would do such a thing, first and foremost because of the need to avenge Athenian temples destroyed by the Persians, but next because it would be wrong to betray their fellow Greeks when they share common blood, language, shrines and sacrifices, and customs (8.144.2). This passage gives language a central role in what it means to Herodotus to be Greek and possibly, by extension, what it means to belong to any other ethnic group. While the Athenian definition seeks to convey a sense of broad and unbreakable similarity among Greeks, elsewhere in Herodotus ethnic groups are not so static nor so monolithic. Herodotus depicts the creation of new ethnic groups, such as the Sauromatae, as well as the acceptance by old ones of new blood, languages, and (religious) customs. Sometimes these novelties result in the transformation of ethnic groups, but just as often they retain their identities despite the changes. Why groups in Herodotus sometimes retain their ethnic identities through these changes and sometimes do not relates to the ways each group actively constructs its identity, an important point of flexibility in Herodotus' conception of ethnic identity.

Language is an especially fruitful lens through which to see this flexibility in action. It recurs throughout Herodotus' narrative as a powerful tool in forging ethnic identities, a passive reflection of them, and even as something that may divide groups who nevertheless claim the same ethnic identity.

*Language and Ethnicity in Contrast: The Ionian Example*

While the definition of Hellenicity given by the Athenians in Book Eight does give important insight into Herodotus' views on (Greek) ethnicity, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of accepting it as a blanket statement. It is, after all, a statement made by narrative characters within a certain context. It makes rhetorical sense for the Athenians to define Greekness in the most all-encompassing and powerful way possible. By doing so, they emphasize the importance of the Greek identity to them, a point of commonality with their Spartan allies whom they wish to convince of their loyalty to the Hellenic cause. In putting together a holistic view of Herodotus' approach to language and ethnic identity it is important to consider passages in which the author suggests that language and identity might not go together so naturally.

One place where Herodotus is careful to distinguish between language and ethnicity is when Herodotus gives his account of the history, language, and ethnicity of the Ionians. Like most peoples in Herodotus' narrative, the Ionians first appear in the context of Persian expansion. The Persian King Cyrus' conquest of Lydia in Anatolia brings him into conflict with the Ionian Dodecapolis, a group of twelve cities in Anatolia and nearby islands with a common sanctuary called the Panionion. Herodotus sometimes refers to these twelve cities simply as 'the Ionians', though he also uses the term to refer to the ethnic group more broadly (Hdt. 1.5. 1.18, 1.56, 1.141, 1.151).[7] While one might think that Herodotus would emphasize the linguistic

[7] This is also how they refer to themselves in inscriptions (e.g. *ISmyrna* 557).

similarities among the Ionians, given their use, from the modern perspective, of a shared Ionic dialect, Herodotus instead emphasizes the Ionians' linguistic diversity.[8]

After Cyrus conquers the Lydians, he prepares to attack the Ionians, who fortify their cities and assemble to plan. This narrative moment gives Herodotus the chance to briefly describe the climate of Ionia, after which he moves on to describe the region's linguistic geography (Hdt. 1.142.3-4):

> γλῶσσαν δὲ οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν οὗτοι νενομίκασι, ἀλλὰ τρόπους τέσσερας παραγωγέων. Μίλητος μὲν αὐτέων πρώτη κέεται πόλις πρὸς μεσαμβρίην, μετὰ δὲ Μυοῦς τε καὶ Πριήνη. [4] αὗται μὲν ἐν τῇ Καρίῃ κατοίκηνται κατὰ ταὐτὰ διαλεγόμεναι σφίσι, αἵδε δὲ ἐν τῇ Λυδίῃ, Ἔφεσος Κολοφὼν Λέβεδος Τέως Κλαζομεναὶ Φώκαια· αὗται δὲ αἱ πόλιες τῇσι πρότερον λεχθείσῃσι ὁμολογέουσι κατὰ γλῶσσαν οὐδέν, σφισι δὲ ὁμοφωνέουσι. ἔτι δὲ τρεῖς ὑπόλοιποι Ἰάδες πόλιες, τῶν αἱ δύο μὲν νήσους οἰκέαται, Σάμον τε καὶ Χίον, ἡ δὲ μία ἐν τῇ ἠπείρῳ ἵδρυται, Ἐρυθραί. Χῖοι μέν νυν καὶ Ἐρυθραῖοι κατὰ τὠυτὸ διαλέγονται, Σάμιοι δὲ ἐπ᾽ ἑωυτῶν μοῦνοι. οὗτοι χαρακτῆρες γλώσσης τέσσερες γίνονται.
>
> These men have not made use of the same language but four different variations. Miletus lies as the most southern city among them, and afterwards Myus and Priene; these settlements are in Caria, and they speak the same language as each other, but the following cities are in Lydia: Ephesus, Colophon, Lebedos, Teos, Clazomenae, and Phocaea. [4] The latter cities do not at all agree linguistically with the formerly mentioned ones, but these five cities agree in speech with each other. There are still three Ionian cities left; two of them have been settled on the islands, Samos and Chios, and one, Erythrae, has been established on the mainland. The Chians and Erythraeans speak alike, but the Samians are on their own. These types of language are four.

[8] Herodotus describes how the twelve Ionian cities differ from each other in respect to *glossa.* This term, literally 'tongue', can mean 'dialect' or 'language'. Its use for both senses is common in Herodotus' period, though later Greeks did distinguish between *glōtta* and *dialektos* (Morpurgo Davies 2002, 161). In general, Herodotus does not seem to distinguish between language and dialect (a distinction that is far from clear in any case). That is not to say, however, that Herodotus did not see Ionic as belonging under the larger umbrella of a Greek tongue, and perhaps these different cities' own dialects as part of an Ionic language. In Herodotus' time, there was not yet a standard Greek language. The various dialects were thus not understood as local variants of a standard. Nevertheless, complicated patterns of dialect switching, including perhaps most famously the use of different dialects for different literary genres, regardless of the author's own native dialect, do show that the different dialects were seen as part of a single whole (Morpurgo Davies 2002). See also Colvin (2010).

The dialectal differences that Herodotus describes have been impossible to detect in inscriptions, but that does not mean they did not exist (Stüber 1996). It is also unclear to what extent Herodotus is outlining distinctions within the Ionic dialect or proposing different dialect boundaries to replace those of the Ionic dialect, though the former is more probable as it could describe an actual though unattested linguistic situation. It seems likely that there would have been dialectal differences present in speech that were not expressed in writing. Such distinctions are observable in Boeotia and Thessaly, where the adoption over time of a standardized regional spelling ignored the phonological differences between regions (Morpurgo Davies 2002, 157). To the variations listed by Herodotus might be added the Attic dialect, since Herodotus sees the Athenians as Ionians who fled the name, being ashamed to be called Ionians (Hdt. 1.143.2-3). In any case, the remarkable point here is that Herodotus focuses on linguistic differences between the various Ionian cities rather than their similarities. Herodotus' account of the Ionians contrasts with others in which he assumes a strong correlation between language and ethnic identity. It shows that he is also able to imagine situations where they do not accompany each other.

In arguing that Ionian ethnic identity exists in contrast to linguistic realities, Herodotus in this passage seems to support one side of a scholarly debate about the importance of language to Greek ethnic identities. Jonathan Hall's *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (1997) and *Hellenicity* (2002) have had a large influence upon the way many classicists think about Greek ethnic identity. Ethnicity is based primarily upon putative shared descent and a shared homeland according to Hall (1997, 25).[9] Language or religion, while they may be connected to ethnicity, are merely *indicia*: while such elements situationally distinguish ethnic groups from each other, they are peripheral to the definition of ethnic groups (J. M. Hall 1997, 32). Hall argues that,

[9] See also the similar ideas presented in Ulf (1996).

inasmuch as an identity ceases to be defined by putative shared descent and a shared homeland, it becomes a cultural instead of an ethnic identity (J. M. Hall 2002, 172–226). Moreover, Hall posits the transition between a weak, aggregative Greek identity before the Persian Wars into a strong one characterized by the dichotomy between Greeks and non-Greeks.[10] Hall's position contrasts with those of many others who emphasize language (and writing) as a core element of Greek identity, including Luraghi, who argues for the "adaption and diffusion of the alphabet as a tangible aspect of a broader process of Greek ethnogenesis in which linguistic demarcation plays a key role" (2010, 69).[11] Hall's separation of language from ethnic identity also differs from the views of various linguistic approaches to the subject of language and identity more broadly (e.g. Fishman 1983, 135; D. Evans 2016c). According to Evans, for example, language not only reflects but also constructs identity (D. Evans 2016a, 1). While the disconnect between language and ethnicity in this passage appears to place Herodotus on Hall's side in this debate, it is important to note that elsewhere Herodotus does suggest a close link between language and ethnicity, showing that his ultimate outlook is much more complicated. Furthermore, as we will see below, Hall's foundation of ethnicity and putative shared descent will also be shown to fail in accurately describing Herodotus' Ionians.

The approach to language and ethnicity in this passage also shows Herodotus' taste for debate and controversy. Dialects were so closely associated with ethnicity by Greeks that it has even been argued the ancients classified dialects somewhat or largely on ethnic rather than linguistic bases (Hainsworth 1967, 62–76; Morpurgo Davies 2002, 162–63). Scripts played a related role. They were also tied closely to identity, as indicated by "the uncanny tendency for

[10] Compare this thesis to the aggregative creation of the conception of a common Greek language described by Morpurgo Davies (2002, 161).
[11] See also Figueira (2020), Harrison (1998, 1), Haarmann (2014) and Sherrat (2003).

borders between alphabets to coincide with borders between ethnic and/or political communities" (Luraghi 2010, 75). Further evidence includes the funeral stele of Phanodikos of Prokonessos, from Sigeion in the Troad (*IG* I$^3$ 1508; Luraghi 2010, 76; Roehl 1882, 134). The stele contains two texts recording a donation of Phanodikos to the people of Sigeion. Both record the donation with slightly different wording, and the second adds that the Sigeians are to take care of the monument and concludes with the signature of the artists. The first inscription is recorded in the Ionic alphabet that would have been used at the foreign Phanodikos' home city of Prokonessos, the other in an Attic script that reflects Sigeion's close ties to Athens (Cole 2004, 85; Luraghi 2010, 76–77).[12] Since anyone who could read one Greek script could probably read the rest, the multiple scripts used in the inscription do not seem to have served the purpose of communicating the same information to readers of different alphabets. Rather, they communicated the respective political identities of Phanodikos and the people of Sigeion. Thus, given the extensive use of dialect and scripts to signal ethnicity among Greeks in Herodotus' time, it seems likely that Herodotus' focus on the differences in speech between the Ionian cities runs contrary to audience expectations, inasmuch as it seems likely that they would have expected Greek ethnic groups, all other things being equal, to be bound by a common language.

Thus language does not bind the Ionian dodecapolis or the greater Ionian *ethnos* together. Neither does putative shared descent of the type Hall describes. Herodotus downplays the Ionians' own claims of shared descent. A large part of the Twelve Cities, according to Herodotus, are Abantes from Euboea, and mingled with them are Minyans from Orchomenus, Cadmeans, Dryopians, Phocian exiles, Molossians, Pelasgian Arcadians, Dorians of Epidaurus, and many other groups (Hdt. 1.146.1). Even those Ionians from Miletus who claim to be the

[12] For more examples, see Luraghi (2010), already cited.

best-born, since they came "from the very town hall of Athens," are descended from Carian women whose parents were put to death by their forefathers (οἱ δὲ αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ πρυτανηίου τοῦ Ἀθηναίων ὁρμηθέντες, Hdt. 1.146.2). A remark about the Ionians' early kings suggests the heroic genealogies which Hall foregrounds as a way of constructing ethnic identity. As kings, some of the Ionians chose Lycian descendants of Glaucus son of Hippolochus, others chose descendants of Codrus son of Melanthus, and some both (Hdt. 1.147). One gains the sense here, especially given Herodotus' remark about the Milesians' claim to be best-born Ionians since they came directly from Athens, that descent, like language, did play some part in the dominant narrative about Ionians' identity, and that thus Herodotus is again deliberately courting controversy. Nevertheless, the fact that Herodotus makes this argument here shows that neither shared descent nor shared language are indispensable to his conception of ethnic identity.

If neither language nor kinship tie the Ionians together, then what does? Ultimately, Herodotus suggests the answer lies in a shared shrine and a common will to be Ionians. While many others, the Athenians included, could claim to be Ionians, they are ashamed of the name (1.143.3):

> οἱ μέν νυν ἄλλοι Ἴωνες καὶ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἔφυγον τὸ οὔνομα, οὐ βουλόμενοι Ἴωνες κεκλῆσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν φαίνονταί μοι οἱ πολλοὶ αὐτῶν ἐπαισχύνεσθαι τῷ οὐνόματι· αἱ δὲ δυώδεκα πόλιες αὗται τῷ τε οὐνόματι ἠγάλλοντο καὶ ἱρὸν ἱδρύσαντο ἐπὶ σφέων αὐτέων, τῷ οὔνομα ἔθεντο Πανιώνιον, ἐβουλεύσαντο δὲ αὐτοῦ μεταδοῦναι μηδαμοῖσι ἄλλοισι Ἰώνων (οὐδ' ἐδεήθησαν δὲ οὐδαμοὶ μετασχεῖν ὅτι μὴ Σμυρναῖοι).
>
> Now the Athenians and the rest flee the name, not wanting to be called Ionians, but even now most of them seem to be ashamed of the name. But these twelve cities are proud of the name and founded a holy place for themselves, and they named it the *Panionion*, and they agreed among themselves to share it with nobody else of the Ionians (nor did any ask to share it with them except the Smyrneans).

It seems that some of the Ionians created an exclusive shrine for themselves only to find out that other Ionians were not interested. Ultimately, the twelve cities deserve the name "Ionian" because nobody else who could claim it values it as they do. Desiring to cement their common status as Ionians, they created a shared shrine to define their identity, perhaps playing on the definition of Ionian identity given later by Herodotus, that all are Ionians who celebrate the Apaturia (though he acknowledges that the Ionian cities of Ephesus and Colophon do not, Hdt. 1.147.2).[13]

In addition to providing a place for Herodotus to examine to what degree language, religion, kinship, and ethnicity are related, this passage also brings up in passing another element frequently thought of as key to Greek ethnic identity: what tribes each group divides itself into. Herodotus seems not to focus on these tribal divisions, however, since he only mentions in passing that the reason that the Ionians created a league of twelve cities relates to the original twelve divisions of the Ionians when they lived in the Peloponnese before coming to the shores of Anatolia (Hdt. 1.145). While this division into twelve is not a tribal division, it is similar in that it is an example of an ethnic group defining itself by the number and naming of its subgroups. Elsewhere, however, tribal divisions and names are shown to be crucial to the Athenians' construction of their own identity in distinguishing themselves from the Ionians. According to Herodotus, it was Cleisthenes who divided the Athenians into ten tribes instead of the four former tribes named after the sons of Ion: Geleon, Aegicores, Argades, and Hoples. In place of the names of these Ionian heroes, he named these new tribes after heroes native to Attica, with the exception of Ajax, since he was a neighbor and ally (Hdt. 5.66). Herodotus then

[13] In the same passage Herodotus also says that all are Ionians who trace their descent back to Athens, but the fact that so many Ionians, according to the author, fail to meet this criterion suggests it is sufficient but not necessary. That is, all those who are of Athenian descent are Ionians, but not all Ionians must be of Athenian descent.

adduces the parallel of how another Cleisthenes, Cleisthenes of Sicyon, changed the names of the Dorian tribes so that the Sicyonians would not share these names with the Dorians (5.68). Likewise, Herodotus argues, Cleisthenes of Athens changed the Athenian tribal divisions out of disdain for the Ionians (5.69). Thus, while tribal divisions seem an important way in which Athenians seek to distance themselves from the Ionians, they are not treated by Herodotus as an important part of Ionian identity in this passage.

Another possible marker of ethnic identity that does not find mention in the Ionian passage is physical appearance. Herodotus does seem to use this as a piece of evidence in a few cases in the histories, such as when distinguishing the Budini and the Geloni (4.109). Herodotus distinguishes the Budini from the Geloni based on language, on the fact that one group is sedentary farmers and the other pastoralists, and on their differing color (*chrōma*, 4.109.1). In general, though, he thinks that physical appearance is not a good criterion for establishing ethnic identity. For example, Herodotus claims that the Colchians have a dual identity, being both Colchian and Egyptian. In making the case for Colchian-Egyptian kinship Herodotus initially mentions the Colchians' skin color and hair, which he says resemble the Egyptians', before going on to say that this is not a good way to establish the relationship between two peoples, preferring to focus on their common practice of circumcision, which he thinks originated in either Ethiopia or Egypt, and the fact that they are alike in working linen, in their way of life, and finally in language (2.104.2-2.105).

Herodotus may not focus on the Ionians' physical appearance, but his harsh attitude towards them is consistent throughout the work. For instance, he reports that the Scythians think the Ionians are cowardly and, as mentioned above, he explains that Cleisthenes renamed the Athenian tribes, which were previously organized in an Ionian manner, out of contempt for the

Ionians (4.142; 5.66, 5.69). He also states that they are "by far the weakest of nations" (Hdt. 1.433.2). Moreover, instead of focusing on the desires for freedom from Persia and democracy that scholars agree were fundamental factors in the Ionian revolt and which Herodotus approves of elsewhere and is glad to praise, in the case of the Ionians he instead focuses on the personal motives of the leaders of the revolt, Aristagoras and Histiaeus of Miletus (Forsdyke 2002, 529; Murray 1988; Tozzi 1979). Herodotus is usually more balanced in assigning praise and blame, and his consistently unflattering portrayal of the Ionians reflects the failure of the Ionian revolt, after which all the participants blamed each other, resulting in a set of contradictory sources for Herodotus (Forsdyke 2002, 529–31).

Overall, the Ionian passage provides Herodotus with a particularly fruitful test case for examining ethnic identity. While ethnic identity often coincides with linguistic boundaries, (putative) shared descent, and shared religious customs, this example shows that the first two fail to define the Ionians, even while elsewhere in Herodotus they do define other ethnic identities. Similarly, the same religion that defines Ionian identity does not prevent the Greeks as a whole from being a people willing to accept foreign gods from the Egyptians and whose acceptance thereof does not affect their Greek identity (Thomas 2001, 215–16). For instance, Herodotus notes the similarity between the Egyptian and Greek phallic processions in honor of Dionysus, with the difference between the two consisting in the fact that the Greeks parade a giant phallus while the Egyptians parade a puppet with genitals nearly the size of its body (2.48). Herodotus does not believe the resemblances between Egyptian and Greek processions are coincidental. Rather, he posits that Melampus, who according to legend introduced the cult of Dionysus to Greece, learned the rites from the Phoenician Cadmus who had learned them from the Egyptians before coming to Greece (Hdt. 2.49). Thus, some Herodotean ethnic groups are ultimately self-

constructed. In doing so, they often select building blocks like language or shared descent, but they may equally well ignore these. Crucially, these building blocks can also be more specific than a general category, as shown by the fact that Herodotus' Ionians are not bound together by a general set of shared religious customs but by a specific shared shrine, the Panionion.

*Language Determines Ethnicity*

In the *Histories*, Herodotus provides many nuanced accounts of different non-Greek peoples in which they are well distinguished from each other. Nevertheless, Herodotus' narrative still often divides the world into Greeks and barbarians. Inasmuch as Herodotus supports this worldview, it supports a very linguistically determined view of ethnicity. At the beginning of Herodotus's history, he singles out the causes of international conflict for special attention, saying that he is writing so that the great deeds done both by Greeks and by barbarians not be forgotten, including the causes of the war with the Persians (Hdt. 1.0):

> Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσέος ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται, τά τε ἄλλα καὶ δι᾽ ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.
>
> This is the exposition of the inquiry made by Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that human deeds not fade with time, and so that the great and wondrous deeds that Greeks and barbarians performed not become obscure, especially why they went to war with each other.

Despite the author's inclusive desire to record the great deeds of both Greeks and barbarians, it still divides the world into these two groups. The binary distinction between Greeks and barbarians, made ubiquitously by Greeks describing the Persian Wars, uses terminology that was originally linguistic. That *barbaros* originally refered to speakers of a foreign language finds support not just in the fact that its earliest attestation is in the compound *barbaro-phōnos*, but also in the fact that similar-sounding onomatopoetic words for the unintelligible speech of

foreigners appear even in unrelated languages (Chantraine 1968, s.v. βάρβαρος, βαρβαρόφωνος; Adrados, Gangutia Elícegui, and Rodríguez Somolinos 2018, s.v. βάρβαρος, βαρβαρόφωνος).[14] That the linguistic sense of the term is still operative in Herodotus is suggested, among other passages, by the famous assertion at 8.144.2 that Greekness—barbarism's opposite—consists, among other things, in a shared language.

This idea gets projected onto the distant past: Herodotus states at 1.58.1 that Greeks have always spoken Greek, even if some of their ancestors only became Greek at the point at which they adopted the language (τὸ δὲ Ἑλληνικὸν γλώσσῃ μὲν ἐπείτε ἐγένετο αἰεί κοτε τῇ αὐτῇ διαχρᾶται, ὡς ἐμοὶ καταφαίνεται εἶναι).[15] Another anecdote in Herodotus that suggests that Greeks are uniquely stubborn in clinging to their language is at 6.119.4, where the Eretrians have held onto their own language despite deportation at the hands of Darius. That an ideal of Greek linguistic purity existed at least among some Greeks finds external support in the *Old Oligarch*, which complains that the Athenians' intercourse with barbarians has caused them to adopt too many features of others' languages and cultures (2.7-2.8). He also suggests that they adopt too many features from the dialects of other Greeks, which are, after all, likewise different *glōssai* (since the same term covers both 'language' and 'dialect'). Does this fit within the Greek idea that languages were somehow connected to innate characteristics of the peoples who spoke them, inextricably connecting Greek linguistic and ethnic purity (Harrison 1998, 16)? Perhaps it does in the case of the *Old Oligarch*, but not in Herodotus. A better explanation for Greek linguistic

[14] The word is first attested at *Il.* 2.867. For a counterpoint to this argument, see Hall (2002, 111–17). He argues (unconvincingly to me) that *barbaros* is a loanword from the Sumerian *barbaru*, which simply means 'strange' or 'foreign', without linguistic connotations. Even if the word were a Sumerian loanword and just meant 'strange', *barbaro-phōnos,* the word's first attestation, would still mean 'strange sounding'.
[15] Still, there is also the counter-example of the Geloni, who Herodotus maintains speak a mixed Greek-Scythian language (4.108). See above on both.

conservativism in Herodotus is the historian's idea that some societies are simply more open to some kinds of outside influence than others, and language is a particularly essential part of Greek identity.

Herodotus suggests that there are also other peoples for whom language is similarly essential. An oracle tells the Egyptian king Necho, preparing himself against a possible Persian invasion, that he should stop digging a ditch since he is "working for the barbarian" (τῷ βαρβάρῳ αὐτὸν προεργάζεσθαι). Herodotus helpfully explains that this is because "the Egyptians call all who do not speak the same language as them barbarians" (βαρβάρους δὲ πάντας οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι καλέουσι τοὺς μὴ σφίσι ὁμογλώσσους, 2.158.5). While this example is relevant, it is questionable whether this statement reflects something about the Egyptians or whether it is meant to make the Egyptians' own struggle against the Persian "barbarians" mirror the Greek one later in the book.[16]

Herodotus also argues that language can be so determinative of ethnic identity that it may be a way to change those identities. Herodotus makes the surprising claim that the Athenians were originally Pelasgians and spoke another language prior to becoming Greek (1.57). Then, in contact with Greeks, the Pelasgians learned Greek and became Greeks themselves.[17] Herodotus is not sure what language the Pelasgians originally spoke, but he reasons about it based on the languages spoken by current-day Pelasgians who did not become Greek (1.57):[18]

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[16] There is no equivalent term to *barbaros* in Egyptian, but the likelihood that this reflects a real ideology is increased by the fact that the Egyptians did have an equivalent discourse comparing the "civilized" self to "savage" other (Smith 2014, 194–95). See also Isaac (2004, 263, n. 25): "In fact it is not the case that every nation has a term to indicate all the others collectively. The Greeks and Jews had one and so, apparently, did the Chinese, but it is not a universal feature."

[17] Herodotus seems to be part of a larger tradition, originating in oral tradition, that incoming Greek-speakers replaced an indigenous population, a conclusion which moderns have also reached using archaeological and linguistic evidence (Finkelberg 2005, 1–23; Hawkins 2010, 216; de Hoz 2004, 35–56). See also Janko's article on the Greek dialects in the late Bronze Age, which uses linguistic evidence to argue for the correctness of traditional accounts of the movements of various Greek peoples (2018, 126–27).

[18] On this passage see also Miletti (2008, 26–27).

ἥντινα δὲ γλῶσσαν ἵεσαν οἱ Πελασγοί, οὐκ ἔχω ἀτρεκέως εἰπεῖν· εἰ δὲ χρεόν ἐστι τεκμαιρόμενον λέγειν τοῖσι νῦν ἔτι ἐοῦσι Πελασγῶν τῶν ὑπὲρ Τυρσηνῶν Κρηστῶνα πόλιν οἰκεόντων, οἳ ὅμουροί κοτε ἦσαν τοῖσι νῦν Δωριεῦσι καλεομένοισι (οἴκεον δὲ τηνικαῦτα γῆν τὴν νῦν Θεσσαλιῶτιν καλεομένην), καὶ τῶν Πλακίην τε καὶ Σκυλάκην Πελασγῶν οἰκησάντων ἐν Ἑλλησπόντῳ, οἳ σύνοικοι ἐγένοντο Ἀθηναίοισι, εἰ τούτοισι τεκμαιρόμενον δεῖ λέγειν, ἦσαν οἱ Πελασγοὶ βάρβαρον γλῶσσαν ἱέντες.[19] εἰ τοίνυν ἦν καὶ πᾶν τοιοῦτο τὸ Πελασγικόν, τὸ Ἀττικὸν ἔθνος ἐὸν Πελασγικὸν ἅμα τῇ μεταβολῇ τῇ ἐς Ἕλληνας καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν μετέμαθε. καὶ γὰρ δὴ οὔτε οἱ Κρηστωνιῆται οὐδαμοῖσι τῶν νῦν σφεας περιοικεόντων εἰσὶ ὁμόγλωσσοι οὔτε οἱ Πλακιηνοί, σφίσι δὲ ὁμόγλωσσοι, δηλοῦσί τε ὅτι τὸν ἠνείκαντο γλώσσης χαρακτῆρα μεταβαίνοντες ἐς ταῦτα τὰ χωρία, τοῦτον ἔχουσι ἐν φυλακῇ.

I cannot say with precision what language the Pelasgians spoke, but if I had to say, speaking on the grounds of what language those remaining of the Pelasgians speak, those who live above the Tyrrhenians in the city of Creston, who were once neighbors of the people now called Dorians (and they then inhabited the land now called Thessalian), and of what language those of the Pelasgians speak who inhabited Placia and Scylace on the Hellespont, who lived with the Athenians, it would be necessary to say based on these facts that that the Pelasgians spoke a barbarian language. If therefore the entire Pelasgian people were such, the Athenian people, being formerly Pelasgian, changed their language at the same time as they became Greeks. For in fact neither the Crestonians nor the Placians speak the same language as those living around them, but they speak the same language as each other, and they clearly preserve the type of language which they brought with them when they migrated to the lands where they live.

The structure of this passage is striking. Herodotus starts by hesitating to make a pronouncement about the language spoken by the Athenians' ancestors, then gives a full list of present-day Pelasgians, none of them speaking Greek, before finally coming to the conclusion at the end of a very long sentence that those ancestors spoke a barbarian language. Thus, the revelation serves as a sort of punchline at the end of a sentence. Afterwards, Herodotus supports this claim with a bit more information. The overall effect of the position of Herodotus' claim in this passage is to highlight its central nature to Herodotus' story of Athenian origins.

[19] For the sake of simplicity I have removed καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα Πελασγικὰ ἐόντα πολίσματα τὸ οὔνομα μετέβαλε from this sentence, following Fowler (Wilson 2015b, 31).

Herodotus' claim flies in the face of prevailing Athenian ideology, which posited that, by virtue of being autochthonous, the Athenians were somehow the most Greek of all (Lape 2010, 274–83; Forsdyke 2012, 133–34; cf. Hdt. 7.161.3). Herodotus' story of Pelasgian origins thus leaves the Athenians just as firmly rooted in their native soil, but in the same camp as the Peloponnesians, Thebans, and others who have foreign ancestors somewhere in their family trees. Moreover, it suggests that the line between Greek and barbarian is at once highly permeable and highly linguistic, since "together with their transformation into Greeks" the Athenians "also shifted their language" (1.57.3). Indeed, if Greece's original inhabitants were Pelasgian, then it presents a choice between ancestors who were Greek and ancestors who had always lived in Greece, undermining ideologies of native ethnic purity.

This passage is used by Haarmann in positing that, in contrast to what Hall argues, language change can bring about ethnic change. He posits that Herodotus, in his example of the Athenians' Pelasgian ancestors becoming Greek by shifting their language, preserves memories of cultural fusion between the pre-Indo-European inhabitants of Greece and Indo-European invaders (Haarmann 2014, 25).[20] Yet more fundamentally, Haarmann claims that ethnicity cannot exist without ethnonyms, and that language and identity more broadly are tightly connected, since it is through discourse that the self is differentiated from the other (Carstairs-McCarthy 1999; Haarmann 2014, 17, 19). This view perhaps overstates the connection between language and ethnicity, as we have seen from the Ionian example that this is not always true in Herodotus. What is especially striking is Herodotus' view that this type of ethnic aggregation is positive and desirable. According to Herodotus, the Greeks were weak and few in number before they accepted a number of different foreign peoples into their ranks (1.58). Similarly, the

[20] Haarmann also notes that language may preserve evidence of previous contacts between linguistic groups even when that evidence contradicts politically-driven contemporary narratives (2014, 28).

Pelasgians who have joined the Greeks have done much better than the Pelasgians who remained Pelasgians (1.58). Thus, Herodotus not only questions whether the Athenians are as ethnically pure as they claim, but whether such purity is really desirable in the first place.

Other elements in the passages besides the Pelasgians' transformation also suggest a deep connection between language and ethnicity. While Haarmann does not mention the fact that Herodotus reasons from the languages of modern Pelasgians that ancient Pelasgians also spoke the same language, this reasoning is important because it implies that Herodotus assumes that linguistic and ethnic continuity go together. Herodotus makes such a claim of continuity explicit in the case of the Greek people. It is clear to him that the Greeks have had the same language since their origins as a people (1.58). In making the claim of accompanying linguistic and ethnic continuity explicit in the case of the Greeks but only implicit in the case of the Pelasgians, Herodotus reflects the centrality of language as a building block of Hellenic identity in particular. The deep and at times essential linkage between ethnicity and language in this passage shows again that although Hall provides powerful tools for investigating the ways ancient Greeks constructed their identity, his language-excluding model is just one theoretical angle from which to view the problem.

Another theme in this passage is the multiplicity and interchangeability of ethnic identity in Herodotus. The Pelasgians are proto-Athenians, but their transformation is not into Athenians, but rather into Greeks through the Greek language. An interesting parallel occurs later in the *Histories*, when Athenian women captured by Lemnian Pelasgians teach their children the Athenian language and customs, thus transforming them into Athenians who beat and claim to rule their Pelasgian counterparts, leading the fearful Pelasgians to kill the Athenian women and their children (Hdt. 6.138). While language again determines whether these children are Greeks

or Athenians, the language they learn is specifically Attic as opposed to a generic Greek. As would surprise nobody, ethnic identity is fluid and manifold, as long as no two of the identities are directly opposed: one can be both an Athenian and a Greek, but these two passages suggest one must either be Greek or barbarian. Moreover, identities can also be tied together or interchangeable. That is, becoming a Greek can also mean becoming an Athenian. Thus, the story of the Pelasgians also shows that Herodotus is aware of the now generally acknowledged ability of individuals to simultaneously inhabit multiple ethnic identities (since, though they ceased to be Pelasgians, they became at once both Greeks and Athenians), each of which may or may not be linked with language.[21]

Also relevant to the connection between language and identity are some passages, beginning primarily in the later books, that suggest that conflict between different language groups is natural, in direct contrast to the mostly peaceful instances of contact that have been discussed so far. Somewhat paradoxically, Herodotus puts one of the clearest formulations of an ideology of linguistic conflict in the mouth of the Persian Mardonius, when, in an assembly of noble Persians, he supports Xerxes' decision to invade Greece against Xerxes' uncle Artabanus. Mardonius downplays the Greeks' martial ability (7.9b.1-2):

> καίτοι γε ἐώθασι Ἕλληνες, ὡς πυνθάνομαι, ἀβουλότατα πολέμους ἵστασθαι ὑπό τε ἀγνωμοσύνης καὶ σκαιότητος…τοὺς χρῆν ἐόντας ὁμογλώσσους κήρυξί τε διαχρεωμένους καὶ ἀγγέλοισι καταλαμβάνειν τὰς διαφορὰς καὶ παντὶ μᾶλλον ἢ μάχῃσι.
>
> Meanwhile the Greeks are accustomed, as I hear, to stir up the most poorly planned wars because of foolishness and stupidity…Since they speak the same language, they should resolve their disputes using heralds and messengers or in any way other than fighting.

[21] See also Evans (2016a, 10,14) and van Hattum (2016).

Mardonius supports the idea that language communities should be peaceful among themselves to be more fearsome towards outsiders, thus implicitly endorsing the idea that the most natural fault-lines along which international conflict should occur are linguistic.

Evaluating his speech is made difficult, however, because events prove him wrong. It is not Mardonius' assumptions about language that prove him wrong but the fact that he does not see how the Greeks will respond to a foreign invasion. The Athenians at 8.144 provide a striking rebuke to Mardonius, refusing to betray fellow Greeks to whom they are bound by linguistic ties. Furthermore, viewed from the perspective of Herodotus' late-fifth-century audience, Mardonius' comments, though bad advice, turn out to be true on another level, as they seem to presage the conflict between Greek-speakers of Herodotus' own day and to chide them for it.[22] Still, though Mardonius' words convey multiple levels of meaning, nowhere does he question the idea that those who speak the same language should fight those who do not.

It will be helpful to examine another passage that is frequently given as an example of the naturalness of conflict between ethnic groups along linguistic lines. Scyles' Istrian mother teaches him Greek language and letters (4.78.1), and he becomes more and more involved in Greek culture until, about to be initiated into the mysteries of Dionysus, the god strikes his house with a thunderbolt (4.78-79). His people, as a result of his initiation, kill him and replace him with his brother (4.80). While this incident has been cited as a more general parable "of the dangers, indeed the ultimate impossibility, of cultural integration" (Harrison 1998, 4), Herodotus himself says that this tale is rather an example of the Scythians' hatred of foreign customs, especially Greek ones (4.76.1). This story is thus more specific to the Scythians than a general parable. While the Scythians condemn the Greeks' Bacchic reveling, thinking it unwise to set up

[22] For the presence of voices from different sources in Herodotus' narratives, see Forsdyke (1999; 2001; 2002), Kurke (1999), and Thomas (1992).

a god who leads men to madness, not all ethnic groups in Herodotus are so opposed to foreign religion (4.79.3). For example, Herodotus can imagine that the Greeks once had different religious practices.

The fact that each ethnic group in Herodotus defines itself differently may explain the fact that some ethnic groups seem particularly resistant to some types of outside influence, such as the Scythians to foreign religions, since perhaps they would not remain Scythians if they worshiped foreign gods. On the other hand, the Greeks may worship foreign gods and may even have had non-Greek ancestors, but Herodotus cannot conceive that they ever spoke other languages (though the non-Greek ancestors of the Greeks may have), while elsewhere he conceives of ethnic groups that may change their language but keep their unique identity. Overall, the Mardonius passage lends some weight to the idea that Herodotus saw a natural community existing among people who spoke the same language. The story of Scyles, however, while providing interesting hints about the Scythians' construction of their own identity, cannot be said to show that there exists in general an unbreakable barrier between different language communities.

*Language and Ethnicity Correlated*

While in passages like that describing the Pelasgians' transformation into Greek, changes in language are shown to have the power to change ethnic identity, there are other passages which suggest that, even when the link is not as close as in the Pelasgian example, there still exists a general correlation between language and ethnic identity. For instance, when describing India, Herodotus says the following (3.98.3):

> ἔστι δὲ πολλὰ ἔθνεα Ἰνδῶν καὶ οὐκ ὁμόφωνα σφίσι, καὶ οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν νομάδες εἰσί, οἱ δὲ οὔ, οἱ δὲ ἐν τοῖσι ἕλεσι οἰκέουσι τοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ ἰχθύας σιτέονται ὠμούς, τοὺς αἱρέουσι ἐκ πλοίων καλαμίνων ὁρμώμενοι.

> There are many peoples of India and they do not speak the same languages as each other, and some of them are nomads, and some of them not, and some inhabit the river marshes and live on raw fish, which they go and catch from reed boats.

The parallelism of Herodotus' statements of Indian ethnic and religious diversity suggests that peoples tend to have their own languages. Nevertheless, in context it may be equally true that the fact that each of these peoples has their own language does not reflect any connection between language and ethnicity but rather reflects the general diversity of the peoples of India. After all, right after describing the region's linguistic diversity Herodotus goes on to describe how some Indian peoples are nomadic and some not, and moreover how some are cannibals while others kill no living thing (Hdt. 3.99-100).

The general correlation of ethnicity and language matters because it explains why Herodotus is so willing to use language as a tool for examining the pasts of various peoples, despite the fact that he knows that the connection between the two is strong but not inseverable. Returning to the Pelasgian example, Herodotus strikingly assumes an identity between language and ethnicity in his reckoning that these ancient Pelasgians probably did not speak Greek, since neither do other Pelasgians (1.57.1-2). This same assumed correlation also shows up elsewhere in the *Histories*, such Psammetichus' experiment where the Egyptian king assumes that the languages spoken by babies whom he isolates will reveal the world's oldest people. Still, it is relevant that Herodotus states that he cannot say with precision what language the Athenians' Pelasgian ancestors spoke (ἥντινα δὲ γλῶσσαν ἵεσαν οἱ Πελασγοί, οὐκ ἔχω ἀτρεκέως εἰπεῖν, 1.57.1). This reveals that Herodotus does not assume a correlation between ethnicity and language because they always go together. As we have seen above, he does frequently connect language and ethnicity, and can even see language as playing a primary role in forming ethnicity, but he is fully aware that they need not always go together. Nevertheless, the general correlation

of the two means that, in the business of making informed guesses about the past, it can be helpful in the absence of evidence to the contrary to assume that the two are linked. In modern scholarship, there is a divide between those who continue to argue for the validity of using Greek dialects to trace prehistoric population movements (Janko 2018), those who think only archaeology can answer such questions (Dickinson 2006), and those who argue that neither linguistics nor archaeology is much help, since neither is coextensive with ethnicity (J. M. Hall 1997, 19–33, 111–42; 2002, 1–29). Herodotus, however, shows a middle way. Just because language and ethnicity are not coextensive does not mean that they are not useful proxies for each other in the absence of other evidence.

## *Conclusion*

The picture that emerges from these passages is of a Herodotus who does not try to force the complex issue of identity into any neat or simple box. Rather, he prefers to focus on nuance and contradiction. The ultimate result is that he acknowledges the role that people play in constructing their own ethnic identity, and of the multiple factors that can go into that construction. That said, there are certain building blocks that feature repeatedly in the definition of ethnic groups in Herodotus' narrative, and language is one of them. "Language as a claim for identity," as Chassy puts it, is a recurring theme in Herodotus' narrative (Chassy 2016, 47). The fact that language and ethnicity do not always go together in Herodotus, however, or that they are both manipulable by groups and individuals does not mean, as some scholars suggest, that language cannot be used to examine the movements of real peoples of the past. Rather, even if the link between language and ethnicity is not always absolute, there is certainly enough correlation between the two to use language as a tool to investigate the past, as Herodotus himself does on many occasions.

## Chapter 2: Athenians, Amazons, and Solecisms: Language Contact in Herodotus

As discussed in the previous chapter, Herodotus makes the surprising claim that the Athenians were originally Pelasgians and spoke another language prior to becoming Greek (1.57). Then, in contact with Greeks, the Pelasgians learned Greek and became Greeks themselves. As we saw, Herodotus' claim contradicted Athenian claims to be the most Greek of all by reason of always having inhabited the same place. Herodotus' story of Pelasgian origins does not dispute the Athenians' autochthony, but robs it of some of its power by making their autochthonous ancestors barbarians. Moreover, it suggests that the line between Greek and barbarian is at once highly permeable and highly linguistic, since "together with their transformation into Greeks" the Athenians "also shifted their language" (1.57.3). Indeed, if Greece's original inhabitants were Pelasgian, then it presents a choice between ancestors who were Greek and ancestors who had always lived in Greece, undermining ideologies of native ethnic purity.

The story of the Athenians' Pelasgian origins is just one of many examples in Herodotus where the interaction between speakers of different languages brings about linguistic change. While Herodotus was not a modern linguist, concepts from linguistics can help clarify the various types of contact-induced change discussed by Herodotus. One introduction to language contact defines it as "the use of more than one language in the same place at the same time" (Thomason 2001, 1). This simple definition, however, belies the size of the bibliography that has emerged from linguistics on such varied topics as the sociolinguistics of contact situations,

multilingualism in nations and individuals, how and why languages in contact change, the new languages created by language contact, and how languages die due to language shift. Language contact has existed for as long as humans have spoken more than one language, and a number of works have explored language contact in classical and late antiquity (e.g. Adams, Janse, and Swain 2002; Adams 2003; Blanc and Christol 1999; Bubenik 1993; 2013; Nagel 1971; Rochette 1997; 2010; Mullen and James 2012; Thomason 2004).

Herodotus' approach to the topic, however, remains largely unexplored. Not only does he appear (if sometimes vaguely) to describe real phenomena, but there is frequently also external evidence for language contact in the geographic and cultural areas that he describes. He does not present language contact monolithically, but in situation-specific terms. While these terms cannot usually be easily mapped onto modern categories, they are specific enough to invite comparison. I will identify six concepts from contact linguistics that Herodotus' linguistic descriptions approximate and relate them to modern linguistic theory: imperfect learning, diglossia, convergence, mixed languages, borrowing (specifically, loanwords), and language death. This analysis will show that several previous claims about Herodotus' discussion of language are incorrect: that Herodotus did not understand foreign languages, that his understanding of language is unremarkable, that he had no concept of language change, and that many of his descriptions of peoples and their languages are implausible.[23]

Most of all, Herodotus' descriptions of various language contact phenomena should be considered when evaluating the author's much-debated linguistic competency. His biggest critic

[23] One might be tempted to think Herodotus had no concept of language change that is not contact-induced, unlike Thucydides, who, though not usually very interested in language, uses the lack of a word for "Greek" in Homer as evidence for the absence of Greek ethnic identity in former times (Thuc. 1.3). Nevertheless, Herodotus does mention at 2.105 that the Colchians are said to be related to the Egyptians because of the similarity of their languages, with the presumption possibly being that they diverged from a common ancestor.

is Fehling (1989), discussed at length by Pritchett (1993), though it is Harrison (1998) who attacks his linguistic credentials most specifically. Harrison maintains that, despite his Carian background, there is no proof that Herodotus knew the language. In the case of other languages, "he shows himself ignorant by his interest" (Harrison 1998, 4). While there may be some truth to Harrison's presentation, we should also be cognizant of what Herodotus gets right: in Book Two, not only are his Egyptian glosses correct (e.g. *pirōmis* at 2.143; A. B. Lloyd 1988, 110), but Phrygian inscriptions corroborate Herodotus' assertion that the Phrygian word for bread is *bekos* (Brixhe 1982, 243–44; Haas 1966, 157–72; Orel 1997, 85). In this chapter, I will add to these examples the basic plausibility of much of what the author has to say about language contact. Some scholars' doubts about the Greeks' knowledge of and interest in foreign languages have even led to the conclusion that Herodotus was no pioneer in the study of languages because the general level of interest and knowledge among Greeks was so low (Harrison 1998, 9).[24] Regardless of the situation among Greeks more generally, however, Herodotus' treatment of language contact shows a nuanced approach to language.

However, before I describe Herodotus' approach to language contact further, I must acknowledge the limits of my conclusions. One must agree with Haarmann's statement, in the brief paragraph he devotes to Herodotus, that the author's "comments reflect an awareness of linguistic change, but they also demonstrate the shortcomings of an analysis that was not

[24] Strict pronouncements about Herodotus' competency are at odds with Adams' emphasis on the difficulties in assessing linguistic competency in the ancient world based on anecdotal evidence, even though Adams is dealing with the Roman situation, where more evidence is available (Adams 2003, 14). It is thus irresponsible to insist that Herodotus really did know a lot about specific barbarian languages, to make the claim that he knew Carian, for instance, or Phoenician. Nevertheless, the case against his knowledge is equally overstated. This does not change the fact that Herodotus uses such self-presentation to shore up his claim to speak authoritatively, as Munson argues (2005, 67). It is also worth adding that, inasmuch as Herodotus accurately represents linguistic situations, his depiction of foreign languages would also be an example of how he does not merely use foreign cultures as a mirror to understand his own culture but also makes a genuine attempt at understanding them in their own right (Munson 2013, 241; see also Gruen 2011, 14–17).

equipped to define that change precisely" (2014, 25). This does not mean, however, that Herodotus lacks a systematic understanding of language (Campos Daroca 1992; Miletti 2008). It is helpful to remember that Herodotus' *Histories* is, among other things, the story of cultures in contact. Herodotus' view of culture is broad, and tends to treat language as just one of many ways cultures can differ (Hinge 2006, 113).

### *I. Imperfect Learning*

Herodotus appears to describe something like the modern linguistic concept of imperfect learning in a single episode, in which he describes the origins of the Sauromatae from Scythian fathers and Amazon mothers. The Sauromatae live near the Scythians and speak a language related to the Scythians' own North Iranian language(s).[25] Herodotus is at once remarkably specific and tantalizingly vague in his description of the origins of the Sauromatae, one of the peoples living in this region. The anecdote centers around how a group of Amazons travel far from home and wed Scythian-speaking men.

[25] On the cultural and linguistic diversity of the steppes, see also Marčenko and Vinogradov (1989, 8) and Lubotsky (2002, 190). Although the Scythians are sometimes thought of as sharing a single North Iranian language (Willi 2003, 203; E. Hall 2006, 229) see Harmatta (1970, 96) on the probability that the Sarmatians spoke more than one Iranian language or dialect. For more on the Iranian language known as Scythian, see Schmitt (1989). Mayor, Colarusso, and Sanders have argued that the various groups of steppe-dwellers whom the Greeks referred to as Scythians spoke multiple Northern Iranian and (non-Indo-European) Caucasian languages (Mayor 2014, 236; Mayor, Colarusso, and Saunders 2014, 461–65). While their thesis is not inherently improbable, flaws in their methodology prevent accepting their claims (Kassian 2016; Clackson et al. 2020, 11–12).

*Map 2: approximate location of Scythia.*[26]

Scythian words described by Herodotus, though he mostly etymologizes them incorrectly, seem to come from an Iranian source (Hinge 2006, 89–93). For example, Herodotus notes that the Scythians call a wondrous one-eyed people who border them the *Arimaspoi* (καὶ ὀνομάζομεν αὐτοὺς Σκυθιστὶ Ἀριμασπούς, 4.27). He then gives the etymology for this name (4.27):

> ἄριμα γὰρ ἓν καλέουσι Σκύθαι, σποῦ δὲ ὀφθαλμόν.
>
> For the Scythians call one 'arima' and eye 'spou'.

While it does appear that *arimaspoi* may originate in a real Scythian word, Herodotus is wrong about its meaning: the name appears to have something to do with the Iranian word for 'horse', *aspa-* (Hinge 2006, 92). Hinge suggests the Iranian *Arjat-aspa-, 'who is esteemed with the horse' as a starting point for *arimaspoi* (Hinge 2006, 91). Herodotus seems to have taken the word from earlier Greek tradition. There was an epic poem called the *Arimaspeia* (Hdt. 4.11),

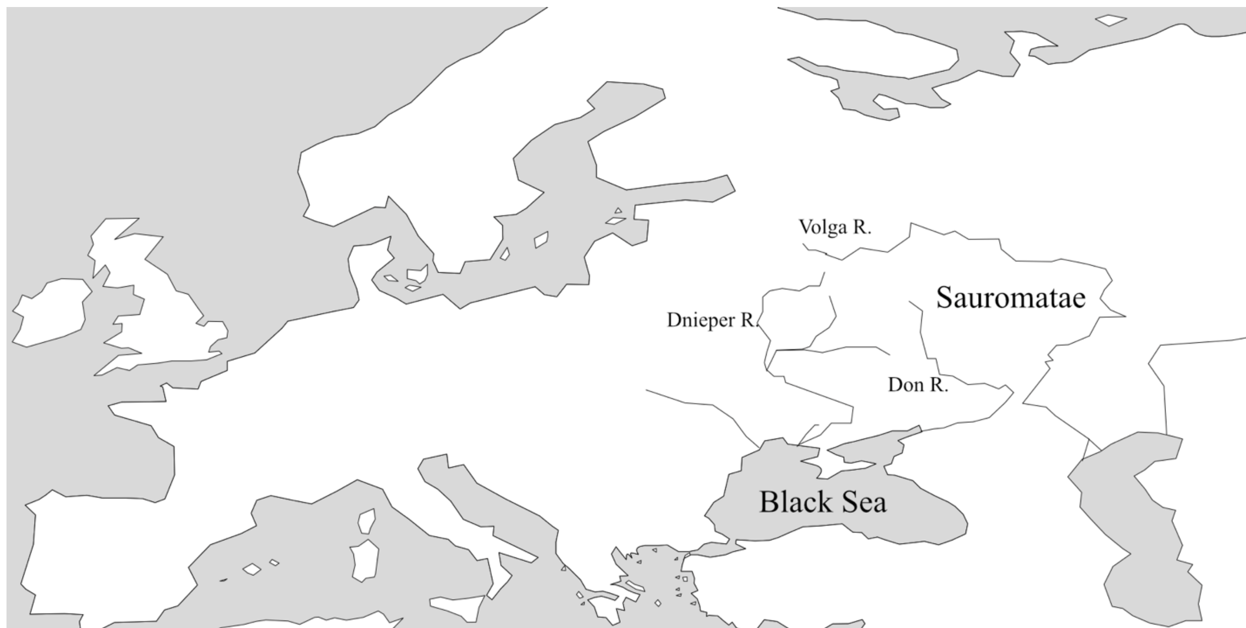
[26] All maps from this chapter created by the author, using models made using the Ancient World Mapping Center's "À-la-carte" application and used under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0). http://awmc.unc.edu/awmc/applications/alacarte

which may date from as early as the 7th century (Hinge 2006, 91–92). Alcman seems to refer to this epic in three places (Ivantchik 2002). *Arimaspos* also appears as an adjective in *Prometheus Bound* ("the one-eyed 'Arimaspos' army, going on horseback," τὸν μουνῶπα στρατὸν Ἀριμασπὸν ἱπποβάμον', 805).

While the very fact that Herodotus' account includes Amazons might appear to detract from its credibility, a growing body of recent scholarship has shown that there may be some truth to Herodotus' account or (at the very least) that there might be some real facts behind the stories about Amazons found in Herodotus and other Greek historians and geographers, such as Strabo (Testart 2002, 185).[27] Much of the evidence for the belief in historical Amazons is archaeological: the shores of the Black Sea host numerous burials of women with bows, arrows, lances, and spears (Apakidze et al. 2009, 253; Lebedynsky 2009, 51; E. A. Powell 2020). Nor can it be argued that such arms and armor were purely ritual: the skeletons of these "Amazons" often bear the scars of battle, as do the remains of the Scythian princess buried at Vergina (Carney 2017, 114; Mayor 2014, 64–65). Scythian burials of warrior women also include sacrificed horses. Overall, 25% of Scythian burials containing weapons and 20% of Sauromatian ones are for females (Ivantchik 2013, 79–80). Nevertheless, as a prominent sceptic of the new wave of Amazon scholarship has pointed out, the fact that some women from the cultures that archaeologists identify as Scythian or Sauromatian were buried with weapons does not necessarily confirm that Amazons existed in the same way that Herodotus describes (Ivantchik 2013, 83).[28]

[27] See Man (2018), the chapters in Schubert and Weiss (2013), and especially Mayor (2014). For the myth of the Amazons, but not their reality, see also Blok (1995).

[28] One objection to Herodotus' account is that female burials with weapons are more common among the cultures identified archaeologically as Scythians than among those identified as Sauromatae (Ivantchik 2013, 80). This assumes, however, that the distinctions made by archaeologists based on material remains identically reflect the ethnic distinctions that Herodotus describes.



*Map 3: Distribution of archaeological cultures associated with the Sauromatae (after Lebedynsky 2009, 46).*

Whatever their real-life corollaries, Herodotus' Amazons, prisoners of war, escape their captors but find themselves far from home in Scythian territory, which they begin to plunder (Hdt. 4.110). The Scythians do not recognize the clothes or language of the invaders. Nor do they realize they are women until they examine the dead bodies of their foes (4.111.1).[29] After this realization a long courtship ensues, involving the men adopting the Amazons' wild habits and living exclusively by plunder and hunting (4.111.2). Eventually, the men begin to have sex with

While Ivantchik is skeptical about historical Amazons, he is far from dismissive of Herodotus' account of the Scythians more generally. He asserts that numerous aspects of the Scythian logos that Hartog and Fehling have declared to be fictitious are not so. They are in fact confirmed by archaeology, Assyrian sources, and other Iranian traditions (Ivantchik 2006, 146). He also notes that Herodotus correctly transmits traits that Scythian and Persian culture have in common despite the Greeks' ignorance of the shared Iranian heritage of the two cultures and the Greek tendency to see them instead as opposites (Ivantchik 2006, 147). This is not to deny, however, the way that Greek accounts of the Scythians do tend to be influenced by particular cultural ideologies (e.g. Shaw 1982, 5–7).

[29] Hdt. 4.111.1: οἱ δὲ Σκύθαι οὐκ εἶχον συμβαλέσθαι τὸ πρῆγμα· οὔτε γὰρ φωνὴν οὔτε ἐσθῆτα οὔτε τὸ ἔθνος ἐγίνωσκον, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν θώματι ἦσαν ὁκόθεν ἔλθοιεν, ἐδόκεον δ᾽ αὐτὰς εἶναι ἄνδρας τὴν αὐτὴν ἡλικίην ἔχοντας, μάχην τε δὴ πρὸς αὐτὰς ἐποιεῦντο. ἐκ δὲ τῆς μάχης τῶν νεκρῶν ἐκράτησαν οἱ Σκύθαι, καὶ οὕτω ἔγνωσαν ἐούσας γυναῖκας "The Scythians could not understand the matter: for they did not recognize their language nor their clothes nor to what people they belonged, but were in wonder as to from where they came, and they thought that they were men who were of the same age as the Amazons, and they made war against them, but the Scythians got possession of the dead and thus learned that they were women."

the Amazons, and marriage is not long to follow, though there is the slight problem of the initial language barrier (4.114.1):

> μετὰ δὲ συμμίξαντες τὰ στρατόπεδα οἴκεον ὁμοῦ, γυναῖκα ἔχων ἕκαστος ταύτην τῇ τὸ πρῶτον συνεμίχθη. τὴν δὲ φωνὴν τὴν μὲν τῶν γυναικῶν οἱ ἄνδρες οὐκ ἐδυνέατο μαθεῖν, τὴν δὲ τῶν ἀνδρῶν αἱ γυναῖκες συνέλαβον.
>
> Afterwards they mixed their camps and lived together, each having as a wife that woman with whom he first had sex. The men were not able to learn the women's language, but the women comprehended that of the men.

When they are finally able to communicate, it is the men who speak first, asking the Amazons to come live with them, their parents, and their possessions.[30]

The Amazons refuse to go back to live with the men's families, and so they all set off together to live on their own, becoming the Sauromatae. Herodotus then continues (4.117):

> φωνῇ δὲ οἱ Σαυρομάται νομίζουσι Σκυθικῇ, σολοικίζοντες αὐτῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀρχαίου, ἐπεὶ οὐ χρηστῶς ἐξέμαθον αὐτὴν αἱ Ἀμαζόνες.
>
> The Sauromatae use the Scythian language, but they have spoken it badly ever since their origins, since the Amazons did not learn it well.

Herodotus' description of the origins of the Sauromatae has not escaped modern linguists. The historical linguist Sarah Gray Thomason, an expert in language contact, describes Herodotus' account as the earliest recorded attestation of language change through imperfect learning (2004, 3). Imperfect learning is typically thought of as occurring in cases of group language shift, such as the one Herodotus describes the Amazons undergoing (Thomason 2001, 74).[31] It does not occur, however, in all cases of language shift, nor does Thomason ascribe it to speakers' inability to learn the target language or to a lack of sufficient access to it. Rather, it appears to relate to the

[30] Hdt. 4.114.2: ἐπεὶ δὲ συνῆκαν ἀλλήλων, ἔλεξαν πρὸς τὰς Ἀμαζόνας τάδε οἱ ἄνδρες· «ἡμῖν εἰσὶ μὲν τοκέες, εἰσὶ δὲ κτήσιες· νῦν ὦν μηκέτι πλεῦνα χρόνον ζόην τοιήνδε ἔχωμεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀπελθόντες ἐς τὸ πλῆθος διαιτώμεθα. γυναῖκας δὲ ἕξομεν ὑμέας καὶ οὐδαμάς» "After they understood each other, the men said to the Amazons, 'we have parents and possessions, so let's live a life like we've been living no longer, but return to the Scythians and live our lives. We will have you and nobody else as our wives.'"

[31] Another example of shift-induced interference are retroflex consonant in Indic languages, which speakers of Dravidian languages brought with them when they shifted language (Thomason 2001, 93). Nevertheless, transfer from a first language and change through language acquisition may be different processes (Kouwenberg 2006, 205).

decision by learners, consciously or unconsciously, to use features not used by native speakers of the target language (Thomason 2001, 74). Herodotus, for his part, takes a more negative view of imperfect learning: the Amazons simply fail to learn Scythian correctly (οὐ χρηστῶς ἐξέμαθον). Nevertheless, he does seem to acknowledge that not all language shifts are accompanied by imperfect learning: compare his account of the Sauromatae with his account of the Pelasgians, described below, in which they switch from another language to Greek without any apparent effect on their Athenian descendants' Greek.

Discussions of the Sauromatae within Classical Studies not infrequently invoke pidgins and creoles, two types of contact language (Gammage 2009, 164–65; Munson 2014, 350).[32] Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that what Herodotus is describing in the case of the Sauromatae is a pidgin or creole language even if, as has recently and surprisingly come to seem likely, there is at least some veracity lying behind his story. The contact situations that are known to give rise to these types of languages do not resemble the situation described by Herodotus. Pidgins come about mainly for the purposes of trade in situations where the native speakers of different languages have only sporadic contact with each other, not where they live together as married couples with children. On the other hand, most of the creoles studied today are a result of European colonialism in general and of the transatlantic slave trade and plantation labor in particular (Mufwene 2001, 10). In more abstract terms, creoles tend to arise in sociolinguistic situations involving multiple languages but where one language is economically dominant (P. Bakker 1997, 194).[33] While the Black Sea region was a famous source of slaves in antiquity, and

[32] Gammage groups the Sauromatae with the Geloni and the Ammonians, suggesting that all three peoples could have spoken ancient creoles (2009, 164). For a good summary of the origins of pidgin and creole linguistics, and their relationships to the present study of these languages, see Baptista (2016b). Another useful work is Thomason and Kaufman (1988).

[33] One way that creoles are thought to emerge is when a pidgin becomes the native language of a speech community, though this has been disputed (Mufwene 2001, 7). Pidgins and creoles are contact languages in a historical sense because they do not have a single clear ancestor (Campbell 2013, 314–15).

a bridge is sometimes drawn between ancient colonization and modern colonialism, nothing about this example suggests a situation similar to that involved in the genesis of creoles (Braund and Tsetskhladze 1989, 114; Tsetskhladze 2006, xiii–xvi). Rather, it is good to keep in mind Thomason and Kaufman's proposition that "when social factors and linguistic factors might be expected to produce opposite results in a language contact situation, the social factors will be the primary determinants of the linguistic outcome" (Thomason 2008, 42).[34]

Social factors include a variety of influences that have nothing to do with the internal structures of the languages that are in contact. She gives as a first and admittedly "trivial" example of the primacy of social over linguistic factors the fact that contact-induced change cannot occur unless speakers of the relevant languages are in contact. Less trivially, social and political relationships between the groups in contact can be equally important. Thomason brings up Weinreich's proposal in his classic and pioneering book, *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, that "in the interference of two grammatical patterns it is ordinarily the one which uses relatively free and invariant morphemes in its paradigms … which serves as the model for imitation" (Thomason 2008, 52–53; Weinreich 1953, 41). She discusses one of Weinreich's examples, "the replacement of possessive constructions comprising a noun plus a pronominal possessive suffix by analytic possessives in Estonian (under the influence of German)," more

[34] Pidgins and creoles may also be relevant to the passage because much criticism of the concept of imperfect learning itself has come about through the study of these types of languages, which are sometimes held to come about through imperfect learning. Among other reasons to question the commonly held belief that creoles come about through imperfect learning is that there is little evidence that the first people to speak them had sufficient access to the supposed lexifier languages or that, even if they were accessible, that attaining them "was part of the speakers' original intents and priorities" (Baptista 2016a, 365). Another way to think about this is to take the various linguistic features of languages and dialects as parts of a feature pool from which speakers make their selection, based on a situation's language ecology, which includes ethnographic factors but also includes more narrowly linguistic ones (Mufwene 2001, 30–31). Thus, while in situations of creole genesis the African languages spoken by early slaves may have eventually disappeared and "the creole won the competition … because of its socio-economic and political power," specific features of creoles were often selected because their presence in multiple languages in contact meant that by using them speakers could maximize the successfulness of their communication (Aboh 2015, 125; Baptista 2017, 148).

specifically (Thomason 2008, 53).[35] She shows, however, that it was more probably the linguistic prestige of German than the relatively free and invariant nature of its pronouns that led it to influence Estonian. After all, the direction of influence was the same even in other cases where "the Estonian construction was more analytic than the functionally equivalent structure in German" (Thomason 2008, 53)

Also interesting is the use by Herodotus of the verb *soloikizō* to describe the language spoken by the Sauromatae. The LSJ defines the verb as "to speak or write incorrectly" and connects it with *barbarizein*, that is, to speak a language, usually Greek, like someone who learned it as a second language or like a foreigner (Liddell et al. 1968, s.v. σολοικίζω). There are few attestations of this word before Herodotus. Anacreon refers to a tongue that commits solecisms and Hipponax talks about capturing solecizing Phrygians and selling them into slavery at Miletus, but, like Herodotus, they are not very specific as to what they mean by committing a solecism (Anacr. 79, Hippon. 46). Hipppocrates once uses a related adjective, *soloikos,* to describe something 'absurd', in Xenophon it describes 'rude' conduct (Hp. *Fract.* 15, X. *Cyr*. 8.3.21).

The first attestation that gives context to Herodotus by explaining more exactly what constitutes a solecism is a fragment of Protagoras preserved in Aristotle, that suggests it has to do with gender disagreement between nouns and adjectives or pronouns. Aristotle describes several examples of solecisms, which all have to do with gender disagreement, suggesting a grammatical phenomenon rather than a lexical one (*Soph. el.* 173b, 182a). This is also the impression one gets from Dionysius of Halicarnassus' treatise on Thucydides, where he

[35] "Analytic morphosyntax is a grammatical system in which derivational and especially inflectional morphology is limited in quantity and scope. Most or all of the grammatical functions which, in a morphologically rich languages, are expressed by inflection are expressed in analytic languages by syntactic means instead" (Thomason 2001, 257).

describes the odd use of grammatical gender and the substitution of the genitive for the accusative case as Thucydidean solecisms (*Thuc.* 11). One more piece of evidence that, at least sometimes, there was a distinction between solecism and other forms of 'barbarism' comes from Diogenes Laertius in his early third-century-CE *Life of Zeno*, when he discusses the teachings of Diogenes of Babylon, the third-century-BCE pupil of Zeno (Diog. Laert. 7.1.59):

> ὁ δὲ βαρβαρισμὸς ἐκ τῶν κακιῶν λέξις ἐστὶ παρὰ τὸ ἔθος τῶν εὐδοκιμούντων Ἑλλήνων, σολοικισμὸς δέ ἐστι λόγος ἀκαταλλήλως συντεταγμένος.
>
> Among faults of style, barbarism is style contrary to the custom of reputable Greeks, and a soloecism is a sentence that has been put together incongruously.

Here Diogenes defines solecism as something different from barbarism. Even if the definition of both is vague, it is possibly telling that the definition of solecism emphasizes the agreement of words being put together, as both ἀκαταλλήλως ('incongrously') and συντεταγμένος ('having been put together') emphasize. Thus, while the idea that the ancients were distinguishing so readily between grammatical and lexical phenomena seems hard to believe, by the time we get concrete examples of solecisms, they do tend to be grammatical rather than lexical.

It is therefore possible that the use of *soloikizō* by Herodotus suggests an understanding of foreign grammars, contrary to some scholars' assertions that Herodotus sees foreign languages as mere collections of words or even just names and has no concept of foreign grammars. A focus on grammatical over lexical change would also be consistent with language change through imperfect learning. One peculiarity of imperfect learning as a mechanism is that it tends to introduce grammatical, not lexical, features into a language, although there appear to be some exceptions, generally when the shifting population is hierarchically dominant. This was the case with the Normans, who introduced many words into English when they shifted from French a century after the Conquest, but who had little effect on English grammar (Thomason 2001, 75).

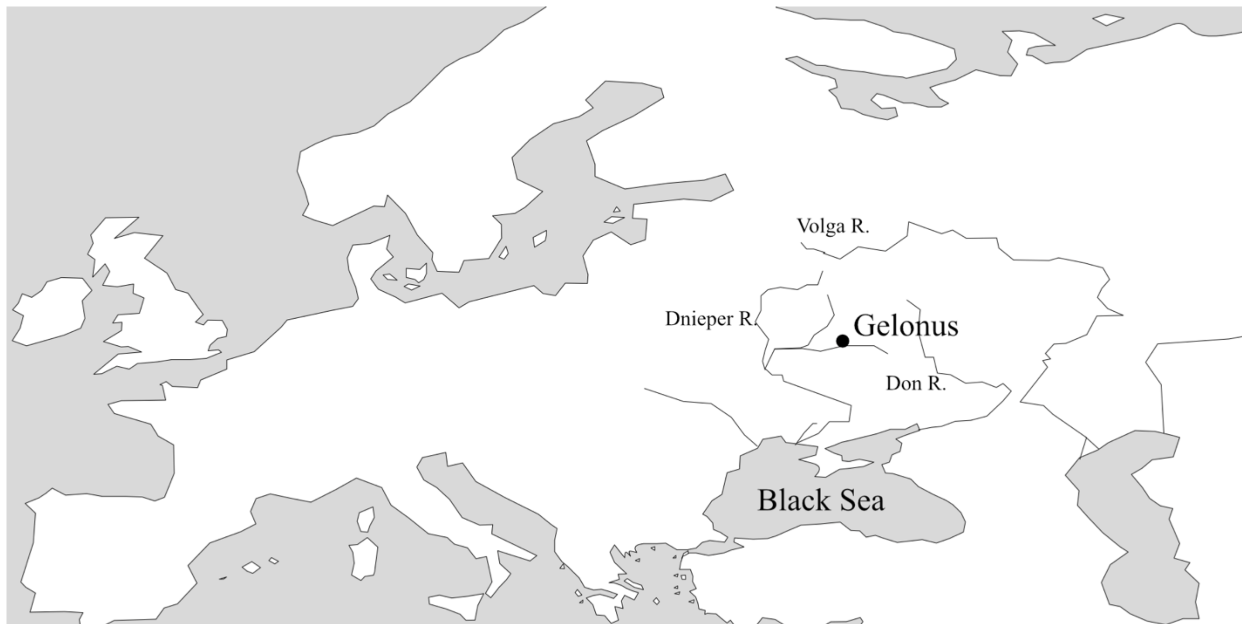
Ultimately, while Herodotus is not entirely precise about the details of the language spoken by the Sauromatae, some elements of his description allow for speculation about what he may have been describing. Most important is the fact that he links the language of the Sauromatae with their mixed ethnicity. This suggests an attempt by the Sauromatae to distinguish themselves from their Scythian neighbors through the use of language to highlight a distinct identity. The sociolinguistic situation does not resemble those that give rise to creoles, in which multiple languages are present but one is economically dominant, but it does resemble those involved in the genesis of many mixed languages, which are discussed at greater length below, and often come about when the marriages of husbands who speak one language and wives who speak another create new societies (P. Bakker 1997, 202, 206–13). Mixed languages, however, are extremely rare (Thomason 2001, 207). Moreover, a language that mostly differs from Scythian grammatically, which seems to be what Herodotus is describing in the case of the Sauromatae, would not fit with many of the mixed languages that feature nouns and nominal morphology from one language and verbs and verbal morphology from another, nor with other mixed languages that take their grammars from one source and their lexica from another (P. Bakker 1997, 213).[36] In the end, therefore, Sauromatian appears most likely to be a language related to Scythian but grammatically different due to (possibly deliberate) imperfect learning.

### *II. Diglossia*

Another language in the Black Sea area was that of Greek colonists, a variety of which survives to this day (Mayor 2014, 236).[37] The Greek language's presence on the shores of the

[36] One example is Media Lengua (or Utilla Ingiru, "little Quechua"), spoken by "Ecuadorian Amerindians, who form a geographical and cultural group between the Quechua-speaking Indians in the mountains and the Spanish-speaking Europeans in the towns in the valleys (P. Bakker 1997, 196). See also Muysken (1988, 419).
[37] On Greco-barbarian contact around the Black Sea see also Maslennikov (2005).

Euxine comes up when Herodotus argues that the Greeks are wrong not to distinguish between the Geloni and their nomadic neighbors, the Budini (4.109). The Geloni, unlike their neighbors, are Greek in origin, living in the city of Gelonus (see map 3 below). Herodotus provides numerous reasons to suspect a different origin for the two peoples, including that they are "different in form and complexion" (οὐδὲν τὴν ἰδέην ὅμοιοι οὐδὲ τὸ χρῶμα, 4.109), that the Geloni have Greek temples, gods, and rituals,[38] and the fact that "they use Scythian language with respect to some things, Greek for others" (γλώσσῃ τὰ μὲν Σκυθικῇ τὰ δὲ Ἑλληνικῇ χρέωνται, 4.108).



*Map 4: Probable location of Gelonus near the modern-day village of Bilsk, Ukraine. Location based on map accessed through Pleiades (https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/459909982).*

This appears to be an example of diglossia, the presence in one society of two languages distinguished by their function (Fishman 1967, 28).[39] The term was first brought into English by

[38] ἔστι γὰρ δὴ αὐτόθι Ἑλληνικῶν θεῶν ἱρὰ Ἑλληνικῶς κατεσκευασμένα ἀγάλμασί τε καὶ βωμοῖσι καὶ νηοῖσι ξυλίνοισι (Hdt. 4.108.2).
For indeed in that place there are temples of Greek gods equipped in the Greek style with wooden statues and altars and shrines.
[39] Examples of ancient diglossia abound. See e.g. Niehoff-Panagiotidis (1994).

Charles Ferguson in an extremely influential article, where he described it as the use of two related languages or varieties of the same language, one for informal ("low") situations and the other one for formal ("high") ones (Ferguson 1959, 325–26). Examples of this include the coexistence of Katharevousa and Demotic Greek (Ferguson 1959, 325). Recent applications of this sociolinguistic concept, however, have expanded it to include instances in which the two languages are not closely related, as is probably the case here, unless by "Scythian" Herodotus means a form of Greek with Scythian influence (Fishman 1967, 29–30; Adams 2003, 537–41). Such situations usually develop when there is a prestige differential between the two languages, with one used for "religion, education and other aspects of high culture" while the other serves for "everyday pursuits of hearth, home and work" (Fishman 1967, 30). A high prestige value attached to Greek as part of the Geloni's separate identity might have preserved it for certain functions. Furthermore, the use of Greek only in a restricted set of environments, if outsiders were unlikely to frequent them, could partially explain Herodotus' contention that other Greeks have not noticed the differences between the Budini and the Geloni: in language, at least, the differences between their neighbors and the Geloni might be partly obscured, especially if the previous Greek sources to which Herodotus refers came to know about the Geloni only through their non-Greek neighbors.

*III. Linguistic Convergence*

Like the Black Sea and Caucasus, Asia Minor is another region known for its ancient linguistic diversity. Indeed, according to the Roman-era geographer Strabo, the verb we saw used above to describe the Sauromatae's new language, *soloikizō* (σολοικίζω), comes from Soloi, a Greek colony in the region of Pamphylia in Asia Minor whose inhabitants spoke in a way that was famously affected by their Carian linguistic surroundings (14.2.28):

> ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ καρίζειν καὶ τὸ βαρβαρίζειν μετήνεγκαν εἰς τὰς περὶ ἑλληνισμοῦ τέχνας καὶ τὸ σολοικίζειν, εἴτ᾽ ἀπὸ Σόλων εἴτ᾽ ἄλλως τοῦ ὀνόματος τούτου πεπλασμένου.
>
> From speaking Carian they transferred both the word "to barbarize" into the treatises about the Greek language, and the word "to solecize," whether the latter word derived either from Soli or some other source.

Like the Black Sea, Asia Minor also serves as the locus for one of the passages in which Herodotus discusses language contact. Herodotus discusses the Caunians' language and that of their Carian neighbors (Hdt. 1.172.1):

> οἱ δὲ Καύνιοι αὐτόχθονες δοκέειν ἐμοὶ εἰσί, αὐτοὶ μέντοι ἐκ Κρήτης φασὶ εἶναι. προσκεχωρήκασι δὲ γλῶσσαν μὲν πρὸς τὸ Καρικὸν ἔθνος, ἢ οἱ Κᾶρες πρὸς τὸ Καυνικόν (τοῦτο γὰρ οὐκ ἔχω ἀτρεκέως διακρῖναι), νόμοισι δὲ χρέωνται κεχωρισμένοισι πολλὸν τῶν τε ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων καὶ Καρῶν. τοῖσι γὰρ κάλλιστον ἐστὶ κατ᾽ ἡλικίην τε καὶ φιλότητα ἰλαδὸν συγγίνεσθαι ἐς πόσιν, καὶ ἀνδράσι καὶ γυναιξὶ καὶ παισί.
>
> The Caunians are, it seems to me, autochthonous. They, however, say they are from Crete. They have approached the Carian people in language or the Carians have approached the Caunian (for I am not able to decide accurately), but they use customs that differ much from other people's, especially from the Carians'. For the most beautiful thing, in their eyes, is for men, women, and children to assemble in droves, per age and friendship, to drink.

Herodotus uses a spatial metaphor for contact-induced language change, wondering about whether one language "has approached" another or vice-versa (προσκεχωρήκασι, 1.172.1). This appears to be an example of linguistic convergence, "a process through which two or more languages in contact change to become more like each other—especially when both or all of the languages change" (Thomason 2001, 262).

Asia Minor has often been posited to be a *Sprachbund* or linguistic area (Hawkins 2010, 221). Linguistic areas are zones in which languages, "due to borrowing and language contact… come to share certain structural features" (Campbell 2013, 299; Thomason 2001, 99). That is, the languages come to share not only borrowed words, but also "elements of phonological,

morphological, or syntactic structure."[40] Well-documented examples of these include the Pacific Northwest of North America and the Balkans (Campbell 2013, 299–304). These areas share a tendency towards convergence "in everything except the phonological shapes of morphemes," although the assumption that such a process would result long-term in the eventual total merger of the grammatical structures of the participating languages is evidenced nowhere in the world (Thomason 2001, 125, 265). This convergence makes it difficult to determine where shared features come from (Thomason 2001, 105–25). For instance, in the case of the Pacific Northwest of North America, there are shared features in the reconstructed ancestors of the three core languages in contact that are likely the results of ancient language contact, but this hypothesis cannot be proven because it is impossible to look back further and determine in which family they originated (Thomason 2001, 125). Herodotus' inability to tell, therefore, which language has approached the other seems to presage problems encountered by modern linguists in analogous situations.

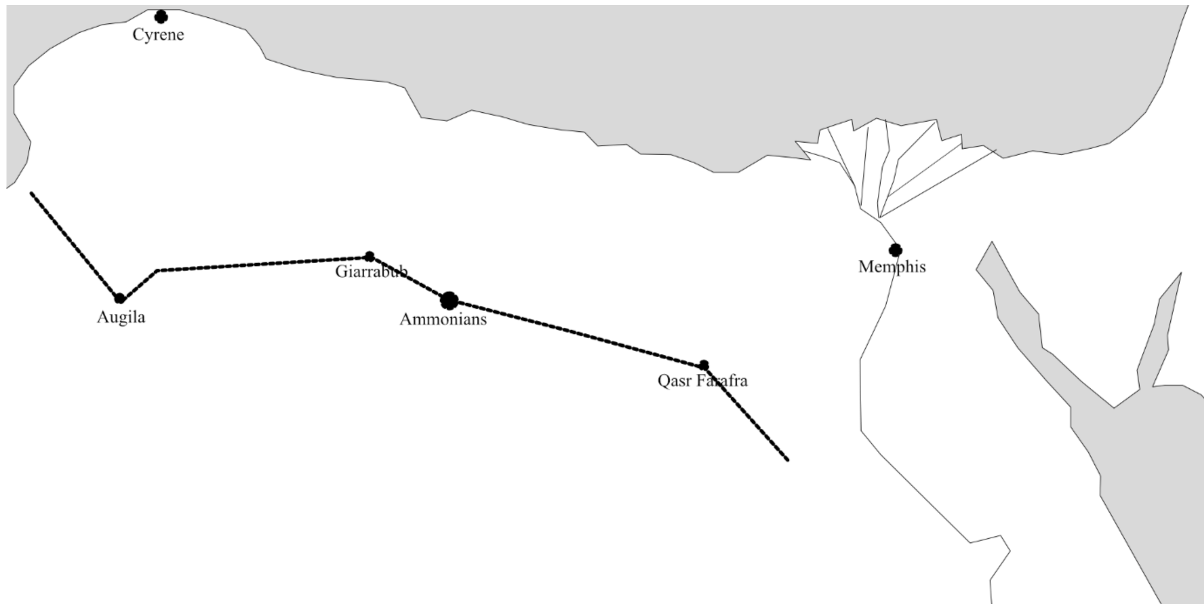
[40] 'Linguistic area' is an English translation of the German 'Sprachbund', which Nikolai S. Trubetzkoy introduced in 1928 (Thomason 2001, 99; Trubetzkoy 1930). These areas are also called diffusion areas, adstratum relationships, or convergence areas (Campbell 2013, 299). One frequently mentioned example of morphological diffusion in Asia Minor is the inherited **-ske-/-*sko-* suffix that forms the -εσκε/ο- suffix in Greek. The function of this suffix in PIE "is not entirely clear and shows different uses in different branches of Indo-European" (Hawkins 2010, 221). While in Latin it forms inchoatives and causatives in Tocharian, it is generally unproductive in Greek, but in both the East Ionic Greek spoken in Asia Minor and in Hittite it indicates "ongoing action with iterative/imperfective/durative habitual sense depending on context and the semantics of the verb" (Hawkins 2010, 222). Another feature may be the use of a root in Greek and Luwian to mean 'wine' that means 'sweet', 'honey', or 'mead' elsewhere.

*Map 5: Caria and Caunos. Regions labeled in italics.*

The fact that the two languages in contact in this example are Carian and Caunian is relevant because Herodotus may have himself been of Carian background (for the location of the two cities, see map 4 above). His city of origin, Halicarnassus, was of mixed Greek and Carian character (Hornblower 1982, 10–11, 14–17). Furthermore, the name of his cousin or uncle, the epic poet Panyassis, is demonstrably Carian (V. J. Matthews 1974, 9–12; Adiego Lajara 2006, 330, 340). Thus, Herodotus is speaking from a position of relatively intimate experience. It has only been with Carian's recent decipherment that it has become possible to analyze Carian inscriptions and to classify the language, as Anatolian within the Indo-European family (Adiego Lajara 2006, 345). Caunos, though Herodotus describes it as separate from Caria, has yet to yield evidence of a language, other than Greek or Carian, though this could be due to a paucity of data. It is the place of discovery of a key Greek-Carian bilingual that greatly furthered the decipherment of Carian (Frei and Marek 1997; 1998; Adiego Lajara 1998a; 1998b). This bilingual, however, probably dates to around 400 BCE, later than Herodotus' narrative and after Caunos had fallen under the influence of a Carian dynasty centered at Halicarnassus.

*IV. Mixed Languages*

Another place that Herodotus locates language contact phenomena is at the Siwa Oasis in the desert west of Egypt, among the Ammonians (see map 5 below). The Ammonians use a language between Egyptian and Ethiopian, owing to their origins in settlers from both peoples. More specifically, Herodotus describes them as "being colonists of the Egyptians and Ethiopians and speaking a language in between both" (ἐόντες Αἰγυπτίων τε καὶ Αἰθιόπων ἄποικοι καὶ φωνὴν μεταξὺ ἀμφοτέρων νομίζοντες, 2.42). There are independent attestations of Ethiopians and Egyptians living at Siwa, and it is probable that Libyans and Nubians were also present (Leclant and Yoyotte 1952, 28 n. 6; Gardiner 1947, 116, 120; Liverani 2000). The Siwa Oasis that the Ammonians inhabited was still a point of intercultural exchange in the 1950s, inhabited by Berbers, Bedouin, and Sudanese (Parke 1967, 202; Fakhry 1950, 1). In antiquity, cultural exchange was facilitated by the fact that the Siwa Oasis was one node in a network of oases by which the desert was traversable (Mattingly 1995, 8; see map 5). Indeed, the cult of Ammon first spread across this network (Mattingly 1995, 38). There are still extensive remains of a temple of Ammon at the site, but inscriptions there show no sign of the language mixture of which Herodotus speaks. Nevertheless, this absence is unsurprising given the conservative nature of sacred writing in hieroglyphics (J. P. Allen 2013, 3).




*Map 6: The Ammonians at the Sîwa Oasis with an outline of other oasis centers and trade routes. Routes and oases from Mattingly (1995, 8).*

The terminology that Herodotus uses to describe the Ammonians' language is ambiguous, but one possibility would be that they spoke a (bilingual) mixed language, a type of language discussed briefly in relation to the Sauromatae. Mixed languages are the result of "the fusion of two identifiable source languages, normally in situations of community bilingualism" (Meakins 2013, 159).[41] They are almost always the product of only two languages. While many take their grammar from one source language and their lexicon from the other, a few take their grammar and lexicon from each source language in large chunks (Meakins 2013, 165, 171).[42] One example of the later type, discussed above, is the newly emergent Light Warlpiri in northern Australia, which takes most of its verbs and verbal morphology from Warlpiri and most of its

[41] Beyond this broad definition, there is some debate about what exactly makes a mixed language (Thomason 2003, 21). Thomason, whose definition is controversial (Meakins 2013, 180), defines such languages as taking their grammar and lexicon from each source language in large chunks without imperfect learning. The absence of imperfect learning is in this scheme one thing that divides these languages from pidgins and creoles, although as noted above there is controversy as to what degree imperfect learning plays a role in the creation of creoles (Thomason 2001, 197; Baptista 2016a, 362).

[42] A famous example of the first type is Ma'á. Its speakers, fleeing the Maasai, moved to the Usambara mountains via the Pare mountains (Mous 2003, 6–10). The mixed language Ma'á "is considered to be the result of resisting assimilation with the neighbouring Pare" (Meakins 2013, 168). Ma'á "combines a Bantu grammar, similar to Pare, with a lexicon composed of Southern Cushitic and Bantu words and some Maasai words" (Meakins 2013, 168).

nouns and nominal morphology from Australian English or Kriol (O'Shannessy 2006, 74).[43] Another example of a "Verb-Noun" mixed language is Michif, which takes its noun phrases from French and verb phrases from Cree (P. Bakker 2003, 122).[44] Michif is a language spoken by the Métis, who descend from white (mostly French) fur traders and indigenous mothers. Most of the mothers spoke Cree natively, and the language served as a *lingua franca* for the rest (Thomason 2001, 201).

One purpose for which people often create a mixed language is to keep their conversations private from other groups. Additionally, mixed languages often serve as ethnic identity symbols (Thomason 2001, 198). Herodotus has thus likely done a good job of indicating an important linguistic marker of Ammonian identity, juxtaposing their mixed language with the statement that they are colonists of both Egypt and Ethiopia (2.42.2). While the dynamics of this co-colonization are left ambiguous, the use of a mixed language suggests close contact between the two groups. As discussed above, one sociolinguistic situation that can give rise to mixed languages is when two groups intermarry and the children of these mixed marriages decide to create a new society. They then represent their identification with a new society by the subsequent fusion of two languages (Croft 2000, 214–21; Meakins 2013, 182). The best example of this type is Michif. In the absence of testimony to the contrary, mixed marriages could very well have given rise to a mixed language among the Ammonians.

[43] See also O'Shannessy (2008).

[44] For a fuller treatment of Michif, see P. Bakker (1997), which was also an important milestone in showing without a doubt the existence of mixed languages.

## *V. Loanwords*

One of the most superficial effects contact can have on languages is the introduction of loanwords.[45] Herodotus never says that specific words in Greek are loanwords, though according to Harrison he uses all the attested loanwords that entered Greek during the archaic period and many of those that entered it during the classical period (Harrison 1998, 7; Braun 1982, 25–26).[46] On the other hand, he does mention what might be seen as a missed opportunity for a loanword at 2.62.3, where he notes that the Egyptians call crocodiles *champsai*. While a new and foreign animal would be a natural place to adopt a foreign term, the Greeks in Egypt preferred to relate these new animals to the smaller lizards that they already knew, terming them *krokodeiloi*. The contrast between what the Greeks in Egypt did and what they might have done can be seen in two Spanish words for 'turkey'. *Pavo* is a word that already existed in Spanish at the time of contact, derived from Latin, but was previously applied to the similar-looking peacock. It is thus like *krokodeiloi*. The *champsai* equivalent is *guajolote,* which is used in Mexico and Central America. This term derives from the Nahuatl *huexolotl* (Real Academia Española 2014, s.v.v. *pavo*, *guajolote*).

At 2.52.2, Herodotus describes a borrowing situation that gives the appearance of involving loanwords but is actually much more challenging to interpret. He describes how the Pelasgians sacrificed to the gods without naming them before they learned the names of the gods from the Egyptians. It is unclear what exactly is going on here. Were the names imported wholesale as loan words, or was the Egyptian influence on the Pelasgian language of the divine

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[45] Borrowing non-core vocabulary is the least intense type of borrowing in Thomason's typology, and does not even require borrowers to be fluent in the source language (2001, 70).

[46] One of the most interesting potential loanwords in Herodotus is *turannos* (τύραννος, 'tyrant'). It is, however, unclear whether it is a loanword from a language of Asia Minor or a "Pre-Greek" word from the language spoken in Greece before the arrival of the Indo-Europeans. Chantraine gives both possibilities (1968, s.v. τύραννος), Beekes (characteristically) only the latter (Beekes 2010, s.v. τύραννος).

subtler? The passage's context within a discussion of Pelasgian sacrificial practices suggests that naming the gods is a sort of linguistic technology, by which one can obtain better results from sacrifices by making them more specific. That is, perhaps the Pelasgians learned the names of the gods from the Egyptians not in a literal sense but in the sense that they learned to name specific gods during their sacrifices as an effective ritual practice.[47] In doing so, perhaps, like the Egyptian Greeks, they avoided borrowing any words and instead used their own names for the gods.[48]

Ultimately, the most cogent explanation of this passage is that of Burkert, who argues that what the Pelasgians really acquired from the Egyptians, according to Herodotus, was to distinguish the names of different gods as opposed to a previously undistinguished group unity (1985, 130). Still, the idea that the names (*ta ounomata*) in this passage might refer to the practice of giving names rather than the names themselves has a long history. Its first proponent was Ivan Linforth (Linforth 1926, 19; Harrison 1998, 251 n. 2). Harrison, however, strongly disagrees with this explanation: he argues that the definition of "name as the practice of naming makes nonsense of a number of neighboring passages" (Harrison 2000, 252). Leaving aside the fact that potential definitions of *ounoma* and not of 'name' are at issue, the fact that such a meaning is not workable in every passage where *ounoma* appears cannot be taken, as Harrison does, to disprove Linforth's claim that "there was no confusion between this 'technical meaning' [i.e. 'practice of naming'] and the 'ordinary sense of the word'" (Harrison 2000, 252). Rather, it

[47] It is also curious, given the fact that Herodotus emphasizes elsewhere that the Pelasgians did not speak Greek, that he says that the Pelasgians called the gods ***theoi*** after the Greek word for offering sacrifices, *ti**thē**mi* (θεοί, τίθημι, 2.52.1). Perhaps he thinks that the Athenians' Pelasgian ancestors brought some roots from their old language along with them when they switched to Greek.

[48] Note that, although loanwords are usually the most casual sort of contact-induced change, they do not appear in situations where the speech community considers them unacceptable, even under conditions of intense contact and strong assimilatory pressure, as is the case with many Native American languages of the Pacific Northwest (Thomason 2008, 48–49).

is entirely to be expected that not all a word's definitions will fit in every place it appears. Were it otherwise, we would suspect one of the definitions to be superfluous.

Moreover, the situation becomes increasingly complicated if we take literally both the statement that the name 'Dionysus' comes from Egypt and that 'Dionysus' is the Greek name for Osiris (Harrison 2000, 254; Hdt. 2.49, 2.144.2). Harrison's insistence that Herodotus' terminology suggests "a translation of equivalent names" could prove a fruitful place to bring in Chakrabarty's metaphor concerning two types of translation (Harrison 2000, 255; Chakrabarty 2000, 72). One type of translation is barter-like: two terms are considered only in relation to each other. Another is like commodity exchange: two terms are viewed as equivalent in relation to a third value (their price or real-world referent). While Harrison's statement suggests that Herodotus' translations of the names of the gods are of the first type, imagining them as being of the second type explains why the Egyptians can originate the name 'Dionysus' even if 'Dionysus,' having come to Greece, is also the Greek name for Osiris: they are not two terms that need always appear opposite each other, but rather two ways of referring to a third entity, a specific divinity that is presumed to exist in an objective way.

One more way of making sense of this passage is to relate it to Herodotus' religious, linguistic, and cultural methodology, as Burkert does. He begins his treatment of the names of the gods in Herodotus by considering the reasoning behind Herodotus' statement that the Greek phallic procession for Dionysus comes from Egypt (Burkert 1985, 121; Hdt. 2.49). There, Burkert shows that Herodotus proves the thesis of borrowing in a methodical way, by excluding both the possibility of an independent, parallel development and of a transfer in the opposite direction (Burkert 1985, 122). Burkert notes that this is still key to modern arguments about cultural influence (Burkert 1985, 122). Interestingly, given the fact that the borrowing of names

is what is at issue, the methodology also has a lot in common with that used to prove that certain linguistic features are the result of contact. To do so, one must identify two languages, show that the two languages were in contact, identify shared features between the two, and show that these shared features were present in the source language but absent in the receiving language before contact (Thomason 2001, 93–95). Herodotus' methodology is based on the identification of a shared feature. Moreover, one cannot exclude a parallel development or a transfer in the opposite direction without showing first that a feature is absent in the receiving language, but present in the source language before contact, as Herodotus does.

To these observations about language contact proper might be added one more phenomenon of borrowing which, while technically not an example of language contact, was surely closely related to these previous examples in Herodotus' conception, which did not readily distinguish between writing and language.[49] According to Herodotus, writing came to Greece when the Phoenician Cadmus immigrated to Thebes (Hdt. 5.58.1-2):

> οἱ δὲ Φοίνικες οὗτοι οἱ σὺν Κάδμῳ ἀπικόμενοι, τῶν ἦσαν οἱ Γεφυραῖοι, ἄλλα τε πολλὰ οἰκήσαντες ταύτην τὴν χώρην ἐσήγαγον διδασκάλια ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας καὶ δὴ καὶ γράμματα, οὐκ ἐόντα πρὶν Ἕλλησι ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκέειν, πρῶτα μὲν τοῖσι καὶ ἅπαντες χρέωνται Φοίνικες· μετὰ δὲ χρόνου προβαίνοντος ἅμα τῇ φωνῇ μετέβαλλον καὶ τὸν ῥυθμὸν τῶν γραμμάτων. [2] περιοίκεον δὲ σφέας τὰ πολλὰ τῶν χώρων τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἑλλήνων Ἴωνες, οἳ παραλαβόντες διδαχῇ παρὰ τῶν Φοινίκων τὰ γράμματα, μεταρρυθμίσαντες σφέων ὀλίγα ἐχρέωντο, χρεώμενοι δὲ ἐφάτισαν, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ δίκαιον ἔφερε, ἐσαγαγόντων Φοινίκων ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, Φοινικήια κεκλῆσθαι.
>
> These Phoenicians who came with Cadmus, among whom were the Gephyraeans, settled this land and brought many other teachings to the Greeks, especially letters, which, as it seems to me, the Greeks did not have before. For at first they

[49] Modern linguistics considers writing and language separate phenomena. The former represents the latter (which is spoken or signed) through a system of symbols that exist on a continuum between representing sounds (phonetic) and words or ideas (ideographic). Thus, English words are composed of sounds but represented by letters. Nevertheless, it makes sense from a Herodotean perspective to consider language and writing together, as he appears frequently to confuse the two, as do most people who have not explicitly learned the distinction (e.g. at Hdt 1.139, 1.148.2; Fromkin et al. 2000, 528).

> used the ones that all the Phoenicians too use, but with the passage of time they changed the shape of the letters along with their sound. [2] At this time among the Greeks it was the Ionians who dwelt in most of the land around them. The Ionians received letters from the Phoenicians through instruction, changed them a little bit and made use of them, and they said that they were called Phoenician, as was right, since the Phoenicians brought them to Greece.

As many have noted, Herodotus is essentially correct here: whether Cadmus was involved or not, the Greek alphabet is originally Phoenician (Hornblower 2013, 178; Jeffery 1990, 21–42; Willi 2005, 162–71; Woodard 1997, 250). While some modern scholars prefer the hypothesis that Greek traders in the Levant brought home the alphabet rather than that Phoenician immigrants brought it to them, it could easily have been the latter, especially given the fact that objects inscribed with Phoenician characters were dedicated at Greek sanctuaries as early as the 9th and 8th centuries BCE (Jeffery 1990, 21–22; Janko 2015, 12–23). In any case, the contact situation that gave the Greeks their alphabet also gave them various loanwords, some of which related directly to the new technology, such as *deltos* (δέλτος, 'writing tablet').

Herodotus' theory about the Phoenician origin of the Greek alphabet probably distinguished him from others, many of whom apparently insisted that the Greeks had writing since before the time of Cadmus. Among these alphabetic opponents was probably Hecataeus, who along with other Milesian writers may have thought that the alphabet came from Egypt via Danaus (S. West 1985, 294–95). Stesichorus, Gorgias, and Euripides seem to have preferred Palamedes' invention of the Greek alphabet as opposed to its being brought over to Greece by Phoenician Cadmus (Stesichorus fr. 213; Gorg. Pal. 30; Eur. fr. 578). By contrast, Herodotus recognizes that the Greeks picked up a certain, ultimately very significant, type of language practice from living near a foreign people. The wording that Herodotus uses to describe the changes in the Phoenician alphabet over time is curiously similar to that used to describe the linguistic and ethnic shift undergone by the Pelasgians, who learned the Greek language at the

same time as (ἅμα) their change (μεταβολῇ) into Greeks (ἅμα τῇ μεταβολῇ τῇ ἐς Ἕλληνας καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν μετέμαθε, Hdt. 1.57.3). Similarly, the Greeks changed (μετέβαλλον) the shape of their letters at the same time as (ἅμα) the noise they make (ἅμα τῇ φωνῇ μετέβαλλον καὶ τὸν ῥυθμὸν).

The idea that physical objects still in existence betrayed the provenance of the Greek alphabet has a parallel only in later sources, namely the Lindian Chronicle from 99 BCE, which describes an inscription made by Cadmus in Phoenician letters (Hornblower 2013, 178; Jacoby 1923, § 532 B15-17). Still, this source does not make explicit reference to Cadmus' invention of the Greek alphabet, leaving Herodotus in a class of his own. Harrison uses Herodotus' insistence that he has seen 'Cadmean' letters as proof of the Greek alphabet's Phoenician provenance to criticize the author. He states that it is "questionable…in the light of his Καδμήια γράμματα whether Herodotus had any such accurate knowledge of the nature of the differences between Phoenician and Greek script" (Harrison 1998, 23 fn. 97).[50] There is, however, no reason why Herodotus' insistence on having seen some kind of archaic Greek letters should not reflect an awareness on the part of Herodotus or of a Herodotean source that older Greek letters do look more like their Phoenician counterparts, although this would imply that Herodotus had some experience with the Phoenician alphabet (Jeffery 1990, 23). After all, Papazarkadas has shown that there may be much truth behind Herodotus' claim to have seen dedications made by Croesus in Boeotia, which suggests that perhaps we should give the historian the benefit of the doubt about Cadmus as well (2014, 245–48). After all there were, as discussed above, real dedications at Greek sanctuaries that bore Phoenician inscriptions, which Herodotus could easily have seen.

[50] The reasoning behind this doubt remains somewhat unclear, but it could be linked to what S. West describes as Herodotus' naïve treatment of the 'Cadmean' inscriptions (S. West 1985, 289–95).

## *VI. Language Death*

Returning to language contact proper, one approach to the topic views it through "a hierarchical set of typologies, starting with a three-way division at the top level into contact-induced language change (including that caused by imperfect learning), extreme language mixture (resulting in pidgins, creoles, and bilingual mixed languages), and language death" (Thomason 2001, 60). This division bears some semblance to Herodotus' thinking about language. In the above examples, we have seen changes of various types and degrees, from the borrowing of divine names to the creation of new mixed languages, themselves examples of extreme language mixture. Moreover, Herodotus is not only aware of language shift (and the language death that also accompanies it), but also of language maintenance, as Gammage notes (Gammage 2009, 163; Mesthrie et al. 2009, 253). Herodotus notes that despite their new linguistic surroundings, the Eretrians whom Darius deported to Persia have preserved their old language (φυλάσσοντες τὴν ἀρχαίην γλῶσσαν, 6.119.4), unlike the Pelasgians or, apparently, the Phoenician immigrants who brought the alphabet to Greece (1.57-58.2). While Herodotus does not seem particularly interested in the factors that lead to language maintenance in some situations as opposed to language death in others, the question is of practical interest to those trying to preserve their own endangered languages in the present (McConvell 2008, 237). Another way to understand this same question is to talk about the *stability* of contact situations. Stable contact situations are ones which, over time, do not degenerate through language shift into monolingualism (Thomason 2001, 21). They are fairly common since, from antiquity onwards, monolingualism has not been nearly as common as some have supposed (Thomason 2001, 31).

*Conclusion*

Some scholars' doubts about the Greeks' knowledge of and interest in foreign languages have even led to the conclusion that Herodotus, in keeping with the general ignorance of and lack of interest in foreign languages among the Greeks, has little interesting, useful, or innovative to say about language. Herodotus does make numerous and well documented errors (Harrison 1998, 9). Still, despite what one might think of the Greeks in general, Herodotus is sophisticated in his approach to language, making observations about language contact that appear to describe real situations despite a lack of modern methodology. He is sensitive to context, historicizing language contact according the specifics of each situation. Munson (2005) has shown that Herodotus' self-presentation as uniquely linguistically competent is a primary strategy for establishing his authority parallel to, yet distinct from, the strategies that Thucydides uses to appear authoritative (Marincola 1997). The question remains, however: what role did Herodotus' observations about language contact play in his larger literary and historical project?

## Chapter 3: Birds, Bats, and Goat Bread: Animal and Divine Language

In the previous chapter, we have seen how language works as a heuristic device for Herodotus in discovering the connections between different cultures and in examining their deep past. Later, we will see how he uses it to explore the divisions between people. Here, however, we will see that language is also used by Herodotus to examine what it is to be human as opposed to an animal or a god.

To what extent did Herodotus see language as a uniquely human phenomenon? A full answer to this question must encompass Herodotus' approach both to animal and to divine language, beginning with a review of the relevant parts of Herodotus' linguistic terminology. Psammetichus' experiment in linguistic isolation fits here, because the children involved seem to learn to speak from goats. The speech of birds comes up twice in Herodotus, once when he describes the foundation of the Oracle of Zeus at Dodona, and once when he describes the Troglodytes and their peculiar language. Herodotus reflects both the Greek idea that birds approached humans linguistically more than any other animal and the trope of barbarian speech as bird song in Greek literature. Finally, episodes of divine speech, inasmuch as they also involve the representation of nonhuman language, form an interesting counterpoint to those that involve animal language.

Herodotus does not think of language as limited specifically to human beings, because there are multiple places in his narrative where language crosses the boundaries between human and animal as well as human and divine, though he does see it as more proper to divine beings than to animals. Herodotus' views on nonhuman language also reveal much about the ways he

thinks language is learned, how he conceptualizes the origins of language, and the ways in which Herodotus is involved in challenging as well as supporting traditional dichotomies.

### *Herodotus' Language Lexicon and Non-human Language*

To begin this chapter, it is useful to review some specific terminology used by Herodotus to describe language and the ways in which it serves to blur the distinction between human language and non-human forms of communication. In particular, Herodotus' linguistic terminology itself partially elides the distinction between animal noises and human languages. This ambiguity allows the author to play with the boundaries between human and animal communication in ways that will be analyzed on a passage-by-passage basis later in the chapter. While Herodotus does not depart from normal Greek usage in using this terminology, an examination of it is essential to understanding Herodotus' conception of the relationships between animal noises and human language. While the supernatural is present in Herodotus' narrative, supernatural beings do not tend to voice themselves directly, meaning that the terminology discussed here is usually restricted to animal or human voices. Unsurprisingly, given the fact that supernatural beings in many traditions possess human language, Homer does use the same terms to describe divine speech and even that of monsters like Scylla (Laspia 1996, 56–57; Od. 12.85-86).[51]

The two words Herodotus most commonly uses to denote 'language' are *phōnē* 'voice' and *glōssa* 'tongue', although Herodotus often uses them interchangeably.[52] *Glōssa* refers to the anatomical organ as much as verbal communication (Miletti 2008, 61; Liddell et al. 1968, s.v. γλῶσσα). Of the two terms, only *glōssa* appears in contexts describing language learning

[51] Laspia has written a whole chapter on the use of *phōnē* in Homer (1996, 53–72).
[52] For examples, see Miletti (2008, 61)

because, as Miletti argues, only *glōssa* (used in its more abstract sense) describes language as a system (2008, 61–62). On the other hand, Miletti describes *phōnē* as "the voice in its material aspect."[53] *Phōnē* refers to a sound emanating from a living being with a mouth of some sort, which means it can apply to animals as well as humans and is broader in use than English 'voice'. Animals that Herodotus describes as producing a *phōnē* include pigs (2.70.2), hippopotami (2.71), and donkeys (4.129 and 4.135.3). Examples of its use to describe human voices occur at 1.85.4 and 2.55.2 (on which see below), among many other passages.

This is not to say, however, that any animal can produce a *phōnē*: humans are just one of the large yet limited group of animals that can do so. Aristotle distinguishes *phōnē* ('voice') from *psophos* ('sound') by arguing that the former requires a pharynx, and that only animals with lungs can produce a *phōnē* (*Hist*. *An*. 535a, 27).[54] Cephalopods, crustaceans, and fish are thus voiceless, as are insects (*Hist. An.* 535b, 1-4). Aristotle then distinguishes *phōnē* from *dialektos* ('speech'), *dialektos* being the articulation (διάρθρωσις) of a *phōnē* by the tongue (*glōssa*).[55] Aristotle's ideas are not necessarily normal Greek ideas or applicable to Herodotus. They must have some basis in everyday Greek usage, since he is trying to add a certain precision to the sense that the words he is defining already had in Greek. *Phōnē* in Homer, for instance, can already be used as much of animals as of humans, just as in Herodotus.[56] Inasmuch as Herodotus' use of *phōnē* accords with Aristotle and others' emphasis on the physical over the abstract manifestations of language, it puts human and animal communication on a continuum

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[53] He defines it as "la voce nel suo aspetto materiale è ben distinta dalla lingua in quanto codice" (Miletti 2008, 61). See also LSJ (1968, s.v. φωνή).

[54] The most thorough treatment of Aristotle's definition of *phōnē* is that of Ax (1986, 119–37). See also Labarrière (1993). On this passage in particular see Zirin (1980, 335–36).

[55] Thus, to further complicate matters, a *glōssa* 'tongue' is required to create a *phōnē*, which may just be a 'voice' but could also be a 'language', in which sense it is often synonymous with *glōssa* 'language'.

[56] E.g. *Od*. 10.239-240, 12.395-396; see Laspia 1996, 54–57. In Plato, *phōnē* is classed, like sight and smell, as a sort of effluence (ἀπορροή) that diffuses from a source, and there are technical discussions of it in the context of music as well (*Meno* 76c-76e). On the meaning of *phōnē* in a Platonic context see also Ax (1986, 93).

and means that animals that can imitate speech sounds may be considered closer to humans in their linguistic abilities than those that cannot.

On the other hand, the usage of the verb *phēmi* ('to speak'), from which *phōnē* derives, does suggest a human/animal distinction, since it is only used of human or divine speech, or of supernatural animals that speak like humans, such as Achilles' horse Xanthus (*Il.* 19.404). Nevertheless, the verb *phōneō*, like the noun *phōnē* from which it derives, can indicate the production of human speech just as much as animal noises. Compare, for example, "she was not able **to speak**, for they did not understand each other" (καὶ **φωνῆσαι** μὲν οὐκ εἶχε (οὐ γὰρ συνίεσαν ἀλλήλων)) at Herodotus 4.133.2 and Hippocrates' statement that "if the lung were not hollow and had a pipe attached to it, animals would not **give voice**" (ὁ δὲ πλεύμων εἰ μὴ κοῖλος ἦν καί οἱ σύριγξ προσείχετο, οὐκ ἂν **ἐφώνει** τὰ ζῷα, *Morb.* 4.25). *Phōneō* also describes animal speech in the *Odyssey*, albeit the speech of an animal that was once human and now divine. In Book Five of the *Odyssey*, the goddess Leukothea (formerly the mortal Ino) transforms herself into a seabird and addresses Odysseus using the verbs *phōneō* and *eipon* (*Od.* 5.333-353).[57] The verb *phthengomai* carries ambiguity similar to that of *phōnē*. Herodotus uses it both to describe horse noises and the speech of Demaretus the Spartan to Xerxes (Hdt. 3.84, 7.103). *Legō* (a verb whose widespread use for 'to speak' occurs first in Herodotus) is like *phēmi* generally confined to humans, though it is used of animals that speak like humans such as the speaking parrots in Ctesias (FGrH 688 F 45.8).

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[57] Note, however, that editors since Aristarchus, who wrote in the second century BCE, have doubted the authenticity of line 5.337 (T. W. Allen 1939, 96). Ino turns into an *aithuia*, which is a diving bird of some sort.

*Pharaonic Goats*

One of the most famous anecdotes in the *Histories*, in which the Pharaoh Psammetichus creates an experiment to determine the world's oldest people, also touches on the relationship between animals and language, as well as Herodotus' ideas about the acquisition and origins of language. Through it, Herodotus both enforces a divide between human and animal language and argues that language is learned rather than innate. The king, who is intent on determining the world's oldest people, concocts an experiment to find out (Hdt. 2.2.2-3):

> παιδία δύο νεογνὰ ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων δίδωσι ποιμένι τρέφειν ἐς τὰ ποίμνια τροφήν τινα τοιήνδε, ἐντειλάμενος μηδένα ἀντίον αὐτῶν μηδεμίαν φωνὴν ἱέναι, ἐν στέγῃ δὲ ἐρήμῃ ἐπ᾽ ἑωυτῶν κέεσθαι αὐτά, καὶ τὴν ὥρην ἐπαγινέειν σφι αἶγας, πλήσαντα δὲ γάλακτος τἆλλα διαπρήσσεσθαι. ταῦτα δὲ ἐποίεέ τε καὶ ἐνετέλλετο Ψαμμήτιχος θέλων ἀκοῦσαι τῶν παιδίων, ἀπαλλαχθέντων τῶν ἀσήμων κνυζημάτων, ἥντινα φωνὴν ῥήξουσι πρώτην· τά περ ὦν καὶ ἐγένετο. ὡς γὰρ διέτης χρόνος ἐγεγόνεε ταῦτα τῷ ποιμένι πρήσσοντι, ἀνοίγοντι τὴν θύρην καὶ ἐσιόντι τὰ παιδία ἀμφότερα προσπίπτοντα βεκὸς ἐφώνεον, ὀρέγοντα τὰς χεῖρας.
>
> He gave two newborn children from the common people to a shepherd to raise among his flocks, having commanded that none was to speak in their presence, but that they were to lie by themselves in an empty hut, and that at an appointed time the shepherd was to lead goats to the children, feed them with milk, and do everything else. Psammetichus did and ordered these things because he wanted to hear from the children, when they were done with meaningless babbling, what utterance they would make first: and indeed, it was so, for when the shepherd had been doing these things for two years, after he opened the door and went in, both children stretching out their hands and falling upon him cried "bekos!"[58]

[58] Later monarchs drew sinister inspiration from Psammetichus. The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II was said to have performed a similar experiment, hoping to discover that Hebrew was the oldest language, but, isolated from love and care, the separated children died (Coulton 1906, 242–43). James IV of Scotland sent two children to be raised by a deaf woman and claimed that they spoke Hebrew (Lindsay 1814, 249–50). The Mughal Emperor Akbar claimed that children he had raised in this fashion were mute, because language arose from hearing (Abū al-Faẕl ibn Mubārak 1939, 3:581–82). The outcomes of Akbar and Frederick's experiments seem more plausible than Psammetichus' or James IV's, raising the chilling possibility that they were actually carried out: children not exposed to language during the critical period will not be able to fully acquire a language, though if not exposed to a spoken language they can still learn a sign language or even, with the help of other children, create their own, and the lack of a primary caregiver's love and physical affection has been shown to have a severe effect on human children and even non-human primates (Senghas and Coppola 2001).

Psammetichus is puzzled by the children's babbling, but soon discovers, after consulting with learned advisors, that *bekos* is the Phrygian word for bread. He concludes that these must be the world's earliest people, not the Egyptians as was previously thought (2.2.4).

The passage appears to be a joke, which hinges on Psammetichus' mistaking the source of the isolated infants' cry for bread, "bekos" (2.2.4). The king foolishly comes to believe that the infants are crying out in Phrygian. In reality, however, the children have picked up on their goat caretakers' bleating, which comic fragments suggest would have sounded something like "bē" to Herodotus' Greek audience.[59] Perhaps Psammetichus' inability to differentiate between goats' cries and human language should not be surprising: he is a frequent butt of Herodotean jokes, and Herodotus uses him as a foil for his own more successful inquiries. Here, the pharaoh Psammetichus mirrors the author in his use of linguistic clues to investigate the origins of various peoples but does so in a bumbling way that is meant to make Herodotus' efforts look better by comparison, much like when Herodotus asserts that anyone with common sense could have done a better job measuring the depth of the Nile than Psammetichus (2.28.4; Christ 1994, 172).[60]

To understand how the Psammetichus episode relates to Herodotus' views of language, it is essential to establish that the king's experiment is not to be taken seriously. That we should take this anecdote to be a joke finds additional support in the many ancient writers who take this position (Liddell et al. 1968, s.v. βεκεσέληνε). There is also modern scholarship supporting this

[59] E.g. ὁ δ' ἠλίθιος ὥσπερ πρόβατον βῆ βῆ λέγων βαδίζει, "the foolish man goes around saying 'bē bē' like a sheep" (Cratinus, fragment 43).

[60] Psammetichus' story in its Herodotean form shows traces of the Ionian science of the author's own time, insofar as it is an attempt to solve a problem by performing an experiment. The story is a popular one in the Greek tradition and probably showed up in Hecataeus (Meulenaere 1951, 47; Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 2007, 242). See Christ (1994) on kings as inquirers. On the (relatively infrequent) use of controlled experiments in Greek science, see Lloyd (1966, 73–79). See the first and third chapters for Herodotus' use of linguistic clues when examining the origins of various peoples.

interpretation such as Lateiner (1989), Vannicelli (1997), and Miletti (2008, 142). Lateiner and Vannicelli both argue that the episode represents a "false start" whose methodological aberrance puts Herodotus' own investigations in a more positive light (Lateiner 1989, 38; Vannicelli 1997, 216). The king's role in making others' research look better carries over into modern times, with one modern linguist exclaiming, "[W]e have come a long way since Psammetichos" (Tartter 1986, 556; Rymer 1994, 4).[61] Furthermore, if we do not take Psammetichus' experiment seriously, this removes the contradiction that would arise from Herodotus' assertion that Egyptians have existed since the beginnings of humanity (2.15). That *bekos* very probably *was* the Phrygian word for bread, appearing as such both in Neo-Phrygian inscriptions and in the writings of other Greeks, does not make the joke any less funny (A. B. Lloyd 1976, 7). The joke is just as funny when the king chooses the more preposterous of the two possible options to explain the children's utterance.[62] A final piece of evidence pointing to an ironic reading of the episode is the fact that this would be in keeping with the possibility that, in considerably altered form, it may go back in some way to an Egyptian original, especially since in Egyptian folk-tales gods and kings show up frequently as "figures of fun" (A. B. Lloyd 1976, 6, 9–12).[63]

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[61] This episode about Psammetichus has attracted a huge amount of modern commentary, probably more than any other linguistic incident in Herodotus. Much of it runs counter to the humorous and ironic interpretation I have put forward here (e.g. Gera 2003, 68–111; Harrison 1998, 33–34). See among others Miletti (2008, 141–43), Gera (2003, 68–111), Vannicelli (1997), Campos Daroca (1992, 49–55), Salmon (1956).

[62] For puns in Herodotus, see among others Powell (1937); for humor in Herodotus, Dewald (2006).

[63] One piece of evidence that Lloyd uses to argue that Herodotus' version of the story must be Greek, though he thinks its origins may ultimately be Egyptian, is the fact that βεκός is surprisingly like an Egyptian word for Egypt, and so such an utterance would suggest to an Egyptian audience that the Egyptians were indeed the first people. Perhaps, then, the original version still played on βέκος, but the king mistook the bleating sound to indicate the Egyptians were indeed the world's first people instead of the Phrygians, whose age seems to be a peculiarly Greek preoccupation.

An example of a tale told at the expense of a pharaoh occurs in the collected stories of the high priests of Memphis, in which Thutmose III is transported to Ethiopia and beaten by the king of that country (A. B. Lloyd 1976, 103; Griffith 1985, 173). Dewald acknowledges the particular density of humorous stories in the Egyptian excursus and the way they seem to cluster around certain kings (2006, 149–50). Flory points out that Herodotus' sophisticated and deliberate use of irony signals his self-awareness of the manipulation of truth and fiction (1987, 78). Griffiths (2001) follows a similar tack.

Also see Moyer (2013) on authentically Egyptian voices in Herodotus.

The Psammetichus episode also subtly pits two views of language acquisition against each other. Psammetichus assumes that language is both innate and fully formed. He does not, however, assume that linguistic differences are unique: there is one common language that all people know innately, and that would be the world's oldest, the roots of a great tree. Herodotus' joke makes fun of this idea, while at the same time suggesting that language is learned rather than innate.[64] That the children learn "language" from the goat responsible for nursing them suggests that Herodotus thought children learned language from their mothers specifically. This idea is also implied by the first Sauromatae learning their mothers' version of Scythian and the children of Lemnian mothers learning Greek. Significantly Herodotus nowhere describes children learning a language from their fathers or peers (Hdt. 4.108, 6.138.2). On the other hand, the isolated infants also resemble the young Egyptian children whom Psammetichus sends to live among his Greek and Carian mercenaries to learn their language (Hdt. 2.154.2), but with animal rather than human models.

Also relevant is the way in which the episode breaks down a strict division between human and animal communication by suggesting that children raised by goats would communicate like goats. This ambiguity is encoded in the verb used of the children's speech, *ephōneon*. As discussed above, like the noun *phōnē* from which it derives, the verb *phōneō* can indicate the production of human speech just as much as animal noises. *Phōnē* also appears in the king's order to the goatherd, whom he commands not to release a *phōnē* before the isolated children (ἐντειλάμενος μηδένα ἀντίον αὐτῶν μηδεμίαν φωνὴν ἱέναι).

Psammetichus' experiment hints not only at Herodotus' conception of how language is learned, but also at his views on its ultimate origins. In an earlier chapter, we saw how Herodotus

[64] While Psammetichus' idea may seem ridiculous, it is interesting in that he thinks that there is some innate language (Phrygian) which is then (in most cases) replaced by some learned language (like Egyptian).

uses linguistic evidence to examine the distant past, but Psammetichus' experiment has an even more ambitious aim: to determine the first human language (presumably spoken by the first people). Another crucial difference between Herodotus and the pharaoh is that Psammetichus' experiment does not involve language contact in any explicit way, whereas Herodotus' explanations of language change almost always do. Nevertheless, the experiment does imply that Psammetichus assumes that every newborn shares Phrygian as an innate primordial language (which some modern people still speak) and then learn by contact the language of the culture into which they are born. That is, almost nobody's supposed first language is really their first language. As Campos Daroca points out, this is in keeping with Herodotus' diffusionist model of human culture, which comes up elsewhere with the Egyptians' export of the twelve gods to other peoples and the ultimately non-Greek origins of the Athenians (Hdt. 1.57, 2.52; Campos Daroca 1992, 49; Weber 1976, 80; Mora 1986, 225). According to this model, the similarities between human cultures are best explained by the spread of cultural traits from one to another. Overall, the similarity of some the assumptions underlying Psammetichus' assumptions to the Herodotean model of cultural diffusion make it seem most likely that Herodotus too would have imagined language as having a single origin from which it was propagated throughout the peoples of the world, despite the contempt in which he seems to hold Psammetichus more generally.[65] Animals, however, seem to have no role in this origin.

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[65] On the other hand, that Psammetichus' search for the first language ends in the bleating of goats should perhaps not be too surprising. After all, a fragment of Callimachus relates a tale told by "Aesop the Sardinian" that, in the time of Cronos, animals and men spoke a common language (*Iambus* 2 fr. 192 Pfeiffer). The idea of this long-ago common language, however, serves to divide humans and animals rather than bring them together, as when Zeus deprives the animals of their speech, thereby marking a fundamental transition out of the golden age. Thus language serves, much like justice in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, as the fundamental trait dividing animals and humans (Gera 2003, 32). Compare also Plato's *Protagoras* (322a–323c). Moreover, human language also originates in animal noises in Lucretius, where humans' first use of language is not dissimilar to the use by animals of various sounds to communicate their emotional responses (Lucr. 5.1028-90).

*Birds and Sirens*

Two different but related strains of Greek thought on birds blend the human and the animal in ways upon which Herodotus plays in his narrative. The first strain is found in Aristotle and others' works on animals, which directly document the imitative powers of birds, even suggesting that they might be capable of language. The second strain is the literary trope that foreign languages sound like bird noises, which also makes an implicit connection between birdsong and human language. Herodotus too shows an interest in birds, and one way to view his descriptions of the foundation of the oracle of Dodona and of the screeching Troglodytes is as his own reaction to these two strains of thought. While Herodotus is not fully supportive of the idea that birds could talk like people, he does seem to think people could sound like birds.

Birds are a particularly liminal animal when it comes to the distinctions between human language and animal noises. Human and avian features combine in depictions of sirens and harpies (Egeler 2011, 71:349–95; see fig. 1 below). Moreover, there are more tales about humans metamorphizing into birds than into any other animal (Mynott 2018, 246). Aristotle thought of birds as the animal most like humans in capability for speech, due largely to their tongues and pharynx, which he saw as the closest to those of humans. Aristotle makes the distinction between voice and speech in the *Politics*, where he argues that humans' unique political and linguistics abilities are naturally connected: while animals may have voice, only humans have speech, and only humans have politics (*Pol*. 1.1253a).[66] Yet in the *Historia Animalium* Aristotle seems to contradict himself in saying that, while animals with a voice lack the capacity for *dialektos*, some birds are capable of speech due to their anatomy (504b1):

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[66] Compare also Heath on Aeschylus' *Oresteia*: "The city-state makes it possible for us to live fully human lives. Humans are speaking, law-needing animals" (2005, 221).

Καὶ γλῶτταν ἅπαντες, ταύτην δ᾽ ἀνομοίαν· οἱ μὲν γὰρ μακρὰν οἱ δὲ μάλιστα δὲ τῶν ζῴων μετὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον γράμματα φθέγγεται ἔνια τῶν ὀρνίθων γένη· τοιαῦτα δ᾽ ἐστὶ τὰ πλατύγλωττα αὐτῶν μάλιστα.

All (birds) have a tongue, but not of the same sort. For some of them have a long one, others a short one. Most of all animals after man, some species of birds produce articulate sounds, and the flat-tongued ones most of all.

He repeats a similar claim later in the same work, namely that some birds have speech (*dialektos*, 536a20-536a22), though he states elsewhere in the work that speech is exclusively human.[67]

Figure 1: Depiction of a Siren from an Attic hydria, circa 550 BCE (Egeler 2011, 71:282).

Ctesias, the late fifth-century-BCE Greek doctor at the court of the Persian King Artaxerxes II who wrote histories of Persia and India, also mentions talking birds in his *Indica*. Like Herodotus, he has been accused of being unreliable if entertaining (Gera 2003, 208). He says of the parrot (FGrH 688 F 45.8):

γλῶσσαν ἀνθρωπίνην ἔχει καὶ φωνήν... διαλέγεσθαι δὲ αὐτὸ ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπον Ἰνδιστί, ἂν δὲ Ἑλληνιστὶ μάθηι, καὶ Ἑλληνιστί.

It has a human tongue and voice… and it can speak Indian like a human, or Greek, if it learns Greek.[68]

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[67] Elsewhere in the *Historia Animalium* Aristotle states (536a. 33-536b.2): τὰ δὲ ζῳοτόκα καὶ τετράποδα ζῷα ἄλλο ἄλλην φωνὴν ἀφίησι, διάλεκτον δ᾽ οὐδὲν ἔχει, ἀλλ᾽ ἴδιον τοῦτ᾽ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν. "All the viviparous and four-legged animals produce different voices, but they do not have speech, because this is proper to man".

[68] Ctesias seems to know of only one Indian language, whereas Herodotus acknowledges India's linguistic diversity (Hdt. 3.98.3).

While language is often a key factor distinguishing Greeks from barbarians, here all human languages are placed on the same footing in admitting the encroachment of the animal into their domain.[69] Thus, both Ctesias and Aristotle may discuss animals and language in ways that blur the distinctions between Greek and barbarian, animal and human. In a counterpoint to the Psammetichus experiment, where children learn to bleat from goats, here a parrot learns to speak from humans.

Birds also play a liminal role between humans and animals in the poetic theory of Pausimachus, a critic who argued that successful poetry is above all a matter of pleasing sounds (Janko 2003, 165–86). Pausimachus' work survives via that of Philodemus, the Epicurean philosopher, literary theorist, and epigrammatist who was born at Gadara in modern Jordan around 110 BCE (Janko 2003, 2–7). Philodemus' *On Poems* contests Pausimachus' euphonic views. According to Pausimachus, nightingales, ravens, and parrots all produce the types of articulated vocalization which give poetry its power (Janko 2020, F 92, 93). While the raven makes the most human-like vocalizations, both ravens and parrots enunciate well and can utter an iambic verse like a schoolboy (τοὺς κόρακας καὶ τοὺς ψιττακοὺς εὖ ἐκφέρειν, λέγειν δὲ τὸν ἴαμβον οἷον τὸν μαθητήν; Janko 2020, F 99). The differences between birds, according to Pausimachus, can illuminate the differences between good and bad poetry. While some birds like the nightingale produce pleasing sounds by nature, other birds like the parrot produce the sort of charmless sounds that bad poets do (Janko 2020, F 93, 94, 97). Inasmuch as good and bad poetry have parallels in the animal world, the difference between the two cannot lie within considerations of genre, since parrots do not know whether they are speaking a line from tragedy

[69] On language as a distinguishing factor between Greeks and barbarians, see Chapter 3. Ctesias is also accepting of the idea that there are numerate animals. He claims that there are cows at Susa willing to carry 100 buckets of water to irrigate the royal gardens, but who refuse to carry even one bucket more (*FGrH* 688 F 34a-b).

or from epic (Janko 2020, F 95). Pausimachus thus uses animals to comment on the human art of poetry.

While Herodotus was writing before authors like Ctesias, Aristotle, and Pausimachus, we will see that his treatment of animal language seems to interact with this tradition, as well as another, far earlier-attested one. There is also a connection between human language and bird noises in the trope of Greek literature that foreign, unintelligble speech is like birdsong. Homer is often thought of as providing the earliest example (Kirk 1985, 265). He describes the Trojans and their multilingual allies rushing forth on the battlefield as follows (*Il*. 3.1-7):[70]

> Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κόσμηθεν ἅμ’ ἡγεμόνεσσιν ἕκαστοι,
> Τρῶες μὲν κλαγγῇ τ’ ἐνοπῇ τ’ ἴσαν ὄρνιθες ὣς
> ἠΰτε περ κλαγγὴ γεράνων πέλει οὐρανόθι πρό·
> αἵ τ’ ἐπεὶ οὖν χειμῶνα φύγον καὶ ἀθέσφατον ὄμβρον
> κλαγγῇ ταί γε πέτονται ἐπ’ ὠκεανοῖο ῥοάων
> ἀνδράσι Πυγμαίοισι φόνον καὶ κῆρα φέρουσαι·
> ἠέριαι δ’ ἄρα ταί γε κακὴν ἔριδα προφέρονται.
>
> But when each group had been marshaled with their leaders, the Trojans went like birds with a cry and a shout, just as the cry of cranes also rises before heaven. They fly with a cry to the streams of Ocean, when they flee winter and awful rain, bringing slaughter and death to the Pygmy men, and they offer evil battle at dawn.

Like *phōnē,* the word used here for ‘cry’, *klangē*, frequently applies both to screams of birds or other animals as well as human battle cries (Liddell et al. 1968, s.v. κλαγγή). The connection between the Trojan’s foreign speech and the choice of this simile is perhaps indicated by the very otherness of the battle between Cranes and Pygmies, though in this analogy the Greeks would be the Pygmies, and in any case Homer compares the Greek forces to birds in the same fashion (*Il*. 2.459-468; Kirk 1985, 264).

[70] Homer describes the Trojans and their allies speaking different tongues because they are called from many lands (ἀλλὰ γλῶσσα μέμικτο, πολύκλητοι δ’ ἔσαν ἄνδρες, *Il.* 4.438). In *Talking Trojan*, Hilary Mackie also contrasts the chaotic clamor of this example with Achaean use of language to attain order or *kosmos* (Mackie 1996, 15–41).

In drama, the connection between foreign speech and birdsong is even more explicit. Clytemnestra says of Cassandra (Aesch. *Ag*. 1050-2):

> ἀλλ’ εἴπερ ἐστὶ μὴ χελιδόνος δίκην
> ἀγνῶτα φωνὴν βάρβαρον κεκτημένη,
> ἔσω φρενῶν λέγουσα πείθω νιν λόγωι.
>
> But if she has not got a strange and foreign language like a swallow’s, now let me persuade her, speaking within her comprehension.[71]

Other examples include Sophocles’ *Antigone* (999–1004) and Aristophanes’ *Frogs* (*Ran.* 678-82). In the former, the seer Tiresias describes how, while taking an augury, the birds were inauspiciously “screaming in an evil and barbarian frenzy” (κακῷ κλάζοντας οἴστρῳ καὶ βεβαρβαρωμένῳ). In the latter, a Thracian swallow is said to roar terribly on the lips of the politician Cleophon (δεινὸν ἐπιβρέμεται Θρῃκία χελιδὼν), whose mother was allegedly Thracian (that is, a slave).[72]

As Mynott notes at several occasions in his book on birds in antiquity, Herodotus was also interested in birds (2018, 193–95, 246, 327). Not all of them talk, like the Phoenix in Egypt, which he describes at 2.73, though he notes that he has never seen one himself, except in paintings. Another example is the cinnamon birds in Arabia, described at 3.3.[73] Herodotus also describes the *trochilos* (‘runner’) bird, which the crocodile allows to enter its mouth unharmed to eat troublesome leeches (2.68). This last example is, like the Phoenix of which Herodotus himself seems skeptical, of questionable veracity, despite a faked photo supposedly illustrating the behavior (see fig. 2 below). Modern biologists have identified the *trochilos* with the Egyptian

[71] This animal metaphor is the first of a number used to describe Cassandra. She is likewise a game animal (1063), a horse (1066-7), an ox (1071), a bloodhound (1093), a nightingale (1145), a general bird (1316), and finally a swan (1444). See Raeburn and Thomas (2012, 183).
[72] For the ridicule of Athenian politicians as slavish, see Lape (2010).
[73] The cinnamon birds in Arabia carry sticks of cinnamon up to inaccessible nests on steep mountain crags. Arabs leave out big pieces of animal carcasses that are too heavy for the birds’ nests. The birds bring the carcasses up to the nests, which, not being able to support the weight, fall to the ground, allowing them to collect the cinnamon.

plover (*Pluvianus aegyptius*) or the spur-winged lapwing (*Vanellus spinosus*), though the term could also possibly refer to a wren or a sandpiper. It seems that crocodile teeth are not of such a nature as to require cleaning, and birds have not been observed eating leeches from crocodiles' mouths, with the exception of a few reports of some sandpipers doing so (Mynott 2018, 194; MacFarland and Reeder 1974, 464). Still, whether Herodotus' report is strictly true or not, he is perhaps the first person to describe a symbiotic relationship between two species. Thus, Herodotus' description of the *trochilos* resembles his description of the various linguistic contact phenomena that were described in the first chapter: even if the fact situations he describes are not always entirely accurate, he still derives theoretical models from them that showcase his critical faculties and intellectual independence.

*Figure 2: Faked photo with plover and crocodile (Mynott 2018, 194).*

Herodotus' description of the foundation of the oracle of Zeus at Dodona seems to borrow both from the Aeschylean and Homeric trope of foreign speech as birdsong and the idea that birds are capable of human speech, only to diverge from both in important details.[74] According to Herodotus, Theban priests say that two Egyptian priestesses, kidnapped by

[74] Harrison notes that perhaps Herodotus is playing on the dual meaning of the word *hermēneus*, which can mean both 'oracle' and 'interpreter' (1998, 18). On the etymology of *hermēneus* see Janko (2014).

Phoenicians, were sold into slavery, one in Libya, the other in Greece. These slaves then used their sacred knowledge to found parallel oracles in different lands (2.54). The prophetesses of Dodona in Greece, however, tell a story involving talking black doves who fly from Egyptian Thebes to Libya and Dodona (2.55.2):

> ἱζομένην δέ μιν ἐπὶ φηγὸν αὐδάξασθαι φωνῇ ἀνθρωπηίῃ ὡς χρεὸν εἴη μαντήιον αὐτόθι Διὸς γενέσθαι, καὶ αὐτοὺς ὑπολαβεῖν θεῖον εἶναι τὸ ἐπαγγελλόμενον αὐτοῖσι, καί σφεας ἐκ τούτου ποιῆσαι.
>
> She, sitting on an oak tree, spoke with a human voice that there should be an oracle of Zeus there, and they understood that the command to them was divine, and they acted according to it.

Herodotus, however, does not accept the traditional explanation (2.57.1-2):

> πελειάδες δέ μοι δοκέουσι κληθῆναι πρὸς Δωδωναίων ἐπὶ τοῦδε αἱ γυναῖκες, διότι βάρβαροι ἦσαν, ἐδόκεον δέ σφι ὁμοίως ὄρνισι φθέγγεσθαι· [2] μετὰ δὲ χρόνον τὴν πελειάδα ἀνθρωπηίῃ φωνῇ αὐδάξασθαι λέγουσι, ἐπείτε συνετά σφι ηὔδα ἡ γυνή· ἕως δὲ ἐβαρβάριζε, ὄρνιθος τρόπον ἐδόκεέ σφι φθέγγεσθαι, ἐπεὶ τέῳ ἂν τρόπῳ πελειάς γε ἀνθρωπηίῃ φωνῇ φθέγξαιτο; μέλαιναν δὲ λέγοντες εἶναι τὴν πελειάδα σημαίνουσι ὅτι Αἰγυπτίη ἡ γυνὴ ἦν.
>
> It seems to me that the women were called doves by the people of Dodona for this reason, because they were barbarians, and it seemed to them that they sounded like birds. After a while, however, they say that the dove spoke with a human voice, when the woman spoke things that they could understand. As long as she spoke a barbarian language, she seemed to them to speak like a bird, since how could a dove speak with a human voice? They indicate that she was an Egyptian woman by saying that the dove was black.

In this passage *phthengomai* (φθέγγομαι) and *phōnē* (φωνή) are again useful to Herodotus, allowing him to be ambiguous about human and animal noises, just as in the Psammetichus episode. There, the language used to describe the children's bleating echoes the ambiguity already present in Herodotus' use of *phōnē* more generally and *phthengomai* specifically. Here, the verb *phthengomai* 'make a sound' is used to describe both a bird's song and human language, although in the episode in general it is used more frequently to describe the bird's song, with *audazomai* used for most instances of speaking (2.57.2).

This episode is an example of a larger tendency to rationalize myths (Miletti 2008, 50). Gera sees in this passage a rejection of Ctesias and those like him who believe animals in general, and birds specifically, might be able to have human language, although admittedly Herodotus speaks here of doves in particular and not birds more generally (Gera 2003, 209). In combination with the Psammetichus episode, the Dodona narrative suggests that overlaps between human and animal language go one way: human children may learn from goats, but birds cannot speak with a human voice. Harrison, in contrast to Gera, roots this passage firmly in the Greek tradition of equating the speech of foreigners to that of birds (Harrison 1998, 17–18). Munson, the title of whose book on barbarian languages in Herodotus makes direct reference to this passage, sees in it similar themes (Munson 2005, 67–69).

While Herodotus does not believe doves could speak with a human voice, we will see below that Harrison and Munson are right that he can conceive of people who speak with bird voices. Moreover, Herodotus' rhetorical question, which implies that the prophetesses seemed to speak like doves while they spoke a barbarian language, because clearly doves cannot speak with a human voice, implies birds cannot talk like humans, though foreign speech can sound like birdsong. Here, however, it should be added that it is not necessarily Herodotus' point that Egyptians literally speak like birds. Rather, the historian seems to be using his knowledge of common literary tropes to criticize those who would interpret the story in an overly literal fashion. Perhaps we are even to imagine that the confusion about whether the priestesses really were doves was in some way due to the lack of understanding of those early Greeks who Herodotus has just informed the reader needed the Egyptians to teach them to worship individual gods.

Whereas Herodotus does not find the idea of birds that speak like people believable in the Dodona episode, elsewhere he seems to endorse the opposite phenomenon, people who speak like birds. The cave-dwelling Ethiopians, or Troglodytes, appear to be imitating bats but are really speaking a human language.[75] Bats are, to Greeks, another type of bird.[76] Herodotus informs us (4.183.4): [77]

> σιτέονται δὲ οἱ τρωγοδύται ὄφις καὶ σαύρους καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ἑρπετῶν: γλῶσσαν δὲ οὐδεμιῇ ἄλλῃ παρομοίην νενομίκασι, ἀλλὰ τετρίγασι κατά περ αἱ νυκτερίδες.
>
> The Troglodytes feed on snakes and lizards and other such creeping things. They use a tongue that resembles no other, but they utter shrill cries like bats.

The Troglodytes appear to be feeding on what some regard, from a Herodotean perspective, as beastly food, though, food being scarce in the desert, lizards have not uncommonly served as an important source of protein for Saharan peoples (Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 2007, 707). The Troglodytes' choice of food may show how this people's language fits into a larger animalism, as does the fact that the Garamantes hunt them in chariots as if they were game.[78] Herodotus uses *glōssa* here and not *phōnē*, emphasizing that what they speak is indeed a human language, even if it contains bat-like sounds. Still, it is important not jump to conclusions about the ideological

[75] Compare the bat-like squeaking of the suitors as Hermes leads them down to the underworld (Od. 24.5–9). Moreover, "the dead can understand each other, as the slain suitors' subsequent conversations with Iliadic heroes reveal, but their words are incomprehensible to the living" (Heath 2005, 57–58).
[76] This is clear from Aristophanes *Av.* 1296, where a list of Avian nicknames includes "the Ibis" (of Lycurgus, perhaps suggesting an Egyptian connection) and "the Bat" (of Chaerephon due to his unhealthy indoor life of study with Socrates; see also Dunbar 1995, 638–44, but contrast Arist. *HA* 490a7-13).
[77] I use the term Troglodyte (*trōglodytēs*, τρωγλο-δύτης), despite the fact that it probably comes from a misreading of *trōgodytēs* (τρωγο-δύτης), because it is the most conventional way to refer to these people. Still, "Trogodyte" should be preferred in this passage, though both terms can mean 'one who creeps into holes', at least according to Hesychius, who claims that *trōks* (normally 'gnawer', Liddell et al. 1968, s.v. τρώξ, genitive τρωγός) can mean *trōglē* (τρώγλη, 'hole formed by gnawing'). In reading τρωγοδύται here, I follow Wilson, who prints τρωγοδύται. Corcella also disagrees with τρωγλοδύται. τρωγοδύται is also the majority reading, though both variants appear in the textual tradition of passages in other authors that mention this people, such as Cicero *De Divinatione* 2.44 and Diodorus Siculus 1.37. This longstanding variation suggests that what is really going on is one word that Greeks and Romans were not quite sure how to spell.
[78] On the Garamantes see Daniels (1970), McCall (1999), and Pelling (2005).

valence of any particular food practice. Northern Barbarians may be known as “drinkers of raw milk” (Shaw 1982). Nevertheless, *not* eating something can be equally marked: Greeks and Romans thought it strange not to eat all species of birds (Mynott 2018).

Still, the Troglodytes’ very name, from an adjective meaning ‘who creeps into holes’, implies a certain animalism, though it also has the potential to ground their origins in the earth itself. The same adjective *trōglodytēs* is elsewhere applied to foxes, snakes, and crabs (Arist. *Historia Animalium* 610a12, *de Incessu Animalium*). We might be supposed to understand that these Ethiopians’ cave dwelling means they live a little more like animals than other peoples. This is certainly the connotation of cave-dwelling in the case of the Cyclopes, whose dwelling situation Homer connects with a wild and antisocial lifestyle.[79] Moreover, dwelling in caves seems especially appropriate for a bat-like people. Nevertheless, the connection with living in the ground may also suggest the Troglodytes’ autochthony. This pattern is found in representations of the first king of Athens, Cecrops, depicted, as Forsdyke states, “as half-snake and half-man, a sign of double nature as a creature intimately associated with the earth and a mortal king” (2012, 124). The suggestion that the Troglodytes, a barbarian and animal-like people, might be autochthonous just like the Athenians challenges Greek polarities.

Nevertheless, it confirms Greek polarities that the Troglodytes are not the only people with an animal-like language to be found in the Libyan desert, where, as commonly at the ends of the earth, animal and human features tend to intersect and monsters abound (Romm 1994). The effects of this extend to language. Another example is the Atarantes or Atlantes (there is

[79] Homer says of the Cyclopes (*Od*. 9.113-115): “they live on the tops of lofty mountains and in hollow caves, and each one is his children’s and wife’s lawgiver and they have no regard for each other” (ἀλλ᾽ οἵ γ᾽ ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων ναίουσι κάρηνα ἐν σπέεσι γλαφυροῖσι, θεμιστεύει δὲ ἕκαστος παίδων ἠδ᾽ ἀλόχων, οὐδ᾽ ἀλλήλων ἀλέγουσιν).

debate about which ethnonym more correctly applies).[80] Whatever their collective name, more relevant here is the fact that, unlike any other people Herodotus knows, they lack individual names (4.184):

> ἀπὸ δὲ Γαραμάντων δι᾽ ἀλλέων δέκα ἡμερέων ὁδοῦ ἄλλος ἁλός τε κολωνὸς καὶ ὕδωρ, καὶ ἄνθρωποι περὶ αὐτὸν οἰκέουσι τοῖσι οὔνομά ἐστι Ἀτάραντες, οἳ ἀνώνυμοί εἰσι μοῦνοι ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν· ἁλέσι μὲν γάρ σφί ἐστι Ἀτάραντες οὔνομα, ἑνὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ αὐτῶν οὔνομα οὐδὲν κεῖται.
>
> Another ten days' journey from the Garamantes there is another salt hill and water, and people live near this who are called Atarantes, who are the only people we know without names. For collectively they are called the Atarantes, but each of them is individually anonymous.

Herodotus thus again likens this people to animals, since he denies them names, a human linguistic universal, as he himself suggests by mentioning that these are the only anonymous people whom he knows.[81] As the inability of the Nasamoni to understand the Pygmies they encounter deep in the desert at 2.32 shows, geographic distance and linguistic difference tend to correlate in Herodotus, making it only natural that the Troglodytes and Atarantes have such extreme languages.[82] Similar are the Dog-heads of Ctesias' *Indica*, who, though they are said to understand human language, are unable to produce it, as they lack the necessary anatomy, unlike Aristotle's birds who do talk, having the necessary anatomy (*FGrH* 688; Gera 2003, 186).[83] Thus, the general context of the Troglodytes and their neighbors suggest that their speaking like bats is an even more striking example than that of Dodona of the animalizing of barbarians through their language.

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[80] For the issue of their name see Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella (2007, 707–8). Wilson's commentary does not discuss the issue but he prints Ἀτάραντες. The manuscripts transmit Ἄτλαντες, but this is probably a corruption resulting from confusion with the Ἄτλαντες mentioned below. Comparison with Stephanus of Byzantium suggests Ἀτάραντες, which may be related to the Berber *adrar* 'mountain'.
[81] Nevertheless, it is also possible that Herodotus' claim that the Atarantes lack names has to do with a secrecy about names, lest they be used to work magic against their owners (Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 2007, 208).
[82] Compare also the unique language of the Androphagoi at 4.106.
[83] The Dog-heads are also interesting for the way they mix animalistic and godlike traits, when peoples on the edge of the earth are typically characterized as either one or the other (Gera 2003, 186–87).

Nevertheless, by comparing Herodotus' descriptions of the Troglodytes and the Atarantes to Pliny's later description in his *Natural Histories*, it emerges that Herodotus in fact portrays them more sympathetically than was typical. On the one hand, Pliny makes explicit the judgements that seem to be implied in Herodotus' narrative. On the other hand, we should be careful not to read too much of Pliny's judgements onto the Herodotean descriptions, which lack explicit analysis. Pliny says of the Atarantes (whom he terms the Atlantes at *HN* 5.45):

> Atlantes degeneres sunt humani ritus, si credimus. nam neque nominum ullorum inter ipsos appellatio est et solem orientem occidentemque dira inprecatione contuentur ut exitialem ipsis agrisque, neque in somno visunt qualia reliqui mortales.
>
> The Atlantes have fallen from human custom, if we are to believe it. For among them they have no use of any names and they observe the setting and rising sun with dreadful curses, as if it were deadly to them and their fields, and they do not see such things in sleep as other mortals.

Whereas Herodotus treats the Atarantes' cursing of the sun as only natural, given their desert environment, in Pliny it has fallen in with their language as a proof of their disconnect from human society and norms. The claim that they experience no dreams comes from Herodotus' description of the similarly named Atlantes (4.184.4). Pliny expands on Herodotus' Troglodytes in the same passage:

> Trogodytae specus excavant; hae illis domus, victus serpentium carnes, stridorque, non vox: adeo sermonis commercio carent.
>
> The Troglodytes dig out holes; these are their homes, their food is the meat of serpents, and they shriek instead of having a voice: it is to such a degree that they lack conversation.

Whereas in Herodotus their screeching represents a type of language, in Pliny it is a replacement for language, further animalizing the Troglodytes. Thus, again we see that Pliny's description has two effects: to some extent it makes explicit what was implicit in Herodotus, while

simultaneously showing somewhat paradoxically that Herodotus handled his account of the same people more sympathetically than he could have.

In summary, Herodotus' descriptions of bird language tend to fall more into the trend of equating bird speech with that of barbarians than that of identifying birds as a type of animal particularly likely to break the human monopoly on speech. Indeed, Herodotus seems, like a modern, to argue for the uniqueness of language to humans, since he is unable to believe that birds talk, even where Ctesias and Aristotle would later disagree. He is, however, able to imagine that some human speech might sound like birdsong, either because the language is not understood, as in the case of the black doves, or because the language actually sounds in some way like a avian noise, as in the case of the Troglodytes. While others may confuse birdsong with human language, however, Herodotus shows himself capable of making the distinction. This is not dissimilar to Herodotus' approach to animal language more generally: in the case of Psammetichus' experiment, after all, we will again see characters whose confusion about the difference between animal noises and human language must be clarified by the author.

### *Divine Language*

At six points in the Homeric epics, the poet specifies divine terms for specific objects. In four of these cases, all Iliadic, Homer contrasts a human lexical item with the gods' term. While each occurrence of the trope responds to contextual literary demands, there is a basic pattern underlying all of them: the human term is always the ordinary Greek designation for the object, place or being, with the gods' word being a poetic circumscription (Watkins 1970, 2; Güntert 1921).[84] The trope appears to have Indo-European roots, occurring also in Old Norse, Old Irish, and Sanskrit poetry (Watkins 1970). More fully stated, the trope constitutes "a metalinguistic

[84] See also Soares Santoprete and Hoffman (2017) and Mawet (1973).

poetic figure setting forth explicitly a hierarchy in the lexicon … the lower level, that of ordinary language, is figured as the 'language of men,' while the higher and more restricted level of formal, poetic, or otherwise exotic language is figured in this ancient metaphor as the 'language of the gods'" (Watkins 1970, 2). Thus when Sleep is described hiding himself from Zeus in the form of a bird, two terms are given (*Il*. 14.289-291):

> ἔνθ' ἧστ' ὄζοισιν πεπυκασμένος εἰλατίνοισιν
> ὄρνιθι λιγυρῇ ἐναλίγκιος, ἥν τ' ἐν ὄρεσσι
> χαλκίδα κικλήσκουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δὲ κύμινδιν.
>
> There he perched, covered closely by fir branches, like the clear-voiced mountain bird that the gods call *chalkis*, men *cymindis*.

Here, we have a contrast between two appellations for the same bird, the poetic *chalkis* (a *chalkos*, that is bronze-colored bird) contrasting with the more common *cymindis* (which is one of the birds mentioned in the Aristophanic list mentioned earlier in this chapter).

On three other occasions, the contrast is between local or personal names. One occurs when Achilles is reminding his mother Thetis of the time she kept Zeus out of bondage by sending a monster to high Olympus to scare the other gods into supporting Zeus (*Il*.1.403):

> ἀλλὰ σὺ τόν γ' ἐλθοῦσα θεὰ ὑπελύσαο δεσμῶν,
> ὦχ' ἑκατόγχειρον καλέσασ' ἐς μακρὸν Ὄλυμπον,
> ὃν Βριάρεων καλέουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δέ τε πάντες
> Αἰγαίων', ὃ γὰρ αὖτε βίην οὗ πατρὸς ἀμείνων…
>
> But you, goddess, came and freed him from his bonds, having quickly called the hundred-handed one to high Olympus, whom the gods call Briareus, but all men Aegaeon, for he is stronger than his father.

This example again fits the same pattern: Aegaeon is the monster's normal name, whereas Briareus means 'the strong', as the explanatory clause at the end of the passage makes clear (Watkins 1970, 2). Similarly, two names for the Scamander river are contrasted (*Il*. 20.74). In another topographical example, two names for the same hill are contrasted (*Il*. 2.811-814).

At two points in the *Odyssey*, the gods' term for something is given without reference to the mortal one.[85] Hermes gives Odysseus a drug to make him immune from Circe's attempts to drug him, which the hero describes thus (*Od.* 10.305):

> μῶλυ δέ μιν καλέουσι θεοί, χαλεπὸν δέ τ' ὀρύσσειν
> ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι· θεοὶ δέ τε πάντα δύνανται.
>
> The gods call it *mōlu*, and it is hard to dig for mortal men, but the gods can do anything.

*Mōlu* appears without complement here because, with its aura of black magic and taboo, there is simply no unmarked mortal counterpart (Watkins 1970, 2). Another example in the *Odyssey*, in which only the gods' term is given, occurs at 12.61, when Circe describes the various dangers, including Scylla and the Sirens, that await Odysseus and his men on the rest of their journey. Among them are the rocks that, according to Circe, the gods call the Planktai, the wandering rocks. The word has an obvious Greek etymology (from the adjective *planktos* from *plazomai*, 'to wander'), and so fits in among the other divine terms, which are mostly poetic descriptions. In this case, however, there does not seem to be any other more neutral word to describe the rocks.

In connecting the idea of divine language in these passages to divine language in Herodotus, it is important to keep in mind Watkins' insistence that "the metaphor was just a metaphor," as shown by the fact that Thor uses human words just as "the gods speak men's Greek" (Watkins 1970, 3). While this is undoubtedly true to an extent, it is just as true that Homer repeatedly describes the Trojans and their allies speaking a multitude of non-Greek languages despite the fact that all their dialogue is presented in Greek. Just as with the Trojans, moreover, perhaps some of the imagined difference in language is refigured poetically into tone and theme (Mackie 1996). There are also other reasons to think of the gods as possessing their

[85] See also Clay (1972).

own language. Clay has shown that in the Odyssey *audē* "does not merely denote the vocal production of sounds but the production of intelligible human speech" (1974, 131). This explains the epithet *audēeis*, which literally means "having *audē*" but often works to distinguish mortals from the gods or to describe gods taking mortal form (*Od*. 5.334, 6.125, 10.136, 11.8, 12.150, 12.449). The adjective is also used to describe Achilles' horse after he is given the power of speech (αὐδήεντα ἔθηκεν, *Il.* 19.407).

Only humans and gods putting on a human form and voice (for gods must always disguise their supernaturally loud voices in such situations) speak with an *audē*, never gods among themselves (Heath 2005, 54).[86] As Heath puts it (2005, 57):

> Homer, then, draws an important distinction between gods and mortals in their speech: the gods are not merely louder but have a distinctively divine tenor that must be carefully disguised along with their immortal forms. Human speech is distinct enough from the divine to warrant a separate designation. The difference is not merely physiological but cultural as well—the epics reveal remnants of a divine language.

Thus, it is not going too far to connect the stylistic differences between the ordinary and poetic to a similar distinction in dialect and style that is used to distinguish Herodotean oracles from the rest of the text.[87] In Herodotus, even when the gods communicate through humans, they cannot avoid sounding a bit different from ordinary people. For one thing, Herodotean oracles speak in meter, specifically the dactylic hexameter of hymns to the gods and epic poetry. Herodotus emphasizes this when he introduces the response of the Pythia, the prophetess of Apollo at Delphi, with explicit mention of the metrical nature of her utterance (ἡ Πυθίη ἐν ἑξαμέτρῳ τόνῳ λέγει τάδε, "The Pythia said the following in hexameter", 1.47.2).

[86] Instead, they use terms like *proseeipe* (*Il.* 1.502) and *phato* (*Il.* 1.511).
[87] For more on oracles in Herodotus, see among others Crahay (1956), Flower (2008), Hollman (2011), Kirchberg (1965), and Sánchez Mañas (2017). Delphi is the third most mentioned settlement in the *Histories*, outdone only by Athens and Sparta (Barker et al. 2010, 15). On the language of oracles, see also Brillante et al. (1981).

To show the kinds of stylistic and dialectal choices associated with divine speech, it will suffice to look at two famous examples, the first of which is the response that the Athenians are given by the oracle of Delphi when they ask what to do about Xerxes' invasion of their country (7.140.2):

> ὦ μέλεοι, τί κάθησθε; λιπὼν φύγ' ἐς ἔσχατα γαίης
> δώματα καὶ πόλιος τροχοειδέος ἄκρα κάρηνα.
> οὔτε γὰρ ἡ κεφαλὴ μένει ἔμπεδον οὔτε τὸ σῶμα,
> οὔτε πόδες νέατοι οὔτ' ὦν χέρες, οὔτε τι μέσσης
> λείπεται, ἀλλ' ἄζηλα πέλει· κατὰ γάρ μιν ἐρείπει
> πῦρ τε καὶ ὀξὺς Ἄρης, Συριηγενὲς ἅρμα διώκων.
> πολλὰ δὲ κἄλλ' ἀπολεῖ πυργώματα, κοὐ τὸ σὸν οἶον·
> πολλοὺς δ' ἀθανάτων νηοὺς μαλερῷ πυρὶ δώσει,
> οἵ που νῦν ἱδρῶτι ῥεούμενοι ἑστήκασι,
> δείματι παλλόμενοι, κατὰ δ' ἀκροτάτοις ὀρόφοισιν
> αἷμα μέλαν κέχυται, προϊδὸν κακότητος ἀνάγκας.
> ἀλλ' ἴτον ἐξ ἀδύτοιο, κακοῖς δ' ἐπικίδνατε θυμόν.
>
> Useless[88] men, why do you sit still? Flee to the ends of the earth, leaving behind your houses and the high peaks of your circular city. For neither will the head remain firm-set nor the body, nor the lowest feet nor indeed hands, nor anything in between is left, but all are in an unenviable state. For fire casts it down and harsh Ares, driving a Syrian-born chariot. He will destroy many other cities and not yours alone, and will give many temples of the immortals to raging fire, which now stand streaming with sweat, shaking with fear, and pour down black blood from their highest roofs, foreseeing the necessity of their misfortune. But go from my sanctuary, and spread a brave spirit over your ills.

One striking piece of Homeric imitation is the separation of the first part of the compound verb *katereipei* 'cast down' (tmesis). Compare also the tmesis of *en…peseitai* in the prophecy at 5.92.β.2 and of *hupo…lusei* at 5.92.β.3. *Katereipō* appears in Homer, Euripides, and Theocritus, but nowhere in Classical prose (e.g. *Il.* 5.92, 14.55; Eur. *Hec.* 477; Theoc. *Id.* 13.49).

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[88] I translate *meleoi* with the Homeric sense 'idle, useless' instead of the later tragic sense 'unhappy, miserable' because I think the former matches the context better and fits with the Homeric tones of the passage.

Interestingly, these poets always use *katereipō* in the intransitive sense ('fall down'), unlike Herodotus' transitive use ('cast down').[89]

This passage also features Herodotus' only use of *pelō* ('be') and *meleos* 'useless; unhappy', ubiquitous in Homer and the tragedians.[90] Here we also see words that, while they do not appear themselves in Homer, are compounds of the types that abound in Homer and later Greek poetry. Just as Herodotus has *Suriē-genes* ('Syrian-born'), Homeric epic has *dio-genes* ('born from Zeus', e.g. at *Il.* 1.337) and Hesiod has *Kyprogenes* ('Cyprus-born,' *Th.* 199). The compound *trocho-eidēs* ('wheel-resembling') also has a similar feel to it, though *trochoeidēs* is poorly attested in poetry before Nonnus (in which late antique writer the word finds frequent use). Beyond the Homeric lexicon, the passage also features the poetic formula *akra karēna* from the Homeric Hymn to Apollo (*Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 33, 39). The passage also has tragic resonances, including the words *purgōmata* and *azēlos*. The phrase "driving a Syrian-born chariot" (Συριηγενὲς ἅρμα διώκων) is almost exactly like the words "driving a Syrian chariot" (Σύριόν θ' ἅρμα διώκων) seen in the Attic tragedian Aeschylus' *Persians* (*Pers*. 82).

The next example passage occurs during Herodotus' excursus on the Cypselid tyrants of Corinth, Cypselus and Periander (5.92.ε.2):

> ὄλβιος οὗτος ἀνὴρ ὃς ἐμὸν δόμον ἐσκαταβαίνει,
> Κύψελος Ἠετίδης, βασιλεὺς κλειτοῖο Κορίνθου,
> αὐτὸς καὶ παῖδες, παίδων γε μὲν οὐκέτι παῖδες.
>
> This man is blessed who goes down into my home,
> Cypselus son of Eëtion, king of famous Corinth,
> he and his children, but his children's children will no longer be.

[89] A search of the TLG shows that the word does become common in later prose such as Strabo and Plutarch, where it generally has Herodotus' transitive sense.
[90] *Pelō* occurs 109 times in Homer and 42 times in Aeschylus. *Meleos* occurs 20 times in Homer and 12 times in Aeschylus.

The adjective *kleitoio* displays the archaic genitive singular in -*oio*, characteristic of Homer and Hesiod but absent in Herodotus outside of verse passages such as this one or the one above (which features the noun *adutoio*).[91] The phrase *this man is blessed who* is a traditional beatitude associated with initiatory cults and strongly resembles line 480 of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter (Hornblower 2013, 260; Richardson 1974, 313–14).[92] The verb *es-kata-bainei* 'go down into' may also carry Homeric resonances, as it occurs only twice in Greek literature: once here and once in the *Odyssey* (24.222). Other poetic words occurring in other oracles and nowhere else in Herodotus, although they are common in Homer and other poets, include *euruopa* ('far-sounding, thundering', an epithet of Zeus), *ēmar* ('day'), and *paros* ('formerly'). The use of poetic meter, diction, morphology, and syntax sets oracular speech aside from the everyday speech of mortals.[93]

Oracles in Herodotus likewise show their divine power by sometimes giving responses involving non-Greek languages. Though of course the ability to speak any set of human languages is not superhuman, it is clearly meant to be impressive in a similar way to the Apostles' ability to speak in tongues in the New Testament, with the implication that the gods are all-knowing when it comes to language (*Acts* 10:46). It is a linguistic expression of the same attitude seen in the Pythia's statement that she (or Apollo) knows "the number of the sands and the measure of the sea" (Hdt. 1.47.2).[94] It is akin to the paranormal powers of perception implied by her statement in the same passage that she perceives the mute and hears the unspeaking.

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[91] On the second declension genitive endings -οιο, -ου, and -ω see Sihler (1995, 259–60).
[92] Also compare the resemblance of the earlier oracle at 5.92.β.2 to *Od.* 13.143-144 256.
[93] Sentence length does not seem to be a way that Herodotean oracles resemble Homer. In keeping with the more clipped style of epic poetry, the *Odyssey* averages 11.18 words per sentence. On average, there are 18.88 words per sentence in the oracles that I have quoted in full, whereas in the *Histories* as a whole the average is 17.89.
[94] οἶδα δ' ἐγὼ ψάμμου τ' ἀριθμὸν καὶ μέτρα θαλάσσης,
καὶ κωφοῦ συνίημι καὶ οὐ φωνεῦντος ἀκούω.

There is also a hint of this type of power in the Homeric oppositions discussed above. For example, Homer describes a hill outside of Troy thus (*Il*. 2.81-814):

> Ἔστι δέ τις προπάροιθε πόλιος αἰπεῖα κολώνη
> ἐν πεδίῳ ἀπάνευθε περίδρομος ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα,
> τὴν ἤτοι ἄνδρες Βατίειαν κικλήσκουσιν,
> ἀθάνατοι δέ τε σῆμα πολυσκάρθμοιο Μυρίνης.
>
> There is a certain steep hill in front of the city, on the plain far away, with clear space around it on both sides, which men call Bateia, but the immortals call it the tomb of bounding Myrine.

The example is a bit different from some of those seen above in that the gods' term is not a single word but a whole phrase 'the tomb of bounding Myrine'. Still, the poetic compound *polu-skarthmoio* ('bounding', literally 'much-skipping') again serves to mark the divine term in contrast to the mortal's simple name. Moreover, there is the suggestion that the divine and mortal contrast here is more than just a matter of markedness. The gods' term suggests a special knowledge about the origins of the hill, that the gods' long lives and unique powers of perception allow them to know the past better than mortals, and that this filters into the way they talk. This special knowledge is also implied when they allow oracles to give responses in a variety of languages that may or may not be known to the person delivering the oracle.

One example is the oracles concerning Battus. Herodotus explains that the Greeks wrongly regard the name of Battus, the founder of Cyrene in Libya, as referring to the king's stutter. Rather, he received it from the oracle at Delphi, which told him to found a colony in Libya and addressed him with a word that Herodotus maintains is the Libyan word for king (4.155.3):

> Ἐπείτε γὰρ ἠνδρώθη οὗτος, ἦλθε ἐς Δελφοὺς περὶ τῆς φωνῆς· ἐπειρωτῶντι δέ οἱ χρᾷ ἡ Πυθίη τάδε·
> «Βάττ', ἐπὶ φωνὴν ἦλθες· ἄναξ δέ σε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
> ἐς Λιβύην πέμπει μηλοτρόφον οἰκιστῆρα»,
> ὥσπερ εἰ εἴποι Ἑλλάδι γλώσσῃ χρεωμένη· «Ὦ βασιλεῦ, ἐπὶ φωνὴν ἦλθες».

> For when he became a man, he went to Delphi to ask about his speech: and when he asked, the Pythia prophesied to him the following: “Battus, you have come concerning your speech, but Phoebus Apollo sends you to sheep-rearing Libya to be the founder of a colony,” just as if she were saying using the Greek language, “king, you come have concerning your speech.”

The oracle engages in code-switching, “the use of material from two (or more) languages by a single speaker with the same people in the same conversation” (Thomason 2001, 262). When the oracle substitutes the Libyan term *battos* for the Greek *basileus* ‘king’, the Libyan term becomes reinterpreted and ends up as the addressee’s name, a name which is more appropriate to the narrative’s conclusion. The ability of the oracle to code-switch into Libyan forms one more way for the god to give an answer that is at once true and cryptic.

Another place where special linguistic knowledge forms part of the greater understanding that marks the distance between the human and the divine is during the Mys episode. When the Persian general Mardonius winters in northern Greece, he sends Mys, a Carian from Asia Minor, to test the oracles of Greece (Herodotus too was from Caria, Halicarnassus being a mixed Greek-Carian city). Mys bribes someone to sleep in the shrine of Amphiaraus in Thebes in order to receive an oracle (Hdt. 8.134.1). Mys also receives an entire oracle in Carian at the Temple to Apollo at the Ptoum, near to the town Acraephium, an event which Herodotus describes as ‘a great marvel’ (*thōma megiston*, Hdt. 8.135.1-2). Unlike Battus, Mys instantly understands the language spoken, but Herodotus never informs the audience what exactly it is he hears (Hdt. 8.135.3). This mystery just compounds the sense of awe at divine linguistic knowledge already present in the Battus episode.

### *Conclusion*

Herodotus distinguishes between the speech of different beings that both accord with and diverge from earlier Greek cultural assumptions about human, animal, and divine speech. He

does not elide the distinction between human and animals. He is clear that, while there may seem to be some examples of speaking animals, they will dissipate under rational analysis. While he cannot imagine speaking animals, he does repeat stories of non-Greek people sounding animal-like, though he does not necessarily impute the same negative connotations as other authors do in such situations. Speech also forms part of the distinction between the human and the divine in the *Histories*. Herodotus marks divine speech through distinct style, dialect, diction, and by making reference to the gods' universal command of human language. He expands earlier Homeric ideas about a divine language and about the linguistic expression of the gods' superhuman knowledge. Overall, Herodotus approaches questions of language origins and language learning and ethnography in ways that put his critical faculties on display, demonstrate his intellectual independence and parallel his inquires elsewhere in the *Histories*.

## Chapter 4: Interpreters and Translation in Herodotus

When Herodotus accurately glosses the Egyptian words for "crocodile" or "gentleman" or when he gives questionable etymologies for the names of Persian kings, he functions as an interpreter (Hdt. 2.69.3, 2.143.3, 5.98.3). As Munson notes, the author translates more than wods for his Greek audience, extending "the linguistic paradigm to non-linguistic paradigms of culture," by translating, for example, the names of Egyptian gods into Greek equivalents (Munson 2001, 78; Hdt. 2.69.3, 2.143.3).[95] Translation in the *Histories* servs to make unfamiliar objects, names, institutions, and concepts understandable to the audience. Herodotean translation is complicated, however, and even as translation seeks to make non-Greek cultures intelligible to his audience, interpreters and translation can also serve to highlight a distance between different peoples in the work or emphasize a dichotomy between Greeks and others. Moreover, Herodotus is not the only interpreter in the *Histories*. Generally, Herodotean characters, like Homeric and tragic characters, speak to each other in Greek whether they are Greek or non-Greek. Unlike Homer and the dramatists, however, Herodotus occasionally draws attention to this convention by noting the use of interpreters.[96] In the *Histories*, both interpreters and translation serve to

[95] For similar glosses in other Greek authors, see Minon (2016) and Schironi (2009).
[96] This is not dissimilar to the way in which Herodotus frequently interrupts his narrative to explicitly offer his own opinion, since both practices involve the spillage of extradiegetic material into what narratologists would call the diegesis of Herodotus' *Histories*, the telling of the narrative and more specifically the world of the primary narrative and those characters, things, and events that belong to it (Abbott 2002, 189; Genette 1983, 13, 28–29, 31, 38, 79, 117). The technical use of diegesis is first attested in Plato (*Resp*. 392d-394d) who contrasts *diēgēsis* (διήγησις 'narration') with *mimēsis* (μίμησις 'imitation'). The use of the term to draw a contrast between the world of the telling proper and the extradiegetic world which contains, for example the world of the narrator, is the result of later innovation. The overall effect is not to disrupt the unity or flow of Herodotus' narrative. Instead, by highlighting the polyphonic nature of what is still ultimately a unified narrative, Herodotus emphasizes that it is because of his ability to offer cross-cultural perspectives that his work is uniquely insightful.

emphasize distance, both physical and metaphorical. This distance is not limited to especially exotic or foreign situations, but also increases dramatic tension or lends emphasis. Nevertheless, it is through interpreters and translation that these differences are sometimes overcome, revealing a common humanity. This apparent contradiction results from the way in which Herodotus bridges human difference even as he recognizes it. Bridges created by translation and interpreters reinforce broader Herodotean themes such as cultural norms and variation, mortality and common humanity, geography, ethnicity, religion, imperial overreach, and the wonders done by both Greeks and non-Greeks (see Herodotus proem).

Before we examine the role of interpreters and translation in Herodotus, however, it will be helpful to look at what has been previously said about them by scholars. These scholars have sometimes presented the author in a negative light. According to Harrison, for example, Herodotus' apparent inconsistency in including interpreters in situations that seem to warrant them is a marker of his general ignorance about foreign languages. The fact that foreigners frequently speak with each other at the narrative level in Greek, is taken to show that Herodotus for the most part imagines a world where people everywhere seem to speak the same language. Though interpreters are mentioned at times in the narrative, their presence is seen as too inconsistent to suggest any systematic attention to the difficulties characters might have in communicating with each other across linguistic barriers (Harrison 1998, 11–12). Harrison states that "Herodotus' interpreters … seem to be applied to the narrative like a linguistic panacea," and that the passage relevant to Darius' experiment vis-à-vis Greek and Callatian funeral practices "must reflect the fact that Herodotus' interpreters are rather more the products of narrative convenience than of any great experience of the practicalities of language difference" (1998, 13–14). Harrison appears to have little regard for Herodotus' treatment of interpreters as

the reflection of an empirical phenomenon. He does understand their use as a narrative device but does not treat this use systematically or explain how it might relate to key Herodotean themes.

Miletti rejects this kind of dismissal of Herodotus. He emphasizes the author's value for reconstructing the history of interpreters in the ancient Mediterranean. He thinks that affirmations of the type made by Harrison are rather unfounded and that Herodotus allows us to reconstruct a picture, albeit a lacunose one, of the presence and use of interpreters despite the inconsistency with which he mentions them (2008, 46–47). Further, he takes issue with what Harrison characterizes as Herodotus' purely Hellenocentric view of foreign languages: the use of Lydian–Persian interpreters in the dialogue between Croesus and Cyrus indicates that Herodotus can think beyond the Greek–barbarian dichotomy to understand the way in which barbarians may be foreign to each other (2008, 45).

Whereas Harrison and Miletti focuses on the factual accuracy of Herodotus' representation of foreign languages, Munson sidesteps that issue to focus on the greater cultural significance of language in the *Histories*. Interpreters come in for scant mention in Munson, but her approach to the subject of Herodotus and barbarian languages differs from Harrison in much the same way as my approach does and has important parallels with how I approach translation in Herodotus as well. That is, Munson agrees with Harrison's point that Herodotus' actual linguistic competency was probably not very high, but focuses instead on the way that the narrator tries to present himself as possessing special knowledge of barbarian languages and what that presentation means for an ideological assessment of his text (2005, 29). She argues that language, as "an area of objective and interesting difference (and unexpected similarities) that also turns out to be relatively unproblematic," is therefore "a good model for coming to terms

with other more emotionally charged features of the barbarian world" (2005, 6, 79). For Munson, language ultimately serves as a paradigm for his other examinations of culture, in which cultural difference is respected even as the author argues for a shared humanity that transcends such differences. This is essentially correct, but not entirely. The accuracy of many Herodotean translations shows that we should not be too hasty in attacking the author's competency, and the use of interpreters initially to emphasize the boundaries created by linguistic difference shows that language does not always serve to bridge cultural divides in Herodotus.[97]

Overall, Herodotus' presentation of translation and interpreters makes more sense if understood in terms of greater narrative and thematic needs. It is not that Herodotus ever inserts interpreters into situations in which they are historically implausible; this would render his narrative unbelievable to contemporaries. Rather, he allows their presence to be assumed except when their presence fulfills a set of narrative and thematic functions. One of these was already suggested by Harrison, although he ultimately dismisses its significance for understanding Herodotus' use of interpreters (1998, 11–12):

> Herodotus does not appear to bother himself—any more than his model, Homer—with the question of the language spoken. Though we may wonder in some instances whether the presence of interpreters constitutes a marker of the especially alien nature of the dialogue at issue—so, Herodotus' mention of an interpreter during Darius' 'seminar on comparative funerary practices' comes only after the introduction of the Callatians—there is by no means always any apparent rhyme or reason to the presence of absence or interpreters.

Harrison begins to explain why Herodotus mentions interpreters only at certain times, or what the effect of this may be, but stops short when he declares that the inconsistency of Herodotus' practice renders its meaning essentially incoherent. Nevertheless, in doing so, he has pointed to one of the functions that interpreters do play in Herodotus.

[97] For attacks on Herodotus' linguistic accuracy see among others Meyer (1892, 192–95), but see Hinge (2006) and Schmitt (2011) for more recent defenses of the author.

*Physical Distancing*

There are many passages in Herodotus where interpreters mark an especially exotic people or situation, that is, cultural difference associated with geographic distance, especially extreme distance. Included among these is the passage that Harrison refers to when he suggests that interpreters may have some function in Herodotus that extends beyond simple empirical reality. In this passage, Darius has asked some Greeks how much money they would accept to eat the bodies of their dead fathers, and they respond that they would not do it for any amount of money (3.38.3). Then, with interpreters present, they learn of a people for whom the opposite is true (Hdt. 3.38.4):

> Δαρεῖος δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα καλέσας Ἰνδῶν τοὺς καλεομένους Καλλατίας, οἳ τοὺς γονέας κατεσθίουσι, εἴρετο, παρεόντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ δι' ἑρμηνέος μανθανόντων τὰ λεγόμενα, ἐπὶ τίνι χρήματι δεξαίατ' ἂν τελευτῶντας τοὺς πατέρας κατακαίειν πυρί· οἱ δὲ ἀμβώσαντες μέγα εὐφημέειν μιν ἐκέλευον.
>
> After this Darius summoned those of the Indians who are called Callatians, who devour their parents, and asked them while the Greeks were present and were learning what was said through an interpreter, how much money they would receive to cremate their dead fathers: but they shouted loudly and ordered him to be quiet.

"Pious cannibalism" of the type described here, which probably never existed, creates a very similar distancing effect to that created by the representation of interpreters (Redfield 1985, 104–5). For Herodotus, cannibalism is important because it represents a cultural practice diametrically opposed to the Greek ideal of cremation. Cremation destroys the dead body, the natural part of a person, and leaves behind nothing but "memory and monument." On the other hand, when a society treats its dead as meat, it returns "the natural man to nature" (Redfield 1985, 105). It is natural that Herodotus would mark this kind of diametrically opposed cultural difference as especially alien by the presence of interpreters.

Another usage of interpreters to emphasize distance occurs when Herodotus describes the Argipaei, a people living on the edge of the world who enjoy a Golden Age-like existence, living under trees and off their fruit. They carry no weapons, but no one ever tries to harm them, for they are said to be sacred (4.23). This remoteness then gains further emphasis based on the difficulty that even the Scythians, who dwell relatively close to them, have in communicating with them (Hdt. 4.24):

> Σκυθέων δὲ οἳ ἂν ἔλθωσι ἐς αὐτοὺς δι᾽ ἑπτὰ ἑρμηνέων καὶ δι᾽ ἑπτὰ γλωσσέων διαπρήσσονται.
>
> Whichever Scythians come to them, they transact their business through seven interpreters and through seven languages.

Harrison finds fault with the number of interpreters in this passage, thinking it characteristic of Herodotus' unrealistic attitude to foreign languages, which is based ultimately in his ignorance of them (Harrison 1998, 4). He compares this passage to that involving the Callatians above, which he finds unrealistic because there is only one interpreter there, though the distance between the Callatians and the Greeks would surely have called for more than one interpreter (but not seven).

One is strongly tempted, however, to take the number seven as symbolic: it could merely indicate 'a lot.' Munson takes this tack, citing a North Carolina expression "to be silent in seven languages" (2005, 28 fn. 47). Interpreters, responding to audience expectation, mark the foreignness of the people encountered, and more interpreters merely suggest that this people is still more exotic than others. After all, they are all bald and live on bean-sized fruits at the edge of the world. Against this rather scanty and comparative explanation, however, can be set an explanation more firmly grounded in the surrounding text: that the multiplicity of languages reflects the multiplicity of peoples that Herodotus is describing. Of the ethnic groups living above Olbia surveyed immediately previously at 4.18-23, the number of those speaking Scythian or a mixed Scythian language alone can be reckoned at seven, as Munson also notes (2005, 28

fn. 47). This multiplicity is the reason that so many interpreters show up here and not in the case of the Greeks and Callatians.[98]

There are passages that function along similar lines but in which it is rather the conspicuous lack of interpreters that highlights a language barrier, again in order to show the extreme exoticism of the situation. One example takes place when pygmies capture five reckless youths from noble Nasamonian families who are exploring the deep reaches of the Libyan desert, seeking to go where no one has gone before (Hdt. 2.32.6):

> Διεξελθόντας δὲ χῶρον πολλὸν ψαμμώδεα καὶ ἐν πολλῇσι ἡμέρῃσι ἰδεῖν δή κοτε δένδρεα ἐν πεδίῳ πεφυκότα, καί σφεας προσελθόντας ἅπτεσθαι τοῦ ἐπεόντος ἐπὶ τῶν δενδρέων καρποῦ, ἁπτομένοισι δέ σφι ἐπελθεῖν ἄνδρας μικρούς, μετρίων ἐλάσσονας ἀνδρῶν, λαβόντας δὲ ἄγειν σφέας· φωνῆς δὲ οὔτε τι τῆς ἐκείνων τοὺς Νασαμῶνας γινώσκειν οὔτε τοὺς ἄγοντας τῶν Νασαμώνων.
>
> (They said that) after they had traversed sandy terrain, much of it and in many days, they at last saw trees growing on the plain, and as they were approaching the trees to pick the fruit growing on them, small men, shorter than normal men, attacked them as they were trying to pick the fruit and seized them and led them; and neither did the Nasamones know anything of their language nor did their captors of the Nasamones'.

The strange nature of these small men comes out also in the fact that they are all wizards (γόητας, 2.33.1). Their exoticism is linked to language, but also directly to geography. Herodotus thinks that the river that runs North and West through the country these small people inhabit is the Nile, but he surmises this only on the basis of its course being parallel to that of the Ister, which he thinks runs South and West across Europe, showing that both places belong on the symmetrically wild fringes of the world, as opposed to 'normal' places closer to the line of symmetry (Hdt. 2.33.2-3; Romm 2013, 34). Accordingly, it should not be surprising that they are

[98] On the other hand, similar chains of interpreters are not unheard of. For instance, in their journal entries for September 5, 1805, the Lewis and Clark expedition record communicating through five interpreters.

inaccessible linguistically, which is an even more striking marker of distance than communicating through interpreters.

The term used for language in this passage, *phōnē* (φωνή), as discussed in the earlier chapter about animal language, is one of two terms used for language in Herodotus, the other being *glōssa* (γλῶσσα). They are not synonyms, though there is considerable overlap: *glōssa* means not only 'tongue' in the anatomical sense but also in the sense of 'system of verbal communication,' whereas *phōnē* is the voice as emitted by a living being, whether an animal, human being, or supernatural entity. The use of *phōnē* here contributes even more to a sense of distance and the exotic because, on the one hand, the word used for the pygmies' speech is not exclusive to human speech, and on other because it is a word that is especially associated with the experience of a foreign language as a meaningless jumble of sounds. Even though there are no interpreters explicitly present in the passage, the language terminology that is used still does much of the same work.

Another example of the edges of the linguistic world is the Carthaginian story Herodotus reports about silent trade with a people in Libya who live beyond the Pillars of Herakles, outside the Mediterranean world. The Carthaginians reportedly trade with these people without the use of language. When they arrive on their shores, they lay their cargo on the shore and then return back to their ship and signal with smoke that they have arrived (4.196.1). The people of the country then come out and lay out some gold and withdraw themselves. If the Carthaginians think this is a fair price, they take the gold and sail away, otherwise they withdraw to their ships while the people bring more gold to them until they are satisfied (4.196.2). The distance at the edges of the world is felt strongly in this passage: not only do the two parties trade silently, they do so without coming into direct contact with each other. Nevertheless, despite their differences,

they actually behave more fairly towards each other than most traders in Herodotus. Though there is ample opportunity for cheating, neither party does so (Hdt. 4.196.3).

Another passage in which language functions to highlight a people's exotic nature is at 3.19.1. Planning an attack on the Ethiopians, Cambyses sends for a specific people who know their language, the Fish-eaters of Elephantine (αὐτίκα μετεπέμπετο ἐξ Ἐλεφαντίνης πόλιος τῶν Ἰχθυοφάγων ἀνδρῶν τοὺς ἐπισταμένους τὴν Αἰθιοπίδα γλῶσσαν). This special linguistic preparation is unprecedented for a Persian king in Herodotus: the historian does not depict the search for linguistically competent agents as an important precursor to such key Persian conquests as Egypt and Lydia, nor the attempted conquest of Greece. This is not because the ability to gather intelligence, communicate with potential local collaborators, and ultimately to dictate terms and govern would have been any less dependent upon foreign language competency in these cases. Rather, either because of the peculiarly distant, exotic, and foreign nature of Ethiopia or merely to reflect it, language concerns are foregrounded in these plans for war in a way that they are not in others.[99] Just before the Fish-eaters appear in the narrative, the Ethiopians' exotic and remote character finds expression in a description of the Table of the Sun, which the local inhabitants claim the earth itself fills with meat, suggesting the Golden-Age conditions which Herodotus and Greeks more generally often thought prevailed in the world's remotest edges (3.18; Karttunen 2002, 466–567). The remoteness of the Ethiopians also falls into a general trend in the surrounding narrative, whereby Persian kings' hubris causes them to foolishly attempt to expand their empire to lands at the edges of the earth, just as Cyrus attempts to subdue the Massagetae in Book One and Darius the Scythians in Book Four: Ethiopia is only one of three nations that Cambyses is seeking to conquer, not content with the significant prize

[99] For the Greek conception of the Ethiopians as an especially far-off and foreign people, traditionally described as inhabiting a utopian landscape, cf. e.g. Asheri et al. (2007, 415–17). See also Snowden (1970).

that Egypt represents.[100] The king also wants to attack Carthage and the Ammonians in the desert to the west of Egypt. Predictably, none of these plans result in a successful conquest.

### *Metaphorical Distancing*

In the interests of not complicating Herodotus' use of interpreters needlessly beyond what nuance demands, we can generalize Harrison's proposed "alien" explanation to include not merely the exotic but also other situations where the narrator emphasizes some kind of distance, whether geographic or otherwise. One example of interpreters marking a metaphorical distance is when Croesus, after Cyrus defeats him and places him on a pyre to burn him alive, remembers Cyrus' wise words about counting no man blessed until he has died (Hdt. 1.86.3-6):

> Ὡς δὲ ἄρα μιν προσστῆναι τοῦτο, ἀνενεικάμενόν τε καὶ ἀναστενάξαντα ἐκ πολλῆς ἡσυχίης ἐς τρὶς ὀνομάσαι «Σόλων». Καὶ τὸν Κῦρον ἀκούσαντα κελεῦσαι τοὺς ἑρμηνέας ἐπειρέσθαι τὸν Κροῖσον τίνα τοῦτον ἐπικαλέοιτο, καὶ τοὺς προσελθόντας ἐπειρωτᾶν. Κροῖσον δὲ τέως μὲν σιγὴν ἔχειν εἰρωτώμενον, μετὰ δέ, ὡς ἠναγκάζετο, εἰπεῖν· «Τὸν ἂν ἐγὼ πᾶσι τυράννοισι προετίμησα μεγάλων χρημάτων ἐς λόγους ἐλθεῖν» … Καὶ τὸν Κῦρον ἀκούσαντα τῶν ἑρμηνέων τὰ Κροῖσος εἶπε, μεταγνόντα τε καὶ ἐννώσαντα ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐὼν ἄλλον ἄνθρωπον, γενόμενον ἑωυτοῦ εὐδαιμονίῃ οὐκ ἐλάσσω, ζώοντα πυρὶ διδοίη, πρός τε τούτοισι δείσαντα τὴν τίσιν καὶ ἐπιλεξάμενον ὡς οὐδὲν εἴη τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι ἀσφαλέως ἔχον, κελεύειν σβεννύναι τὴν ταχίστην τὸ καιόμενον πῦρ καὶ καταβιβάζειν Κροῖσόν τε καὶ τοὺς μετὰ Κροίσου.
>
> When this [previous conversation with Solon] came to [Croesus'] head, after he sighed and lamented and, after much silence, he said the name "Solon" three times. And after Cyrus heard this he ordered his interpreters to ask Croesus who this man was whom he was summoning, and they went to him and asked, but Croesus was silent for a while although he was asked, but afterwards, when he was compelled, he said: "The one whose spoking with all kings I would have thought was worth much wealth" … Cyrus, after he heard from the interpreters what Croesus said, when he had repented and gotten it into his head that although

[100] In contrast to the Ethiopians, Herodotus does not mention interpreters for the Scythians or Massagetae. The simplest explanation for this is that Herodotus need not be totally consistent in his mention of interpreters. Another explanation could be that the Persians are farther from the Ethiopians than from the Scythians and Massagetae (who, as Hdt. 2.15 indicates, wear the same clothing as the Scythians and have the same way of life). After all, Persians and at least some of the Scythians spoke related languages (though some Scythians may have spoken non-Iranian languages, on which possibility see Chapter Two).

> he was a human being himself he was giving another human being to fire alive, and since he began to fear comeuppance and think upon the fact that no human matter is secure, he gave orders to put out the fire as quickly as possible and to get Croesus and those with him down from the pyre.

The distance here is not the distance of the exotic: neither the Persians nor the Lydians are any more exotic than any other group of barbarians. On the contrary, Croesus is in some ways one of the least exotic foreigners in Herodotus' narrative. Not only is Lydia physically close to Greece, but Croesus is also closely involved with Greek religion, being a famous patron of the oracle at Delphi and a noted devotee of Apollo. Rather, the distance is an intellectual one. Croesus has only too late realized the truth of Solon's advice to him that, despite how wealthy and powerful he was at the moment, no man could be counted blessed (ὄλβιος) until he had ended his life well, "for god having shown wealth to many has then upturned them roots and all" (πολλοῖσι γὰρ δὴ ὑποδέξας ὄλβον ὁ θεὸς προρρίζους ἀνέτρεψε, Hdt. 1.33). All this is not to deny the fact that interpreters also slow the narrative down and add tension and drama, but their prominence in the narrative through this function only serves to highlight how they reflect not only the usual linguistic barriers between the two leaders, but also their differing mental states.

Cyrus is so different from Croesus because at the beginning of the episode he has not internalized any of Solon's message for arrogant kings. None of the possible reasons he has for burning Croesus alive are laudable: either as a sacrifice to some god, or to fulfill a vow, or even because he wanted to test Croesus' famed piety by seeing if a god would rescue him from the pyre, which Apollo in fact does (Hdt. 1.86). Cyrus' interpreters can only do so much to bridge the gap in wisdom. Through the mediations of both Croesus and his interpreters, Cyrus does learn enough from Solon about the vicissitudes of human fortune to keep him from burning Croesus alive, but not enough to keep him from meeting his eventual fate through his hubris at

the hands of the Massagetae (1.214). The distance suggested by the interpreters then is especially appropriate, because the gap is never really closed.

The interpreters also give a dramatic vividness to the conversation. In the passage, Herodotus alternates in focalization between Cyrus and Croesus. He begins with Cyrus, considering his motives for placing Croesus on the pyre. We then see the narrative through Croesus' eyes, and are allowed into his head to see him remember Solon. The interpreters come into the picture once we have returned to viewing things through Cyrus. The audience already knows what Croesus means when he sighs deeply and groans and repeats "Solon" three times. Nevertheless, the fact that we first experience what Croesus has to say as a series of incoherent noises then through one puzzling sentence mirrors the way that Cyrus understands Croesus through interpreters: translation does not seem to be simultaneous here, but occurs after the interpreters get a full account of what Croesus wants so say. Cyrus only learns the full import of what Croesus is saying after the interpreters have pestered him for the full story. Thus, Cyrus first hears a jumble of sounds that he does not understand, just as the narrative of Croesus' speech starts with a groan, and only later takes on a coherent form.

Another passage where interpreters highlight metaphorical distance is at 3.140, where Syloson asks that Darius put him in charge of Samos, from which he has been in exile since the death of his brother Polycrates. He asks this favor as a benefactor of the king, because he gave him his cloak in Egypt when Darius was still a lowly bodyguard (Hdt. 3.139.2-3). Darius, when he first learns that Syloson has come to see him at Susa, has forgotten this good turn: he is surprised because he has just begun to rule and because hardly any Greeks have ever traveled all the way to the Persian court at Susa (τίς ἐστι Ἑλλήνων εὐεργέτης τῷ ἐγὼ προαιδέομαι,

νεωστὶ μὲν τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔχων, ἀναβέβηκε δ' ἤ τις ἢ οὐδείς κω παρ' ἡμέας αὐτῶν, Hdt. 3.140.2). When he decides to talk to Syloson anyway, Darius uses interpreters (Hdt. 3.140.3):

> Παρῆγε ὁ πυλουρὸς τὸν Συλοσῶντα, στάντα δὲ ἐς μέσον εἰρώτων οἱ ἑρμηνέες τίς τε εἴη καὶ τί ποιήσας εὐεργέτης φησὶ εἶναι βασιλέος.
>
> The gatekeeper brought Syloson forward and the interpreters were asking him, who was standing in the middle (of everyone), who he was and what he did to call himself a benefactor of the king.

Though Darius does emphasize the distance that Syloson has traveled to see him in the run-up to this passage, the distance that causes interpreters to show up here is both geographic and metaphorical. The interpreters are just one type of palace attendant that mediate Syloson's interaction with Darius. There is also the gatekeeper (πυλουρὸς) mentioned in the passage above, who is the first one to inform Darius of Syloson's presence. Thus, as often, interpreters are not the only factor used to convey distance in the passage but rather are one of several narrative touches used by Herodotus to create this effect.

As in Croesus' conversation with Cyrus, interpreters in this episode also help Herodotus craft his narrative and contribute to its themes. The combined effect of these attendants is the same as that which Deioces achieves by isolating himself from the other Medes in an impressive palace at 1.99: difficulty of access creates a sense of awe and instills obedience in subjects who cannot perceive their sovereign's human fallibility. This kind of distance is always true of interactions between Persian kings and their subjects, but the narrator highlights it here because of the unique nature of the connection between Syloson and Darius. Syloson knew the Persian before he was a king, so the new distance reflects a change in status. When the two men last met, they were much closer in status. Now, the distancing effect of Darius' kingship separates them. This emphasis on the change in relative status fits into Herodotus' thematic interest in the constant rise and fall of human fortunes. Finally, there is also one more kind of metaphorical

distance at play here. Darius is suspicious of Greeks in general, since none have come to him in the short time that he has been king, and he cannot imagine that any Greek would be of use to him (Hdt. 3.140.2). The distance indicated by the use of interpreters thus corresponds with the suspicion that the Persian king bears towards this Greek stranger, his nature, and his aims.

One final passage in which an interpreter seems to be indicating some kind of metaphorical distance occurs when Herodotus describes an inscription in which Cheops boasts about how much money it took to build his pyramid (Hdt. 2.125.6):

> Σεσήμανται δὲ διὰ γραμμάτων αἰγυπτίων ἐν τῇ πυραμίδι ὅσα ἔς τε συρμαίην καὶ κρόμμυα καὶ σκόροδα ἀναισιμώθη τοῖσι ἐργαζομένοισι· καὶ ὡς ἐμὲ εὖ μεμνῆσθαι τὰ ὁ ἑρμηνεύς μοι ἐπιλεγόμενος τὰ γράμματα ἔφη, ἑξακόσια καὶ χίλια τάλαντα ἀργυρίου τετελέσθαι.
>
> He indicated through Egyptian letters on the pyramid how much was spent on radish and onion and garlic for the workmen, and, to the best of my recollection, the interpreter as he read the letters said to me that these things cost 1,600 talents of silver.[101]

The passage is perplexing. First of all, why are condiments so important that they show up in this type of inscription? Is there some kind of joke going on here, and, if so, is Herodotus the one cracking wise or is the joke at his expense? Is the amount expended just on radish, onion, and garlic meant to emphasize the size of the workforce, because if this much was spent on these items, surely more must have been spent on staples? Herodotus' own hesitancy to accept the source is indicated by his question at 2.125.7, where he asks how much must have been spent on the workmen's food and clothing and the iron for their tools if what the interpreter said was true. Commentators agree on one thing: that this is not a genuine Old Kingdom inscription, since among other problems Old Kingdom Egypt did not measure expenditures in quantities of silver,

[101] A recently found papyrus records the actual rations (Stille 2017).

and Old Kingdom pharaohs did not inscribe on their pyramids, but rather in their mortuary temples (Lloyd 1988: 70).

How and Wells suppose that the interpreter misunderstood the royal inscription: the onion plant was the hieroglyph for king, and the papyrus and the lotus, which assumedly could be mistaken for radish and garlic, could spell his titles as “Lord of Upper and Lower Egypt” (1928: 229). Lloyd gives more agency to Herodotus’ interpreter, suggesting that Herodotus asked him to translate one of the many graffiti on Cheops’ pyramid and, unable to read the inscription, he provided an answer that parodies with remarkable accuracy a standard building inscription from a later time (Lloyd 1988: 70). This parody fits within a general trend within Herodotus’ Egyptian logos by which humorous incidents cluster around certain kings whom subversive folktales mock.[102] The joke then would seem to be on Herodotus, were it not for two crucial details, the first being the abovementioned question and the second being the fact that of the 11 foreign-language inscriptions listed by West, this is the only one for which Herodotus mentions an interpreter (1985: 280). Herodotus’ introduction of the interpreter here, along with the question about how much must have been spent on more important items, shows that he does not regard the inscription as entirely credible, though he does not have the knowledge necessary to refute it. Instead, he merely distances himself from a humorous anecdote by ascribing it to an interpreter. As this distance is not literal, it constitutes a metaphorical use.

*Translation and Distancing*

Herodotus himself takes on the role of translator numerous times in his narrative. In over 20 instances, the historian introduces common nouns taken from other languages by explaining what some group of people call something (e.g. “a plant they call so and so”). In about 25

[102] See the discussion of Psammetichus in the third chapter, Dewald (2006), Griffith (1985), and Griffiths (2001).

instances, he translates terms the other way, beginning with a foreign word before indicating what the Greeks call it (e.g. "what the Greeks call so and so"). Though his phonological accuracy varies, for the most part he seems to gloss actual Egyptian, Persian, Scythian, Libyan, Phrygian, and possibly even Thracian vocabulary.[103] Similarly, Herodotus provides over a dozen glosses for varieties of Greek with which his audience is presumably unfamiliar, bringing to mind Plato's *Protagoras* 341c, which refers to Lesbian Greek as a "barbarian language."[104] In fact, Herodotus provides six glosses for Spartan terms, more than for any non-Greek language besides Egyptian and Persian. Greek and non-Greek glosses alike fit similar patterns. Translation in Herodotus often marks the same kind of metaphorical and physical distancing that interpreters do. Unlike interpreters, however, translation in Herodotus also serves to create distance between different groups of Greeks and, in at least one case, operates focalized through a Persian perspective in a way that separates them from barbaric Greeks.

One of the most common types of Herodotean glosses are those describing unfamiliar objects. Herodotus' provision of a foreign name for these objects marks them as belonging to

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[103] While many of these translations will be discussed in this chapter, here is a complete list with bibliography on their accuracy:
Other Egyptian glosses: 2.30.1, 2.69.3, 2.77.4, 2.81.1, 2.92.2, 2.94.1, 2.143.4, 9.32.1. See Lloyd (1976; 1988).
Persian or Median glosses: 1.110.1, 1.192.2, 3.89.1, 7.54.3, 8.98.2, 9.110.2. See Mancini (1995) and Schmitt (2007; 2015).
Scythian glosses: 1.105.4, 4.7/4.31, 4.67.2. See Vasmer (1925, 13) and Schmitt (2011). At 4.31 Herodotus says that the Scythians call snow "feathers", which claim explains a reference to feathers at 4.7. Dumézil connects this to the 'cotton-wool snow' of some Abkhazian legends (1978, 339–51).
Probably Scythian or another language spoken in the region: 4.23.3, 4.53.3. See Trubačev (1977, 134–35).
Libyan glosses: 4.155.2, 4.192.2. Both are plausible. See Masson (1976). Compare also "the indigenous goddess whom we call Athena" at 4.180.2
Phrygian gloss (only gloss given by a character as opposed to in the metanarrative): 2.2.4 (see Animals chapter note, probably accurate).
Unindicated language (Thracian?): 5.16.4. See Chantraine (1968, 3.856).
For a division of Herodotean glosses based on their direction, see Munson (2005, 30–66).
[104] Spartan glosses: 1.67.5, 6.57.2, 6.71.1, 7.134, 8.124.3, 9.11.2.
Ionian terms: 2.69.3, 5.58.3.
Athenian terms: 8.52.1, 9.39.1.
Groups of Greeks mentioned only once: Delphians (1.14.3), Greek colonists on the Hypanis river (4.18.1), Chalcidians (5.77.2), Thermopylaeans (7.176.3), Magnesians (7.188.2), Achaeans (7.197.2), Boeotians (9.39.1).

another world from that of the audience. There are many of these within Herodotus' description of Egypt on the second book of the *Histories*. For instance, Herodotus describes an Egyptian bread made from emmer wheat which they call *kyllēstis*, a term also glossed in Herodotus' predecessor Hecataeus (Hdt. 2.77.4, *FGrH* 1 F 322).[105] *Kyllēstis* renders the Egyptian name *kršt*, which describes a common type of unleavened bread (Kees 1933, 32). Similarly, Herodotus says that Egyptians "wear tunics made of linen with tassels around the ankles which they call *kalasiris*" (2.81.1).[106] In both these cases, the gloss is only part of the translation. To make these objects legible to his audience, Herodotus' translation must include a short description of the object.

Sometimes a name comes only at the end of the long description of an object. Herodotus' Egyptian narrative contains a long description of a certain kind of boat, beginning with its construction. The author first describes the materials that the Egyptians use for building these boats, then the methods used in putting those materials together, how they steer the boats, and finally the way a raft is used to tow the boat (2.96.1-4). After that, it is eventually revealed that the type of boat that Herodotus has been describing is called a *baris* (2.96.5):

> ἡ μὲν δὴ θύρη τοῦ ῥόου ἐμπίπτοντος χωρέει ταχέως καὶ ἕλκει τὴν βᾶριν (τοῦτο γὰρ δὴ οὔνομά ἐστι τοῖσι πλοίοισι τούτοισι), ὁ δὲ λίθος ὄπισθε ἐπελκόμενος καὶ ἐὼν ἐν βυσσῷ κατιθύνει τὸν πλόον.
>
> So, with the current flowing, the raft goes swiftly and tows the *baris* (for this is the name of these boats) and the stone dragging behind on the river bottom keeps the boat's course straight.

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[105] ἀρτοφαγέουσι δὲ ἐκ τῶν ὀλυρέων ποιεῦντες ἄρτους, τοὺς ἐκεῖνοι κυλλήστις ὀνομάζουσι. οἴνῳ δὲ ἐκ κριθέων πεποιημένῳ διαχρέωνται· οὐ γάρ σφι εἰσὶ ἐν τῇ χώρῃ ἄμπελοι. ἰχθύων δὲ τοὺς μὲν πρὸς ἥλιον αὐήναντες ὠμοὺς σιτέονται, τοὺς δὲ ἐξ ἅλμης τεταριχευμένους.

[106] ἐνδεδύκασι δὲ κιθῶνας λινέους περὶ τὰ σκέλεα θυσανωτούς, τοὺς καλέουσι καλασίρις· ἐπὶ τούτοισι δὲ εἰρίνεα εἵματα λευκὰ ἐπαναβληδὸν φορέουσι.
No garment with such a name appears in Egyptian texts. It seems likely the kalasiris here relates to some item of clothing worn by the Kalasiries (Καλασίριες) warrior class mentioned at 2.164. While this is not an actual Egyptian word, the name that Herodotus gives for the warrior class does derive from the Egyptian *gl-šry* 'young lad, young recruit, soldier', and Herodotus' description of them does seem to have some basis in fact (Fischer-Bovet 2013, 213–14; Winnicki 1977, 267).

While the lack of parallels for the *baris* as described by Herodotus led many to doubt its existence, recent archaeology has confirmed that there were boats in Late-Period Egypt that match Herodotus' description (Belov 2019). Still, the same idiosyncrasy of construction that led so many to doubt Herodotus' description for so long is probably what attracted Herodotus to provide such a lengthy description of the *baris* instead of simply telling his audience that this was the word for this type of boat. Such a long description highlights the boat's unusual features, which like the name *baris* helps to emphasize the difference between this boat and Greek equivalents.

When describing objects from foreign lands, Herodotus not only provides translations of non-Greek words and words from various dialects of Greek, but also provides translations of non-Greek words into specific Greek dialects. For instance, in a previous chapter I noted how he gives a correct gloss for the Egyptian word *champsae* 'crocodiles' (2.69.2). Herodotus does not, as often, simply provide a translation straight into "the Greek tongue" (κατὰ Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν: Hdt. 2.137.5, 2.144.2, 4.110.1, 6.98.3). Rather, Herodotus notes that it was the Ionians specifically who first invented the name *krokodeilos* (Ionic form of *krokodilos*), analogically applying a word for house lizards to the larger reptiles. In doing so, Herodotus gives his readers information about the Egyptian and Ionian languages at the same time. The double gloss furthers Herodotus' point that the Ionians were the first Greeks to come to Egypt. While such a double gloss still serves to locate these crocodiles in a far-off land, it also places a specific sort of Greek within those lands.

One surprising example of a translation in a passage emphasizing (metaphorical) distance occurs when Xerxes comes to Alus in Achaea Phtiotis. There his guides tell him a story about how the Achaeans, commanded by an oracle, place restrictions on a certain family. The strange

religious customs related to Xerxes by his guides parallel those which Herodotus hears about from his guides in Egypt and elsewhere, but focalized from the barbarian perspective (7.197.2):

> ὃς ἂν ᾖ τοῦ γένεος τούτου πρεσβύτατος, τούτῳ ἐπιτάξαντες ἔργεσθαι τοῦ λῃίτου αὐτοὶ φυλακὰς ἔχουσι (λήιτον δὲ καλέουσι τὸ πρυτανήιον οἱ Ἀχαιοί)· ἢν δὲ ἐσέλθῃ, οὐκ ἔστι ὅκως ἔξεισι †πρὶν ἢ θύσεσθαι μέλλῃ·† ὥς τ' ἔτι πρὸς τούτοισι πολλοὶ ἤδη τούτων τῶν μελλόντων θύσεσθαι δείσαντες οἴχοντο ἀποδράντες ἐς ἄλλην χώρην, χρόνου δὲ προϊόντος ὀπίσω κατελθόντες ἂν ἡλίσκοντο ἐσελθόντες ἐς τὸ πρυτανήιον, ὡς θύεταί τε ἐξηγέοντο στέμμασι πᾶς πυκασθεὶς καὶ {ὡς} σὺν πομπῇ ἐξαχθείς.
>
> [Xerxes's guides said that the inhabitants of Alus] order that the eldest of that family not enter their town hall (which the Achaeans call the lēiton) and themselves keep guard there. If he should enter, he may not come out, save only to be sacrificed. They say as well that many of those who were to be sacrificed had fled in fear to another country, and that if they returned later after time had gone by, and were caught, they were brought into the town-hall. They also described how he is sacrificed: with fillets covering him all over he is led out with a procession.

It is striking here that the Achaeans are depicted as performing human sacrifice, a behavior typically associated with particularly barbaric non-Greeks, and one which Herodotus chides the Greeks for imagining that the Egyptians could practice, since they are forbidden to sacrifice even beasts, except swine and bulls and bull-calves, if they are unblemished, and geese (2.45.2).[107] The sense of the exotic confronting the Persian king is further heightened by Herodotus' providing a translation for the Achaeans' term for town hall, which appears to means something like 'people's house', since it comes from *lēos* ('people', a dialectical variant of λαός). This passage then is another example of translations serving to distance two peoples, with the twist that the 'nearer' people, from the audience's perspective, are the Persians, and the Greek Achaeans are the more distant one perhaps challenging ethnocentric Greek assumptions.[108]

[107] Herodotus is (unsurprisingly) correct about the lack of human sacrifice in Egypt (Helck et al. 1975, 4.64-65).
[108] Immediately following this story, Xerxes also acts with appropriate and perhaps uncharacteristic piety towards the local temple precinct.

### *Translation and Cross-Cultural Connections*

While translation and interpreters often mark distances both physical and metaphorical, they also provide Herodotus with opportunities to close that distance. For instance, though interpreters emphasize just how foreign the Callatians are, the ultimate point of the passage is that the Greeks and the Callatians are the same in one key aspect: everyone believes that their own customs are best, and it is therefore foolish to disrespect another's customs (Hdt. 3.38.1). The Persian conqueror of Egypt, Cambyses, learns this lesson when he is driven mad by the gods after murdering the sacred Apis bull (3.29).[109] Herodotus might also imply by the use of funeral customs for this example that the Greeks and the Callatians hold their funeral practices in particular very dear, something which is often assumed to be true cross-culturally by those seeking to match archaeological remains with a particular people (Fortson 2010, 45). This seminar on comparative funerary practices is thus a paradoxical moment in Herodotus: even as a people's foreignness is emphasized, in a larger way they are the same as the Greeks, because they too think that their customs are best, even if those customs could not be more different in terms of their particular details. In one sense, then, the Callatians' foreignness just makes their ultimate equation to the Greeks even starker. Both want to treat their fathers with respect.

A similar connection occurs in the case of Cyrus and Croesus on the pyre. As discussed above, it is only when the interpreters allow Cyrus and Croesus to communicate that Croesus finally thinks of their common humanity and that it would not be right for him to consign another human being to the flames. Even if Cyrus does not fully learn Solon's wisdom from Croesus, it can still be said that interpreters, while they indicate the distance between the two figures, ultimately also allow the bridging of the very difference whose presence they indicate.

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[109] Cambyses also mocks a statue of the Egyptian god Ptah and opens up tombs to look at the bodies within (Hdt. 3.37). For a critical view of this account, see Briant (2002, 56–59).

In understanding the role interpreters play in Herodotus it is also useful to examine the situations where Herodotus explicitly mentions other ways that native speakers of different languages communicate, such as when he records Persians who speak Greek or Greeks who speak Persian. Just as is the case with interpreters, there is no reason to expect that such communication is not implicit elsewhere, and one is often left wondering why Herodotus has chosen to be explicit in some places and not in others. One example occurs at 6.29.2, where Histiaeus, the erstwhile tyrant of Miletus, being pursued after a battle by a Persian soldier, saves himself for the moment by crying out in Persian and making known who he is (Περσίδα γλῶσσαν μετεὶς καταμηνύει ἑωυτὸν εἴη Ἱστιαῖος ὁ Μιλήσιος). There is of course the immediate practicality of speaking in Persian: the soldier would probably otherwise not understand him. On the other hand, as we have seen above in the scene with Croesus on the pyre, bridging the linguistic gap humanizes barbarians. Whereas interpreters highlight the linguistic gap between two parties, even as they bridge it, the ability of one party to speak in the language of the other without the distancing effect of an intermediary has the potential to create a sense of closeness.

A similar incident occurs before the battle of Plataea, when Thebans and Persians dine together. They do not eat separated into two groups but a Persian and a Theban share each couch (9.16.1). The Persian sitting next to Thersandrus of Orchomenos, who is telling the story, asks him in Greek where he is from (Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν ἱέντα εἰρέσθαι αὐτὸν ὁποδαπός ἐστι, 9.16.2). The Persian then continues that he predicted the defeat and destruction of the Persians, and that many other Persians also fear the outcome of their expedition (9.16.3-5). Nevertheless, they are powerless to escape because they must follow their orders and because it is impossible for a human being to turn aside what is bound to happen on account of god (ὅ τι δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐκ

τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀμήχανον ἀποτρέψαι ἀνθρώπῳ, 9.16.4). The use of Greek here brings the Persian and Greek interlocutors closer together, which is appropriate to what is already a humanizing moment, where Herodotus lets Greeks peer into the mindset of a non-royal Persian and see that it is much more sympathetic and familiar than the hubris displayed by figures like Xerxes. This passage shows that one way in which Herodotus is the most Homeric of historians is in his sympathetic and humane portrayal of people on both sides of a conflict. Together with the Histiaeus episode, these are the only two incidents in the work where a Persian is explicitly marked as communicating in Greek or vice versa. This incident thus contributes to Munson's thesis about language's function as a thematic indicator of common humanity, even as it shows how the marked lack of interpreters elides the distance that they normally create.

Like interpreters, translation also bridges distances as well as creates them, by putting content from one language into terms that makes it intelligible in another context. One common type of translation in Herodotus that serves to bridge intercultural gaps is the translation of names. Herodotus often feels the need to translate proper nouns from another language into Greek. The names tend to be unrelated, but to refer to the same entity. One example, which has already been discussed in Chapter Two, is when Herodotus equates foreign and Greek gods. In addition to the case of Osiris/Dionysus, discussed there, and various other Egyptian gods, Herodotus also informs us that "the Assyrians call Aphrodite *Mylitta*" (1.199.3), gives Greek equivalents for multiple Scythian gods (4.59.2), and refers to a Libyan Athena, though he does not name her. Similarly, he says that the Egyptian king Rhampsinitus went down alive to "what the Greeks call Hades" and played dice with Demeter (2.122.1). Thus, the equation between different gods can be extended to translate places associated with those gods (as is the case with

Hades). These translations serve to put non-Greek gods into terms that are intelligible in terms of Greek religion.

There is good reason to believe that, when Herodotus equates Greek and non-Greek divinities, the translation is literal. The first reason is that Herodotus uses the same language to equate divinities that he uses for other glosses. For instance, he uses a form of the verb *kaleō* 'to call' with two accusatives in both divine and mundane contexts. Thus, he reports both that "the Medes call a dog a *spaka*" and that "the Assyrians call Aphrodite *Mylitta*" (Hdt. 1.110.5, 1.199.3). Another reason is Herodotus' statement that the Egyptians gave the Greeks nearly all the names of the gods (σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ πάντων τὰ οὐνόματα τῶν θεῶν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐλήλυθε ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, Hdt. 2.50.1). While interpretations of this passage vary in important details, they tend to agree that it shows that, for Herodotus at least, the same divinities might be named or worshipped differently depending on the customs (*nomoi*) of individual peoples.[110] Finally, the idea that divinities really do have foreign equivalents fits within Herodotus' general tendency to draw direct parallels between Greek and foreign religions or to trace the origins of the one from the other (Harrison 2000, 205–14; Rudhardt 1992, 224).

By examining one particularly expansive example of this type of translation, we can understand better Herodotus' translation of divine names. During his description of the Scythians, Herodotus goes so far as to translate most of what he identifies as the Scythian pantheon at once (4.59.2):

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[110] Stein and others like him argue that Herodotus, when speaking here of the borrowing of 'names', is thinking of "the concept of the divinity concerned, as it showed itself in its form, cult and myth" (Stein 1881, I, Part II: 60-62; cf. How and Wells 1928, 191; Linforth 1926, 1–25; Fritz 1967, 2:99). Linforth takes this line of argumentation to its logical conclusion, that the names of the gods are used like common nouns, so that, as Lattimore summarizes, "Zeus is merely a translation of Ammon, both denoting the same substance" (Lattimore 1939, 359). Lattimore, followed by Lloyd, argued instead that Herodotus regards both the Greek and the Egyptian names for the gods as having originated in Egypt (since it was the Egyptians who discovered most of the gods), but that one name died out in Greece while the other did so in Egypt (Lattimore 1939, 364; A. B. Lloyd 1976, 203–5). In either case, there is a real sense in which both names refer to the same entity, as Burkert also acknowledges (Burkert 1985).

> ὀνομάζονται δὲ Σκυθιστὶ Ἱστίη μὲν Ταβιτί, Ζεὺς δὲ ὀρθότατα κατὰ γνώμην γε τὴν ἐμὴν καλεόμενος Παπαῖος, Γῆ δὲ Ἀπί, Ἀπόλλων δὲ Γοιτόσυρος, οὐρανίη δὲ Ἀφροδίτη Ἀργίμπασα, Ποσειδέων δὲ Θαγιμασάδας.
>
> Hestia is named Tabiti in Scythian, Zeus is called (most correctly in my opinion) Papaios, Gaia Api, Apollo Goitosyros, heavenly Aphrodite Argimpasa, and Poseidon Thagimasadas.[111]

The closest parallel is when Herodotus identifies the Egyptian divinities Horus, Isis, and Bubastis as Apollo, Demeter, and Artemis, respectively (2.156.5). Whereas there the translation serves to make an Egyptian myth about an island in the Nile understandable to a Greek audience, the Scythian example serves the more general purpose of making Scythian religious practices understandable in Greek terms. While Herodotus translates the Scythian divinities into their Greek forms, he also suggests that perhaps the Scythian names are superior by saying that Zeus is "most correctly" (ὀρθότατα) called *Papaios* in Scythian, either because of its similarity to Greek *pappas* (πάππας 'daddy') or because of its derivation from a related Iranian word (or perhaps for both reasons; Vasmer 1925, 15).[112] Still another explanation for Herodotus' statement on the correctness of the Scythian name could be that Herodotus is merely punning on the apparent similarity between *pappas* and *papaios*. Whatever the explanation, it is striking that he considers the non-Greek term for Zeus to be more correct than the Greek one, just as he thinks the Egyptians have a better calendar than the Greeks and the Babylonians have the best way of arranging marriages.[113]

If Herodotus is being serious here, it is noteworthy that he extends a Cratylus-style theory of the correctness of some words over others to suggest that the Scythian name might be more

[111] Γοιτόσυρος has been corrected from the manuscripts' Οἰτόσυρος based on Hesychius.
[112] *Papaios* might also derive from pā(pa)- 'to defend, to protect' (Vasmer 1925, 15).
[113] The Egyptians add five days to a calendar of twelve thirty-day months, as opposed to the Greek practice of adding an intercalary month every other year (Hdt. 2.4). Babylonian fathers, per Herodotus, used to auction off their daughters, using the money obtained from the sale of the most attractive to pay for the dowries of the least attractive (Hdt. 1.196).

correct than its Greek equivalent, just as he states that Babylonian dowry practices are superior to Greek ones (*Cra.* 435c, 1.196). Little enough is known about Scythian divinities that it has been hard to connect Herodotus' account to actual deities. For instance, in the case of Apollo/Goetosyros, the interpretation of Goetosyros as *gaēθōsūra ('rich in cattle' or 'master of the living world') might suggest a parallel with the Iranian Mithras, often assimilated to Apollo (Vasmer 1925, 11). Still, other interpretations are possible (see e.g. Mora (1986, 51), Dumézil (1983, 121–22)).[114] In any case, Herodotus' translation of divine names again serves not just to point out religious differences but also to connect Greek and non-Greek religion, since ultimately Greeks, Scythians, and Assyrians worship mostly the same divinities, albeit under different names.

Divine names are not the only names that receive translations in Herodotus. One example occurs during Herodotus' account of the childhood and rise to power of Cyrus, who will become the first Achaemenid Persian king. His maternal grandfather, the Median king Astyages, has dreams that predict that his daughter's offspring, with whom she is currently pregnant, will overthrow him.[115] To prevent this, he tasks a nobleman named Harpagus with killing his infant grandson (Hdt. 1.107-1.109). Unwilling to do the deed himself, however, Harpagus sends for one of Astyages' cowherds to do the task for him (Hdt. 1.110.1):

> ταῦτα εἶπε καὶ αὐτίκα ἄγγελον ἔπεμπε ἐπὶ τῶν βουκόλων τῶν Ἀστυάγεος τὸν ἠπίστατο νομάς τε ἐπιτηδεοτάτας νέμοντα καὶ ὄρεα θηριωδέστατα, τῷ οὔνομαἦν Μιτραδάτης. συνοίκεε δὲ ἑωυτοῦ συνδούλῃ, οὔνομα δὲ τῇ γυναικὶ

[114] For the other gods see Asheri et al. (2007, 623–26) and the bibliography provided there.
[115] The status of Cyrus' paternal ancestors is a proven inaccuracy of Herodotus. While Herodotus claims that that his mother was the daughter of the king of Media and his father, Cambyses, was a Persian from a good family (1.107.2), Babylonian and Persian documents show that Cambyses was actually king of Anshan, a kingdom in Parsa (modern Fars, in southwestern Iran), who was perhaps a client king of the Medes. Herodotus knows the names of Cyrus' father, father's father, and father's paternal grandfather, and first known ancestor, Achaemenes, but neglects to mention that they were kings, possibly reflecting the bias of noble Persian sources hostile towards Achaemenid kingship (Munson 2013, 458).

> ἦν τῇ συνοίκεε Κυνὼ κατὰ τὴν Ἑλλήνων γλῶσσαν, κατὰ δὲ τὴν Μηδικὴν Σπακώ· τὴν γὰρ κύνα καλέουσι σπάκα Μῆδοι.
>
> He said these things and immediately sent a messenger to one of Astyages' cowherds, whose name was Mitradates, who he knew grazed his flocks in pastures and mountains most suitable for his purpose, for they were full of wild beasts. A fellow slave lived with him as his wife, and her name in Greek would have been Kyno ('dog lady'), but in Median was Spako: for the Medians call a dog a *spaka*.

Herodotus' translation here may be roughly correct, with some caveats. A Median form **Spakā*- seems probable, derived with the suffix *-*ka*- from the Old Iranian stem **span*- "dog" (attested in Avestan as *span*-), like the Old Persian name Rša-ka- (Greek Ἀρσάκης). Additional evidence of such a form comes from the Parthian name Spak. Just because Herodotus' etymology is correct, however, does not mean the name is. A closer Greek rendering of the possibly authentic underlying form would be the first declension form **Spakē* (*Σπάκη). The form as attested in Herodotus seems to have assimilated the woman's name to a broader pattern of third-declension female names in Greek like Kleō (Κλεώ, masculine Κλέων) or Gorgō (Γοργώ, as e.g. at Hdt. 4.48). Nevertheless, accuracy of the gloss does not explain its purpose here.

The single mostly likely reason why Herodotus includes this detail is so that he can explain it later, much as in the *baris* passage Herodotus introduces the type of boat by describing it before much later telling us its name. When Cyrus returns to Persia and his original parents, he does not forget Kyno's kindness. Rather, he talks often to his royal parents about his adopted mother (1.122.3):

> τραφῆναι δὲ ἔλεγε ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ βουκόλου γυναικός, ἤιέ τε ταύτην αἰνέων διὰ παντός, ἦν τέ οἱ ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τὰ πάντα ἡ Κυνώ. οἱ δὲ τοκέες παραλαβόντες τὸ οὔνομα τοῦτο, ἵνα θειοτέρως δοκέῃ τοῖσι Πέρσῃσι περιεῖναί σφι ὁ παῖς, κατέβαλον φάτιν ὡς ἐκκείμενον Κῦρον κύων ἐξέθρεψε. ἐνθεῦτεν μὲν ἡ φάτις αὕτη κεχώρηκε.
>
> And he said that he was raised by the cowherd's wife, and he was always praising her, and *Kynō* was always on his tongue. When his parents heard this name, they circulated a legend that a dog suckled Cyrus when he was exposed, so that their

> son's survival would seem even more to be by divine providence. From here, then, began the legend.

Herodotus thus rationalizes a myth based on his earlier translations. His explanation of the myth serves as foreshadowing for this later bit of analysis. Herodotus' translation of Kynō's name thus serves as a prerequisite for another kind of translation, that from the world of legend into a more believably realistic kind of world.[116] It also allows the translation of what could be an originally Persian account of Cyrus' origins for a Greek audience. In rationalizing a Persian story, Herodotus is following the same practice he uses with various Greek myths, providing another bridge between material from different cultures.

Besides this rationalizing explanation, Herodotus' translation creates other interesting parallels within the story of Cyrus and his description of Persian customs. One parallel is Herodotus' remark that Persian magi, unlike Egyptian priests, can kill any living thing with their own hands except humans and dogs, which hints at the fact that the dog is sacred to the Zoroastrian angelic divinity Mithras, who may have been a special patron of Cyrus (Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 2007, 167, 172). Given Cyrus' extensive praise of her, the association of Spako with this sacred animal could also be a way of elevating her. The Spako story also has an apparent parallel later in the *Histories*, when Herodotus describes a Spartan prince whom some call by a pet name (Hdt. 6.71.1):

> Λευτυχίδης δὲ ὁ Μενάρεος Δημαρήτου καταπαυσθέντος διεδέξατο τὴν βασιληίην, καί οἱ γίνεται παῖς Ζευξίδημος, τὸν δὴ Κυνίσκον μετεξέτεροι Σπαρτιητέων ἐκάλεον.
>
> Leutychides the son of Menares received the kingship after Demaratus' reign was ended, and he had a son, Zeuxidēmos, whom some of the Spartans called *Kyniskos* ('puppy').

[116] Compare also Livy and the claim that the wolf who nursed them was actually a prostitute, that being another meaning of the word *lupa* 'she-wolf' (1.4.7).

Finally, the story makes us think of the way Cyrus himself is described in animal terms by the Delphic oracle, which cryptically describes him as a mule, an allusion to his mixed Persian-Median parentage (1.55.2). Thus, even beyond allowing for the translation of a Persian story for a Greek audience, explaining Spako's name contributes to various different themes of Herodotus' Cyrus story.

Herodotus at various points provides glosses that includes a non-Greek and Greek dialectal form alongside each other. At 9.20, Herodotus introduces a Persian commander who led the cavalry under Mardonius before the battle of Plateia (9.20):

> Μαρδόνιος δέ, ὡς οὐ κατέβαινον οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐς τὸ πεδίον, πέμπει ἐς αὐτοὺς πᾶσαν τὴν ἵππον, τῆς ἱππάρχεε Μασίστιος εὐδοκιμέων παρὰ Πέρσῃσι, τὸν Ἕλληνες Μακίστιον καλέουσι, ἵππον ἔχων Νησαῖον χρυσοχάλινόν τε καὶ ἄλλως κεκοσμημένον καλῶς.
>
> Mardonius, when the Greeks did not come down onto the plain, sent all his cavalry against them. They were led by Masistios, a prominent man among the Persians, whom the Greeks call Makistios, who had a Nessian horse with a golden bit and other beautiful ornaments.

Makistios derives from the Doric form of *mēkistos* (μήκιστος, 'tallest'). Herodotus seems uninterested in or unaware of the word's Doric derivation here, unlike previous examples we have seen. This is perhaps because the long alpha serves more to connect the name to its Persian equivalent than as a marker of Doric dialect. Masistios is a rendering of Old Iranian **Masištiya*-, an *-*iya*-extension of the superlative **masišta*- 'greatest' (Schmitt 2015, 254).[117] *Makistios* thus rather literally translates the meaning of the original name into Greek.

When Herodotus reintroduces him, he notably uses the Persian version of the name, though he clearly expects the reader to remember the translation that he had provided earlier.

[117] **masišta*- itself is attested as an anthroponym in Greek (Μασίστης, e.g. at Hdt. 7.82, 121; 9.107, 108, 110-113) and Babylonian (Ma-si-iš-tu4) sources. Superlative forms extended by *-*iya*- are attested in Avestan and Vedic Sanskrit (Schmitt 2015, 254).

That the name refers to the man's height is confirmed by the way Herodotus praises his height and beauty after he dies fighting the Greeks at the battle of Plataea (9.25.1):

> Οἱ μέν νυν βάρβαροι τρόπῳ τῷ σφετέρῳ ἀποθανόντα ἐτίμων Μασίστιον· οἱ δὲ Ἕλληνες ὡς τὴν ἵππον ἐδέξαντο προσβάλλουσαν καὶ δεξάμενοι ὤσαντο, ἐθάρσησαν πολλῷ μᾶλλον. καὶ πρῶτα μὲν ἐς ἅμαξαν ἐσθέντες τὸν νεκρὸν παρὰ τὰς τάξις ἐκόμιζον· ὁ γὰρ νεκρὸς ἦν θέης ἄξιος μεγάθεος εἵνεκα καὶ κάλλεος, τῶν δὴ εἵνεκα καὶ ταῦτα ἐποίευν· ἐκλείποντες <δὲ> τὰς τάξις ἐφοίτεον θεησόμενοι Μασίστιον.
>
> The foreigners honored Masistios in their own way upon his death. The Greeks, on the other hand, felt much more confident because they had received the charging cavalry and pushed it back. First, they put the dead man onto a wagon and carried him along before their ranks, for the corpse was well worth seeing because of its size and beauty, to the point that they kept leaving their posts and going to look at Masistios.

The content of the passage explains the Greek name from the earlier passage, that is, it explains why his name would mean 'tallest'. This explanation falls into the same pattern seen before the case of Spako, where the full import of the translation is only apparent later in Herodotus' narrative. Thus, the translation of Spako and Masistios' names are part of the same technique of suspense we see in Cyrus' delay in understanding Croesus' words, when Cyrus can grasp their meaning only after his interpreters have translated them.

Herodotus also translates the names of the Persian kings Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes. The text, as given in Wilson's recent edition, follows Cook's emendation of the original (1907; 6.98.3):[118]

[118] Cook also had an overlooked predecessor, the well-known New Testament scholar Eberhard Nestle (1901). The manuscripts preserve a rather different gloss:

Δαρεῖος ἐρξίης (-είης A), Ξέρξης ἀρήιος Ἀρτοξέρξης μέγας ἀρήιος Ar idem D, omisso μέγας ἀρήιος.

Darius is the doer, Xerxes the warrior, and Artaxerxes the great warrior.

The passage as received needs emendation for several reasons. One issue is the word for "doer", *erxiēs* (ἐρξίης). This word is barely attested beyond this passage. The only other attestations occur in poems by Archilochus, where the term serves as a proper name, and in lexicographers referring to these two appearances in Archilochus, in coins from Ephesus and Colophon, and as the name of an author in Athenaeus' *Dining Sophists* (Archil. fragment 88.1, 89.29; *Etym. Magn.* 376.53; *Etymologicum Symeonis* 796.1; Heph. *Enchiridion de metris* 18.15; Ath. *Deipnosophistae* 13.12; Schmitt 2015, 259). The meaning itself is unclear, and depends on whether the etymology derives from *erdō* (ἔρδω, future ἔρξω) 'to do' or from *ergō* (ἔργω, Attic εἴργω) 'to bar one's

> δύναται δὲ κατὰ Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν ταῦτα τὰ οὐνόματα, Δαρεῖος ἀρήιος, Ξέρξης ἐρξίης, Ἀρτοξέρξης κάρτα ἐρξίης. τούτους μὲν δὴ τοὺς βασιλέας ὧδε ἂν ὀρθῶς κατὰ γλῶσσαν τὴν σφετέρην Ἕλληνες καλέοιεν.[119]
>
> In the Greek language these names have the following meanings: Darius is the Warrior, Xerxes is the Doer, Artaxerxes the Great Doer. The Greeks would rightly call the kings these things in their own language.

In fact, Darius is already the Greek-language version of Old Persian *Dārayavauš* (𐎭𐎠𐎼𐎹𐎺𐎢𐏁, 'he who holds firm the good(ness)'), Xerxes of Old Persian *Xšayāršā* (𐎧𐏁𐎹𐎠𐎼𐏁𐎠, 'ruling over heroes'), and Artaxerxes of Old Persian *Artaxšaça* (𐎠𐎼𐎫𐎧𐏁𐏂, 'whose rule is through truth').[120] As emended, the passage suggests that Herodotus sought to give Greek translations for the names of these Persian kings that most resembled the original names in sound, a practice which clearly differs from his translation of divine names. If these lines are indeed not to be deleted, then they suggest that Herodotus felt that the Persian and Greek languages were related, as indeed they are.[121] Nevertheless, tthe translations offered are

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way, to keep away, to hinder' (Schmitt 2015, 258). The other word given by Herodotus, *arēios* 'warlike', is less problematic: while it is out of place in Herodotus or in prose in general, it is at least a relatively common word in Homer (e.g. *Il.* 2.698, 3.339, 4.114; *Od.* 16.284, 19.4, 24.219).

Cook's emendation makes sense of Herodotus' obscure choice of vocabulary: by switching the order of translation such that *arēios* translates *Darios*, *erxiēs Xerxēs*, and *karta erxiēs Artoxerxēs*, Herodotus' bizarre choice of vocabulary is justified by an obvious desire to translate the royal names using similar-sounding Greek words. The emendation gains further credence because it posits that the corruption began with a mistaken transposition of two words, "an error of trivial and common type" (Wilson 2015a, 117). After its relationship to the first part of Artaxerxes' name was obscured, *karta* (κάρτα, 'very') was then more easily replaced by the more common *megas* (μέγας, 'big, great'). Another reason to accept Cook's emendation is the fact that this kind of translation is not unheard of in Greek literature. Schmitt, for instance, mentions that in later times, the Septuagint tried to find Greek lexemes that sounded as close as possible to the Hebrew words they translated, though this parallel should not be taken too far, as there were special religious constraints at work in that translation, since it was the goal of the translators "not to re-create freely the content of the Hebrew scriptures, but to reproduce both content and form as faithfully as possible so as not to go against God's commandment" (Schmitt 2015, 259; Janse 2002, 361; Exod. 32:16).

[119] This is one of many translations that Herodotus provides through the verb *dunatai* (δύναται). While the root meaning of the word is 'to be able to', it is also a standard word for 'means', in the translational sense 'x means y', and Herodotus uses it as such (e.g. Ar. *Ran*. 691, Thuc. 7.58, Hdt. 4.110). The use of the word for translation, however, is just one manifestation of a larger sense in which it means 'to be equivalent to'.

[120] For the etymologies see the relevant entries in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (Yarshater 1985).

[121] The passage has problems that cannot be fixed by emendation. One striking feature is the disconnect between the passage and its context. The passage occurs in the context of an earthquake on the island of Delos during the Persian expedition against the island in 492 BCE. This event was regarded as a fateful omen. Herodotus abruptly moves on to translating the names after quoting an oracle that seems to refer to the earthquake. Because the material is tangentially related to the narrative but lacks any direct connection, either logically or syntactically, one explanation for the passage could be that it was a marginal note that was mistakenly copied into the main body of the text. This is the explanation offered by Wesseling, who deleted the passage. The reason that Wilson and others ultimately

completely wrong, besides the fact that Xerxes and Artaxerxes do indeed share a root (xšā- 'to be able; rule, be lord of'; Cheung 2007, s.v. xšaH). Herodotus further argues that the Greeks would do better to call the kings by the Greek translations of their names, suggesting that they are missing a proper understanding of these kings without the connection that translation provides.

Another way in which translations not only serve to point out difference but also to create a connection between different peoples is the fact that Herodotus provides glosses for both Greek and non-Greek political concepts and political institutions. Many of these concern elements of Persian imperial administration. For example, Herodotus informs us that the Persians call governorships "satrapies" (1.192.2) and the king's benefactors *orosangai* (8.85.3) and have a postal system called the *angarieon* (8.98.2).[122] There is a special feast every year on the anniversary of the Persian king's accession to the kingship called a *tykta* (9.110.2). This is similar to the way Herodotus gives us the name for an Achaean town hall, special types of Spartan ambassadors (6.57.3, 7.134.1), and a group of Spartans referred to as the Knights (8.124.3). There is thus a certain equalizing effect to Herodotus' description of the peculiarity of Greek and non-Greek systems alike.

Like institutions, Herodotus provides glosses to describe both Greek and non-Greek concepts in an egalitarian way. For example, Herodotus famously states that the Egyptians, like the Greeks, call all those who speak other languages barbarians (*barbaroi*, 2.158). Likewise, he notes that the Spartans have a different understanding of outsiders from other Greeks, calling them not barbarians but *xeinoi*, a term usually reserved for Greeks from other cities (9.11.2). Similarly, Herodotus provides equivalencies between different Greek and non-Greek systems of

decided to print the passage, however, is that Herodotus is clearly interested in both oracles and foreign languages, and that Herodotus' remarks represent "an author's addition, not integrated into the context" and "the interpretations offered can plausibly be attributed to a period when linguistic inquiry was in its infancy" (Wilson 2015a, 117).
[122] On *orosangēs* see Schmitt (2011, 326).

counting time, weight, and distance.[123] When Herodotus says a Persian parasang 'means' 30 Greek stadia, or that a Babylonian talent 'means' a certain number of Euboeic *minae*, that is a cultural as well as a mathematical translation.[124] Altogether, these cultural translations both highlight but, more importantly, bridge differences between different peoples.

Herodotus provides a similar sort of translation when, at the end of his discussion of Egyptian chronicles (2.99-2.142.1), he converts the 341 generations from the first king of Egypt to the current priest of Hephaestus into years (2.142.2-3):

> καίτοι τριηκόσιαι μὲν ἀνδρῶν γενεαὶ δυνέαται μύρια ἔτεα· γενεαὶ γὰρ τρεῖς ἀνδρῶν ἑκατὸν ἔτεά ἐστι. μιῆς δὲ καὶ τεσσεράκοντα ἔτι τῶν ἐπιλοίπων γενεέων, αἳ ἐπῆσαν τῇσι τριηκοσίῃσι, ἐστὶ τεσσεράκοντα καὶ τριηκόσια καὶ χίλια ἔτεα. (3) οὕτως ἐν μυρίοισί τε ἔτεσι καὶ χιλίοισι καὶ πρὸς τριηκοσίοισί τε καὶ τεσσεράκοντα ἔλεγον θεὸν ἀνθρωποειδέα οὐδένα γενέσθαι· οὐ μέντοι οὐδὲ πρότερον οὐδὲ ὕστερον ἐν τοῖσι ὑπολοίποισι Αἰγύπτου βασιλεῦσι γενομένοισι ἔλεγον οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον.
>
> In fact, 300 human generations are 10,000 years, since three generations are one hundred years. The 41 generations that follow the 300 are 1340. Thus, they say that in 11,340 years there has been no god in human form, nor indeed do they say there was such a one among the remaining kings of Egypt before or after.

King-lists of various sorts were kept throughout Egyptian history (Moyer 2002, 74; Redford 1986, 1–64). These lists were inscribed on monuments around which the presence of Greek, Aramaic, and Phoenician graffiti hints at the presence of Greek and other tourists (Moyer 2002, 75; Perdrizet and Lefebvre 1919; Rutherford 2003). King lists were also kept on papyrus in the way described by Herodotus, such as on the Turin Canon, found in the Theban necropolis in 1822. Due to the papyrus' incomplete state, an exact number of kings cannot be ascertained, and the list would only include kings up to the reign of Ramses II, roughly eight centuries before the time of Herodotus. Nevertheless, the scale of the king-list is around 293 to 346 names, which is

[123] Distance: 2.6.3, 5.53.1; weight: 3.89.2; time: 2.142.2.
[124] *Dunatai* is again the verb used in these examples.

of the same order as the 341 names given by Herodotus. Herodotus alludes to these lists, giving the length of time in generations, before translating these generations into years, connecting his audience more fully to a sense of the depth of recorded Egyptian history.

### *Conclusion*

In Herodotus, distances both physical both literal and figurative are emphasized by interpreters and translation. Distance may increase dramatic tension or lend emphasis as well as create a sense of the exotic or foreign. Somewhat paradoxically, translation and interpreters also bridge these distances, revealing a common humanity. Interpreters also contribute to the larger themes of the *Histories*, aiding the author to comment on geography, ethnicity, and the vicissitudes of all human life. Interpreters and translation allow communication not only across boundaries of culture and space but also of time, since they are part of Herodotus' rationalization of myths, which brings the world of myth nearer to the present day by bringing it into accordance with the rules of everyday reality. Herodotus' cultural translation occurs not only when he glosses non-Greek words, but also when he translates Greek words that are peculiar to a certain place or dialect. This is another way in which his work plays with the distinction between Greek and non-Greek. Herodotus thus resembles some of the interpreters of his own narrative, and not only in offering translations. Like the interpreters in his narrative, Herodotus serves as the intermediary between the myriad voices from which he constructs his narrative, creating conversations and debates between sources that were probably not before in dialogue, such as Egyptian and Dodonaean priests.

## Conclusion

Language relates to several larger issues in understanding Herodotus. It has been tied into the traditional debate about Herodotus' value as a source, but more importantly it allows us a fuller view of Herodotus as sophisticated thinker, literary artist, and investigator of the past. It comes up time and again when he examines the distant past, such as when he treats the Athenians' Pelasgian ancestors or the Egyptians' claim to be world's oldest people. Often, he uses language to make surprising inferences about a people's past, for instance by suggesting that the Athenians' ancestors were not Greek. Similarly, language plays an important role in the construction of Herodotus' narrative, most notably through his use of interpreters. In Herodotus, language is always part of its historical context, and Herodotus' examination of both Greek and barbarian languages side by side using the same methodologies shows his even-handedness and openness. The Psammetichus episode at the beginning of the second book of the *Histories* and Herodotus' account of Egypt serves as a programmatic passage, foreshadowing Herodotus' approach to language by contrasting it with pilloried king Psammetichus, whose essentializing, primordialist, and conservative view of language contrast with Herodotus' dynamic, historicizing, and contextualized one.

Did Herodotus invent linguistic phenomena? To answer this question straightforwardly one might attempt to show him to be intentionally fraudulent or, conversely, to be right about more than he is given credit. To do so would be to enter into a seemingly insoluble debate at least as old as the first century CE, if one counts Plutarch's *On the Malice of Herodotus* as an early entry in a series of attacks on the historian's credibility. Many would now urge the

wholesale rejection of this question as both unproductive and anachronistic, given the different relationship with the truth held by ancient historians. The fairest course seems to me to be to approach Herodotus in the spirit in which he approaches others. For instance, Herodotus first evaluates the claim by the Egyptians that the Nile Delta is the result of soil having been deposited over time by the river. Herodotus finds this claim credible because the soil is unlike that of neighboring Libya, Syria, and Arabia (2.12.2-3). The consequence of him accepting this view is that he must disagree with the Ionians who claim that only the Delta is Egypt, for this would make the Egyptians quite young if, as the Egyptians claim and Herodotus accepts, the Delta only recently came to exist in the fashion described above (2.15.2). In his treatment of sources, the truth remains a useful object to aim for, but the process of evaluation takes center stage, and even patently false claims are entertained if they are interesting or useful to think with. It is possible to read Herodotus in the same spirit.

At various points during the current study, I have pointed out when Herodotus' observations about language are correct or possibly correct from a modern perspective. For instance, I argue that Herodotus deserves credit for correctly identifying the Greek alphabet's Phoenician origins. On the other hand, I show equal interest in Herodotus' observations that have little to do with fact, such as his fanciful, Greek-based etymologies for the name of Persian kings. This duality begs the question, why do I take the time to try to show where Herodotus is factually accurate, or even partially accurate, if elsewhere I treat his factuality as irrelevant? Does it matter whether Herodotus is accurate or telling the truth when he talks about languages? Ultimately, the duality of my approach results from my sense that this question does not have a simple yes or no answer. There are some questions for which his accuracy is important, most notably the question of how much credence to give the *Histories* as evidence for the societies and

languages Herodotus describes. For many other questions, however, the truth of Herodotus' linguistic statements is of less obvious value. For answering questions internal to Herodotus or about how Herodotus' work relates to the broader perception of the world by Classical Greeks, the truth of Herodotus' ideas is not so important as the way they relate to each other and those of other authors. In these contexts, the only argument that can be made for the importance of Herodotus' accuracy is that it perhaps implies an honest attempt to get to the truth, though well-constructed lies often contain some factual information in order to appear more credible.

What about the questions most central the present study? For them, too the ultimate truth of Herodotus' claims is not of the utmost importance, though not so minor as to justify exclusion from the study altogether. I chose to examine language in Herodotus not because of a desire to showcase Herodotus' accuracy, but rather to show the sophistication of his methodologies. Language shows this especially well. Herodotus incorporates language into a fluid view of identity that does not distinguish between group identities based on descent, language, religion and other factors. Rather, Herodotus probes what features define each group, and especially the ways groups define themselves, in an approach that at times verges on modern constructivism. He shows himself to be particularly sensitive to language contact in ways that also overlap modern approaches to the subject, describing such phenomena as mixed languages and imperfect learning. While the *Histories* is chiefly an investigation into human deeds, language plays a key role in defining the human as opposed both to the divine and the animal. Moreover, in examining the way divine speech is marked, he prefigures modern linguistic anthropology and religious history. Finally, Herodotus uses interpreters to construct a more vivid narrative and uses Greek and non-Greek glosses to translate culture as well as words. None of these achievements depend strictly on Herodotus' factual accuracy. Herodotus' accuracy is limited by that of his sources, but

that does not mean that the way he evaluates and processes that data is any less interesting or remarkable. Nonetheless, when Herodotus does get things right, it is fair to give credit where credit is due. If nothing else, it shows that Herodotus' worldview is not only important for intellectual history but can, given the correct data, arrive at true conclusions.

### *Summary of Chapters*

The previous chapters say much about Herodotus' approach to language. The first chapter explores the relationship between ethnicity and language in Herodotus' *Histories.* In certain situations, Herodotus links ethnicity and language so deeply that they seem conflated. At other times, Herodotus explicitly separates the two. The apparent contradiction does not rise from any confusion on Herodotus' part. Rather, as the chapter shows, Herodotus' conception of ethnic identity appears to be fluid enough to account both for situations in which language plays a fundamental role in identity and ones in which it plays no role whatsoever. This is because he imagines ethnicity as constructed by people out of building blocks, such as language or (at least putative) shared descent, that tend to come up over and over again but may or may not be salient in the case of any particular group. In this he mirrors Barthes, "who pioneered what later became known as 'constructivism': the claim that ethnicity is the product of a social process rather than a cultural given, made and remade rather than ascribed through birth" (Wimmer 2008, 971; Barth 1969).

Herodotus' interest in language often focuses on language contact. The second chapter details the relationship between Herodotus' observations about language and modern linguists' understanding of language contact. Connections are made between Herodotus' observation and the modern concepts of imperfect learning, diglossia, linguistic convergence, mixed languages, loanwords, and language death. While Herodotus' descriptions of contact phenomena are not

always very detailed, they give enough information to suggest, based on what we know about these types of situations in general, that he is describing real situations. The way in which Herodotus approaches language contact shows an ability to observe linguistic phenomena even without an understanding of modern methodologies. Herodotus' approach to language contact, like most of his work, is multi-faceted. While the terms that Herodotus uses cannot usually be easily aligned with modern categories, they are specific enough to invite comparison. Overall, the use of language in Herodotus is sophisticated. It functions both as a tool and as a subject of study in its own right.

Herodotus' approach to language contact and the connection between language and ethnicity challenge traditional Greek ideas about ethnic differences. Similarly, Herodotus makes distinctions between human, animal, and divine speech that both echo and diverge from earlier and later Greek cultural assumptions. Herodotus does not collapse the distinction between humans and animals. Instead, the historian emphasizes that purported examples of speaking animals can be explained by rational analysis. Several examples in the *Histories* follow Greek tropes about the language of non-Greek peoples sounding animal-like, although Herodotus does not necessarily accept the negative associations that other writers impute to people who speak animal-like languages. Concerning divine speech, style, dialect, and diction mark it as distinct throughout the *Histories*. Also important is the gods' universal command of human language. By distinguishing between divine and human speech, Herodotus builds on earlier Homeric ideas about a divine language and about the linguistic expression of the gods' superhuman knowledge. Herodotus connects his treatment of animal and divine languages to questions of language origins and language learning and ethnography in ways that put his critical faculties on display.

In sum, Herodotus' approach to non-human language demonstrates his intellectual independence and parallels his inquires elsewhere in the *Histories*.

Interpreters and translation contribute to these same themes in the *Histories*. Interpreters and translation highlight both physical and metaphorical distance. This distance may increase dramatic tension or lend emphasis as much as mark a situation as foreign. It is also, however, through translation and interpreters that these differences are sometimes overcome, revealing a common humanity. All the while, interpreters allow Herodotus to comment on geography, ethnicity, and the ups and downs of all human life. Interpreters and translation make connections across divisions not only of culture or of space but also of time; they sometimes play a part in Herodotus' rationalization of myths, a process that is itself one of bridging the gap between mythology and observed reality. Moreover, translation in the *Histories* is not limited to non-Greek languages. Herodotus also provides glosses for Greek words that are particular to a certain dialect or place, another way in which his work blurs the distinction between Greek and non-Greek. In the end, Herodotus resembles some of the interpreters of his own narrative. Just like them, Herodotus serves as the intermediary between the reader and the myriad voices from which he constructs his narrative. Through this Herodotean translation, conversations and debates occur between sources that were probably not before in dialogue, such as Egyptian and Dodonaean priests.

In all these chapters, I have shown how Herodotus' representation and understanding of Greek and non-Greek languages is significant to his work as historian and narrator. Herodotus' approach to language is, like everything in the *Histories*, bound up with the larger themes of the work. The investigation of language allows Herodotus to comment on ethnicity, religion, cultural interaction and change, and cultural difference. At times, it also helps the author construct a vivid

and compelling narrative, and language plays an important role in Herodotus' historical methodology and literary techniques. Ultimately, language in the *Histories* functions not just as a marker between traditional categories like Greek and barbarian or human and animal, but as a heuristic device to examine some of these traditional categories, reinforcing them in some places but also questioning them in others.

### *Next Steps*

Though this dissertation is now finished, this work has brought up many more questions. One aspect of Herodotus' approach to language that has received only tangential mention in the dissertation so far is the linguistic geography of Herodotus. Herodotus is fascinated by the connections between language and place. Most descriptions of language in Herodotus tie it to specific places, and it would be illuminating to understand better how Herodotus maps language(s) onto space, both from the perspective of work on Herodotean geography like Romm et al. (1994; 2013) and Romm, Raaflaub, and Talbert (2010) and from the more language-focused approach taken in my dissertation. In particular, it would be interesting to look at the way that language functions as another marker of the boundaries of the world in Herodotean thought.

Another promising area for future exploration is Herodotus' own mixed dialect and the relationship that it bears to the themes discussed throughout the other chapters. Such a project would involve a review of ancient and modern scholarship on Herodotus' dialect, including the opinions of recent editors of Herodotus' text. It is important to examine the ancient testimonia on Herodotus' dialect not only because they may have had access to a text of Herodotus that could be more accurate than that which we have today, but also because, from a thematic perspective, it seemed more important to try to understand how Herodotus' dialect would have been

perceived by contemporaries than how moderns would classify it. I would then look at Homeric forms in Herodotus, lexicon, contraction and lack of contraction of vowels, syntax, code-switching, Doric, Attic, and Aeolic dialect forms. One obstacle to such research is the sheer difficulty of establishing with any certainty that the Attic forms in Herodotus are part of his original text instead of the work of later copyists. Overall, looking at the language of the *Histories* as part of Herodotus' approach to language would be difficult to accomplish but provide a new and interesting angle from which to view the topic. My suspicion is that the language of the *Histories* was probably, at least in part, a consciously constructed literary dialect.

Another related question that emerges concerns Herodotus' relationship to his own origins in Anatolia. It has been proposed that Herodotus, being from the Carian city of Halicarnassus and having a relative called Panyasis, certainly knew Carian (Diels 1910, 14). Herodotus mentions the Carian language twice in his narrative (1.172, 8.135). Although Halicarnassus was nominally a Doric city, the absence of Dorian inscriptions, and the non-Greek etymology of the city's name suggests a Carian-dominated city, but one in which the heavily Hellenized Carian population indicated their difference by the use of Ionian instead of Doric Greek (Bresson 2009, 113, 118–19). A fruitful area for future research would be the archaeological and historical context of Herodotus' ideas, not just in terms of Halicarnassus itself but also surrounding sites, with which I would then be able to compare the city.

Another way to follow up the research presented here would be to broaden my approach by comparing Herodotus' use of interpreters as a narrative device with that of other ancient authors, or more broadly the way in which the occasional moments in which Herodotus acknowledges language differences between his characters compare with similar moments in other authors. Comparisons that seem preliminarily promising include Thucydides, other Greek

(or Greek and Roman) ancient historians, Herodotus' immediate predecessors, contemporaries, and followers, or Classical Greek authors more generally. I might then refocus my approach to translation in Herodotus by comparing Herodotus' glosses with the tradition of foreign glosses in Greek scholarship as discussed in e.g. Schironi (2009).

Another opportunity for additional research would be to add archaeological and historical context to my discussion of the Ionians' ethnicity. Herodotus ultimately locates their identity in the shared desire to be Ionians and in the shared shrine of the Panionion. One angle of this passage that I would like to explore in the future is the degree to which Herodotus' examination of Ionian identity relates to what we know about Ionian identity from elsewhere, including the archaeological record. While there are good works of secondary scholarship on this subject, such as Mac Sweeney (2013) and Herda (2009, 37–43), I would benefit from being able to see the underlying evidence myself. Another place where more research would be helpful is in the first chapter on language and ethnicity in Herodotus. My primary engagement with theories on ethnicity has been through classicists such as Hall. It would be helpful to incorporate more sociolinguistics, sociology, and anthropology into the chapter to see in what way Herodotus' understanding of ethnicity, even if it contrasts in some way with Hall, might align with other modern theories.

In my dissertation, I show that Herodotus' observations about language are relevant to a full understanding of the author's work and to larger questions about how Greeks understood cultural, ethnic, and linguistic difference. Within the scope of this dissertation, I have highlighted many of Herodotus' most striking observations about language and ethnicity, language contact, non-human language, and interpreters and translation. Of course, there will always remain more to be said, such as the questions that have emerged here about Herodotus' own dialect, the

historical and archaeological context of his life, and how this context relates to these themes, as well as how Herodotus' observations about language relate to those of the sophists and presocratic philosophers. Moreover, a fuller picture of certain elements of Herodotus' approach to language, especially interpreters and non-human language, would benefit from a more extensive comparison between Herodotus and other authors. Nevertheless, even without these next steps, the evidence here assembled clearly shows that Herodotus was a sophisticated as well as enthusiastic observer of human language, and that his ideas about language formed part of a larger understanding of ethnicity that prioritized groups' own construction of their identity over the essentiality of any factors such as language, religion, or shared descent, while still recognizing the importance of these factors.

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