

HERODOTUS—THE MOST HOMERIC HISTORIAN?

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The Online Journal of Ancient Historiography

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HERODOTUS—THE MOST
HOMERIC HISTORIAN?



Edited by
IVAN MATIJAŠIĆ

HISTOS SUPPLEMENT 14

2022

Oxford • Edmonton • Tallahassee

Published by

HISTOS

ISSN (Online): 2046-5963 (Print): 2046-5955

www.histos.org

Published online 22 February 2022

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PREFACE

This book explores the relationship between Herodotus and Homer and the reason why Herodotus was considered Homeric in antiquity. It stems from a conference at the School of History, Classics and Archaeology of Newcastle University which took place in March 2019, where most of the chapters that make up the book were presented. The conference was funded by the Research Committee of the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at Newcastle, and by the Institute of Classical Studies in London. I wish to express my gratitude to both institutions for their generous support, to the speakers for accepting my invitation to Newcastle, to the other numerous participants for a successful and fruitful discussion during the event, and to the chairs of each session: Federico Santangelo, Rowland Smith, Christopher Tuplin, and Jaap Wisse.

I also wish to thank the *Histos* editors, Rhiannon Ash and Timothy Rood, for accepting this edited book for publication in the journal's Supplements, and especially the supervisory editor of the Supplements, John Marincola, for the extremely helpful guidance and valuable assistance in the final stages of the publication process.

Each chapter is autonomous and includes a self-standing bibliography, but all have benefitted from discussion during the conference and from subsequent exchanges of emails and texts. The Covid-19 pandemic has certainly made our work more challenging, especially because of limited access to libraries, but we hope that our efforts have produced something that will benefit Herodotean and Homeric scholars. If the book manages to stimulate further thoughts or provoke some constructive reaction, it will have accomplished its principal objective.

I. M.

Siena, October 2021

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

ELTON BARKER is Professor of Greek Literature and Culture at The Open University. His research interests focus primarily on poetic rivalry in Homer and representations of space and place in Herodotus. He is author of *Entering the Agon: Dissent and Authority in Homer, Historiography and Tragedy* (2009), as well as two co-authored books on Homer with Joel Christensen: *A Beginner's Guide to Homer* (2013), and *Homer's Thebes* (2020). His work on spatial analysis led to the edited volume *New Worlds out of Old Texts* (2016) and to the establishment of the Pelagios Network, which is developing digital tools and methods for scholarly research into historical places (see the Pelagios special issue of the *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing*, 2021).

GIULIA DONELLI holds an MA and a PhD in Classics from King's College London, where she currently teaches. Previously, she was a Teaching Associate in the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Bristol, where she remains an Honorary Research Associate. Her main research interests are Greek lyric poetry, Herodotean historiography, and the early developments of Greek prose.

MARIA FRAGOULAKI is Lecturer in Ancient Greek History at Cardiff University. Her main research interests are ancient Greek historiography, especially Thucydides and Herodotus, kinship and international relations in antiquity, memory and performance studies. She is author of *Kinship in Thucydides: Intercommunal Ties and Historical Narrative* (2013), and co-editor (with Christy Constantakopoulou) of *Shaping Memory in Ancient Greece: Poetry, Historiography, and Epigraphy* (2020). She is currently working on a monograph on Thucydides and Homer and co-editing (with Neville Morley) a volume on *Doing Things with Thucydides: Politics, Education, Performance*.

THOMAS HARRISON is Professor of Ancient History at the University of St Andrews. His research focuses primarily on the archaic and classical Greek world, with particular interest in Herodotus' *Histories*, Greek religious ideas, and the interface between the Greeks and foreign peoples. His publications include *Divinity and History: The Religion of Herodotus* (2000), *The Emptiness of Asia: Aeschylus' Persians and the History of the Fifth Century* (2000) and *Writing Ancient Persia* (2011). He is currently working on a study of Greek religious belief.

JAN HAYWOOD is Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Leicester. He is the co-author of a book on cross-cultural receptions of the Trojan War tradition with Naoise Mac Sweeney (*Homer's Iliad and the Trojan War: Dialogues on Tradition*, 2018), and he has a co-edited with Zosia Archibald a volume in honour of the ancient historian J. K. Davies (*The Power of Individual and Community in Ancient Athens and Beyond*, 2019). He has also published several articles and book chapters in the field of ancient Greek historiography, and is now working on a book concerning the sources of information that informed Herodotus' *Histories*, and a separate article on human and divine agents in the *Histories*. He is also the co-founder of the Herodotus Helpline with Thomas Harrison, a free, online seminar series set up in April 2020, which is open to anyone interested in Herodotus and his world.

IVAN MATIJAŠIĆ is post-doctoral researcher in Ancient History at the University of Siena. He holds a PhD in Classics and Ancient History from the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. He has held research and teaching positions in Venice, Münster, and Newcastle. His research interests focus on Greek historiography, epigraphy, ancient geography, and the history of classical scholarship in the twentieth century. He is the author of two books: *Shaping the Canons of Ancient Greek Historiography* (2018) and *Timachidas of Rhodes* (2020).

CHRISTOPHER PELLING is Emeritus Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford University. Among his books are *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian* (2000), *Plutarch and History* (2002), *Herodotus and the Question Why* (2019), and commentaries on Plutarch's *Antony* (1988) and *Caesar* (2011), on Herodotus Book 6 (coedited with Simon Hornblower, 2017), and Thucydides Books 6 and 7 (2 vols, 2022). He is now working on a further Plutarch commentary, this time on Alexander.

OLGA TRIBULATO is Professor of Greek language and literature at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. She is the author of *Ancient Greek Verb-Initial Compounds: Their Diachronic Development within the Greek Compound System* (2015) and she has edited, among other volumes, *Language and Linguistic Contact in Ancient Sicily* (2012). Her research interests focus on the Greek dialects and literary languages, epigraphy, ancient bilingualism, Atticist lexicography, and Greek theories of language correctness. She is currently the PI of the ERC project *Purism in Antiquity: Theories of Language in Greek Atticist Lexica and Their Legacy (PURA)*.

CHRISTOPHER J. TUPLIN is Gladstone Professor of Greek at the University of Liverpool. He is the author of *The Failings of Empire* (1993), *Achaemenid Studies* (1997), and some 140 research essays on Greek and Achaemenid Persian history; editor of *Pontus and the Outside World* (2004), *Xenophon and his World* (2004), and *Persian Responses: Cultural Interaction (with)in the Achaemenid Empire* (2007); and co-editor of *Science and Mathematics in Ancient Greek Culture* (2002), *Xenophon: Ethical Principles and Historical Enquiry* (2012), and *Aršāma and his World: The Bodleian Letters in Context* (2020). His current major project is a commentary on Xenophon's *Anabasis*.

THE HOMERICNESS OF
HERODOTUS' LANGUAGE
(WITH A CASE STUDY OF -ÉEIN AORIST
INFINITIVES IN THE *HISTORIES*)*

Olga Tribulato

1. Introduction

This paper investigates the role that language played or may have played in the ancients' widespread practice of equating Herodotus with Homer. Ancient and modern scholars alike have often noted the Homeric character of Herodotus' word choice and turns of phrase, as well as his frequent recourse to Homeric allusions or citations. Despite this evident but often elusive Homericness, it is very difficult to tell whether Herodotus deliberately made his language resemble that of Homer in terms of phonology and morphology. The text that has reached us is replete with epic-Ionic features, but it is debated whether they are original at all, or whether they depend on ancient editorial interventions aimed at making Herodotus' Ionic resemble that of Homer. This last hypothesis has been popular in modern scholarship, but must come to terms with the almost complete silence of ancient sources on the linguistic fabric of Herodotus' Homericness: we simply do not know how this stylistic feature may have been perceived in antiquity (§2). The vagueness of the ancient rhetorical and stylistic assessments of Herodotus has had a profound impact also on the way modern scholars have approached the language of the *Histories* (§3), its transmission in papyri and medieval manuscripts, and hence its rendering in modern critical editions (§4). A balanced conclusion on this very complex question is to assume that Herodotus did use some Homeric features on

* I wish to thank Ivan Matijašić for his invitation to contribute to this project, and Lucia Prauscello and Aldo Corcella for their comments on an earlier draft of this piece. Unless otherwise stated, Herodotus' text is quoted by book, paragraph and line number from the edition of Wilson (2015b).

purpose, and that the initial epic character of his diction was later enhanced by editors through the insertion of other epic features and pseudo-Ionisms, in a way not too dissimilar to what happened in the transmission of other dialectal authors. Historical and rhetorical sources do not give us any information on the rationale behind this assumed transformation of Herodotus' text, but a look at the literary and linguistic trends of the post-Classical age may offer new insights. The last section of this paper applies this method of interpretation to one of the most questionable Homeric features in Herodotus' text: uncontracted present and aorist infinitives in *-έειν*. While it is likely that these features are not original (though we will never know for sure), it is possible that they penetrated Herodotus' text in a less chaotic and haphazard way than scholars have been willing to admit.

2. The Ancient Take on Homer and Herodotus: Does it Entail Clear Linguistic Arguments?

The comparison between Herodotus and Homer—which modern interpreters somehow often reduce to the definition of Herodotus as *ὀμηρικώτατος* given in *On the Sublime* (13.3)—makes its first appearance in Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Before the late first century BCE we find no attempt to equate the two authors, and certainly no detailed comparative discussion of their stylistic features.¹ In the vast majority of sources that treat both authors together, the comparison is based on a number of criteria: similarities in the structure of their works; their recourse to fables (and hence their trustworthiness) and ability as narrators; their choice of words (particularly poetic vocabulary); and their talent in entertaining the audience.²

The last three criteria appear frequently in rhetorical sources, and treatments of Herodotus' style in relation to Homer's should be viewed against the background of the broader discussions on the difference between, and relative merits of, poetry and prose. In *Poet.* 1451b Aristotle declares that the difference between the two genres does not consist in their metrical or ametrical form: to prove his point, he chooses precisely Herodotus, whose work 'would be no less a history in verse than in prose'. This point is taken

¹ It may be noted in this respect that in [Demetr.] *Eloc.* 12, whatever the date of the treatise, Herodotus is opposed to Homer: he is a representative of the 'broken-up style' (*διηρημένη λέξις*), whereas Homer represents the 'periodic style' (*κατεστραμμένη λέξις*).

² All these motifs are discussed in Priestley (2014) 187–219.

up again by Strabo in Book 1 of the *Geography*, much of which is devoted to defending Homer from those—especially Eratosthenes—who considered him unreliable (Str. 1.2.3–40). Discussing Homer's value, Strabo in 1.2.6 addresses the question of whether a poet can be considered a valuable rhetorical model. He answers positively, stating that poetry and prose are just different genres, but that poetry is more preeminent, as is shown by the fact that the early prose writers imitated its language, while dropping the metre (Str. 1.2.6):

... ὁ πῆζος λόγος, ὃ γε κατεσκευασμένος, μίμημα τοῦ ποιητικοῦ ἐστὶ. πρῶτιστα γὰρ ἢ ποιητικὴ κατασκευὴ παρήλθεν εἰς τὸ μέσον καὶ εὐδοκίμησεν· εἶτα ἐκείνην μιμούμενοι, λύσαντες τὸ μέτρον, τᾶλλα δὲ φυλάξαντες τὰ ποιητικά, συνέγραψαν οἱ περὶ Κάδμον καὶ Φερεκύδη καὶ Ἑκαταῖον.

... But prose—I mean artistic prose—is, I may say, an imitation of poetic discourse; for poetry, as an art, first came upon the scene and was first to win approval. Then came Cadmos, Pherecydes, Hecataeus, and their followers, with prose writings in which they imitated the poetic art, abandoning the use of metre but in other respects preserving the quality of poetry (transl. Jones).

This chapter of the *Geography* helps us to immediately grasp the recurrent characteristic of these ancient theories: their complete indeterminacy. Strabo does not further clarify the features which define 'the quality of poetry' (τὰ ποιητικά) in prose, i.e., whether it resides in the lexicon, or in the 'rhythm' of sentences, or else in given elements related to dialect, morphology, and word-formation. Such vagueness emerges even more strongly once we turn to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, perhaps our most authoritative source on the comparison between Homer and Herodotus. A case in point is the famous passage of *On Thucydides* praising Herodotus for his 'poetic' style, based on a stylistic *ποικιλία* to which Dionysius also refers in *Pomp.* 3.11 (see further below):

οὗτος [Herodotus] δὲ κατὰ <τε> τὴν ἐκλογὴν τῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ κατὰ τὴν σύνθεσιν καὶ κατὰ τὴν τῶν σχηματισμῶν ποικιλίαν μακρῶ δὴ τινι τοὺς ἄλλους ὑπερεβάλετο, καὶ παρεσκεύασε τῇ κρατίστη ποιήσει τὴν πῆζην φράσιν ὁμοίαν γενέσθαι πειθοῦς τε καὶ χαρίτων καὶ τῆς εἰς ἄκρον ἠκούσης ἡδονῆς ἔνεκα (*Thuc.* 23).

[Herodotus] was far superior to the rest in his choice of words, his composition, and his varied use of figures of speech; and he made his prose style resemble the finest poetry by its persuasiveness, its charm and its utterly delightful effect (transl. Usher, slightly adapted).

The three qualities for which Herodotus receives praise from Dionysius remain ill-defined.³ Neither is it clear whether Herodotus' *ἐκλογή τῶν ὀνομάτων* is close to epic vocabulary,⁴ nor do we get a definition of his poetic style that goes beyond an impressionistic description of its 'delightful effect'. Dionysius compares Herodotus and Homer in other treatises, where he elevates both as models of *σύνθεσις* (*Comp.* 3.25–6), stylistic *μεσότης* (*Comp.* 24.21–8) and pleasurableness (*Pomp.* 3.11).⁵ All these judgements rely on generic descriptions of style, not language: and it is telling that when Dionysius quotes passages from Herodotus he translates them into Attic.⁶ In the two passages where Dionysius mentions the Ionic dialect as a defining feature of Herodotus' prose Homer is tellingly absent: the other point of comparison is Thucydides, because Dionysius' discussion concerns historiographical models, not language *per se*.⁷ Thus in the *Letter to Pompeius Geminus* (3.16) both historians receive praise for writing in the purest form of their respective dialects, Ionic and Attic (*Pomp.* 3.16):

πρώτη τῶν ἀρετῶν γένοιτ' ἄν, ἧς χωρὶς οὐδὲ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν περὶ τοὺς λόγους ὄφελός τι, ἢ καθαρὰ τοῖς ὀνόμασι καὶ τὸν Ἑλληνικὸν χαρακτῆρα σφίζουσα διάλεκτος. ταύτην ἀκριβοῦσιν ἀμφοτέροισι· Ἡρόδοτός τε γὰρ τῆς Ἰάδος ἄριστος κανὼν Θουκυδίδης τε τῆς Ἀττικῆς.

³ Modern discussions of this passage do not improve its vagueness: see, e.g., Grube (1974) 79 and Priestley (2014) 197. To state it with Grube (1974) 80, the ancient critics 'say very little on the essential nature and qualities of the [historiographical] genre, even of the author they are discussing'.

⁴ In this respect [Demetr.] *Eloc.* 112 is more precise, when he critically remarks that Herodotus transposes poetic words into prose (*μετάθεσις*, not *μίμησις*); on the passage, see Matijašić (2018) 164–5.

⁵ The motif of Herodotus' pleasurableness and sweetness is discussed by Pernot (1995) and Priestley (2014) 197–209.

⁶ Corcella (2018) 206.

⁷ On Dionysius' treatment of Herodotus and Thucydides as historiographical models, see Matijašić (2018) 73–8.

We may regard as the supreme virtue that without which no other literary quality is of any use—language that is pure in its vocabulary and preserves the Greek idiom. Both writers meet these requirements exactly: **Herodotus is the perfect model of the Ionic dialect, and Thucydides of the Attic** (transl. Usher).

One may choose to interpret these short statements as evidence that Dionysius detects a special connection between poetry and the use of Ionic, and hence that he considers both the poets and Herodotus pleasurable because they use this dialect. However, although the connection is explicit in later sources, especially in Hermogenes,⁸ it is important to note that nowhere does Dionysius tell his readers that Herodotus is like Homer because they use the same dialect.

The more detailed theorisation of Hermogenes (late second century CE) does not bring an improvement in linguistic precision. Differently from Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Hermogenes credits Herodotus not with a pure Ionic dialect, but with a mixed language that the rhetorician sees as a marker of the poetic character of Herodotean prose (*Id.* p. 411 Rabe):

Ἐκαταῶλος δὲ ὁ Μιλήσιος, παρ' οὗ δὴ μάλιστα ὠφέληται ὁ Ἡρόδοτος, καθαρὸς μὲν ἐστὶ καὶ σαφής, ἐν δὲ τισι καὶ ἡδὺς οὐ μετρίως· τῇ διαλέκτῳ δὲ ἀκράτῳ Ἰάδι καὶ οὐ μεμιγμένῳ χρησάμενος οὐδὲ κατὰ τὸν Ἡρόδοτον ποικίλῃ, ἥττον ἐστὶν ἕνεκά γε τῆς λέξεως ποιητικός.

Hecataeus of Miletus, from whom Herodotus learned much, is pure and clear, and in some passages also quite charming. He uses a pure, unmixed Ionic dialect, **unlike the mixed variety that Herodotus uses**, and this makes his diction less poetic (transl. Wooten).

Interestingly, in *On Types of Style* Hermogenes uses *διάλεκτος* to refer to (dialectal) language only in four passages, all of which are discussions of

⁸ The pleasurable and poetic quality of Ionic is often recalled in rhetorical and grammatical sources: cf., e.g., Himer. *Or.* 60.15 Colonna: ἰωνικὴ δὲ καὶ ἡ πολλὴ λύρα καὶ ἰατρικὴ καὶ ποίησις; Hdn. *Περὶ παθῶν* (ex *Etyim. Magn.*), *GG* 3.2 361.11–12 Lentz on the dual *συνοχωκότε* or Choer. *Proleg. in Theodos. canon. verb.* 40.9, 12–13 Hilgard (on imperfects such as *τύπτσκεν*). I discuss the 'character' of Ionic in Tribulato (2019). Some later sources have a negative view of Herodotus' pleasurable quality, which they associate with his untrustworthiness as a historian: see, e.g., the classic Plut. *Her. mal.* 874B, with recent discussion in Priestley (2014) 213–16 and Kirkland (2019) 504–6.

Ionic. The other relevant passage occurs earlier in the same treatise. Here Hermogenes explains that Ionic is poetic by nature, although some poets may choose to combine it with features taken from other dialects (*Id.* p. 336 Rabe):⁹

λέξις δὲ γλυκεῖα ἢ τε τῆς ἀφελείας ἰδία παρὰ τὴν καθαρὰν ῥηθεῖσαν εἶναι καὶ ἔτι ἢ ποιητικῆ. ταύτη τοι καὶ Ἡρόδοτος τῆς γλυκύτητος μάλιστα πεφροντικῶς ἐχρήσατο μὲν καὶ μεθόδοις καὶ ἐννοίαις, αἷσπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐχαρακτηρίζομεν τὴν γλυκύτητα, λέξει τε ἐκάστη ἰδία τῆς ἀφελείας πολλαχοῦ, ὡσπερ ἐλέγομεν, ἐκείθεν δὲ μάλιστα διαρκῆ ἔσχε τὴν γλυκύτητα, ὅτι καὶ αὐτὴν εὐθὺς τὴν διάλεκτον ποιητικῶς προείλετο εἰπεῖν· ἢ γὰρ Ἴας οὐσα ποιητικῆ φύσει ἐστὶν ἡδέια. εἰ δὲ καὶ ἄλλων διαλέκτων ἐχρήσατό τισι λέξεσιν, οὐδὲν τοῦτο, ἐπεὶ καὶ Ὅμηρος καὶ Ἡσίοδος καὶ ἄλλοι οὐκ ὀλίγοι τῶν ποιητῶν ἐχρήσαντο μὲν καὶ ἄλλαις τισὶ λέξεσιν ἐτέρων διαλέκτων, τὸ πλείστον μὴν ἰάζουσι, καὶ ἐστὶν ἢ Ἴας ὅπερ ἔφην ποιητικῆ πως, διὰ τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἡδέια.

The style that produces sweetness is the same as the one that is characteristic of simplicity, which is similar to the pure style, and one that is poetical. Herodotus, who was particularly concerned with sweetness, used both the approaches to produce it and the thoughts that, in our opinion, are characteristic of it, and each style that is peculiar to simplicity, as we have already said. One reason the sweetness in his work is so remarkable is that he chose to use a dialect that is poetical. **The Ionic dialect, since it is associated with poetry, naturally gives a lot of pleasure. It doesn't really matter whether he also uses some words from other dialects, since Homer and Hesiod and quite a few other poets do the same thing. But they generally use Ionic. And Ionic, as I said, has a poetic flavor, and because of that it is pleasing** (transl. Wooten).

The sources discussed so far show that the ancient comparison between Herodotus and Homer entails reflections on style, and sometimes annotations on word choice, but very rarely a discussion of the differences and similarities between their languages. To our eyes, descriptions of Herodotus' dialect are never precise, because they lack the kind of phono-

⁹ On this passage see also Priestley (2014) 202–3.

morphological information which is typical of a modern linguistic assessment. As H. W. Smyth put it over a century ago,

The grammarians rarely, the rhetoricians never, busied themselves with any possibility of difference between the idiom of the soil and that of Ionic prose literature ... The nature of the inflections, the character of word forms, fail to trouble Hermogenes when he sets Hekataios off against Herodotos, or characterizes the poetical nature of the latter's diction.¹⁰

These baffling testimonies have not eased the work of modern interpreters, who face very complicated and interrelated issues: the fact that the transmitted text of Herodotus mixes Ionic with epic, Attic, pseudo-Ionic, and even Doric features; the diverging assessments of Herodotus' dialect in ancient sources; and the vagueness of their descriptions. Dionysius' judgement has lent authority to modern corrections of Herodotus' transmitted text, which have aimed to make it more authentically Ionic. On the other hand, more conservative approaches to the text have privileged Hermogenes' theory that Herodotus wrote in a mixed form of Ionic,¹¹ claiming that the perception of Herodotus as a purely Ionic author is a product of the Byzantine age. However, one need also recall that while Byzantine scholarship usually processes and simplifies the information provided by ancient rhetorical and linguistic exegesis, it seldom introduces original variations: that Herodotus was singled out as a model-author for Ionic must be a consequence of earlier grammatical practice.¹²

The issue at stake is not simply whether we should consider Dionysius more trustworthy than Hermogenes or vice-versa, but underpins larger interpretative questions. Their different judgements may simply be a matter of labels, reflecting the different purposes of their works. Dionysius may thus

¹⁰ Smyth (1894) 82.

¹¹ See, e.g., Thumb–Scherer (1959) 236, Priestley (2014) 203, and the review in §3 below.

¹² An example is provided by the fragments of a grammatical or dialectological treatise transmitted on papyrus by *PSI* 1609 (second century CE, *ed. pr.* Luiselli (2013)), where the Ionic genitive ending in *-εω* is exemplified with two examples (*Πέρσεω* and *Ξέρξεω*) which are likely to have a Herodotean background. The extraordinary fact is that the simple rules listed in the papyrus are almost verbatim renderings of rules that are common in late-Byzantine dialectology, which advises us against drawing neat conclusions about the supposedly more 'sophisticated' character of ancient grammar compared to its Byzantine counterparts; see further Tribulato (2019) 366–7.

be content with merely calling Herodotus an Ionic author because his aim is to define the historical canon and hence his focus is on distinguishing the Ionic Herodotus from the Attic Thucydides. Hermogenes, instead, may be more inclined to highlight the *ποικιλία* of Herodotus' Ionic because his focus is on what makes style poetic. Alternatively, Hermogenes' and Dionysius' diverging views could be indicators that the *perception* of Herodotus' language evolved over the centuries, with later scholars such as Hermogenes becoming more aware of the literary fabric of his diction and his difference from other Ionic authors. Or, with a more radical approach, these diverging assessments could serve as a basis to speculate that Dionysius had access to a Herodotean text in which Ionic was not so mixed as in the text Hermogenes read: i.e., as has been suggested by Wolfgang Aly, that there were different contemporary *recensiones* of Herodotus,¹³ or that the text circulating in the late second century CE had been infected by more non-Ionic features than the text circulating earlier, perhaps as a result of specific editorial and exegetical practices in this period.¹⁴ The last scenario is particularly difficult to assess because we know very little about the ancients' exegetical activity on Herodotus' text, and nothing at all about any kind of editorial work before the Imperial age. *P.Amherst* 12 shows that Aristarchus worked on Herodotus, but it is questionable that he also produced an edition.¹⁵ The grammarians Hellanicus, Philemon, and Alexander of Cotiaecum dealt with various features of the text, but they do not prove the existence of any proper exegesis.¹⁶ In the light of these ancient interpretations, the next section looks at the way they have influenced modern Herodotean scholarship, crossing paths with dialectology, epigraphy, and textual philology: the aim is to highlight some recurrent trends that have shaped editorial practice and hence the way modern readers of the *Histories* perceive Herodotus' language.

¹³ See Aly (1909) 593–4.

¹⁴ See Galligani (2001) and Lightfoot (2003) 98: 'the texts of Herodotus available in the second century were already full of such pseudo-Ionisms and epicisms, overlaid over whatever *poetic* form Herodotus himself had preferred' (my emphasis).

¹⁵ For the papyrus, see Paap (1948) 37–40. It is uncertain whether this work was a continuous commentary or rather a selective collection of notes on points of interest: on the issue, see Montana (2012), who proposes new readings for column II, and the overviews in Priestley (2014) 223–9 and Matijašić (2018) 150–1. Scholars tend to agree that Aristarchus cannot be credited with an edition of the text, but see Hemmerdinger (1981) 20, 154 for an opposite view.

¹⁶ For details about these testimonies see Jacoby (1913) 514–5 and Wilson (2015a) xxi.

3. Modern Approaches to Herodotus' Language

All modern scholars agree that the dialectal confusion that reigns in Herodotus' text cannot be authentic. However, it is extremely difficult if not impossible to draw a neat line between securely authentic features, possible dialectal variants adopted by Herodotus himself to create a literary language purportedly different from any spoken dialect, and later intrusions due to ancient editorial practices. Consequently, the Herodotean text and its mixed language have received competing and often radically opposite interpretations in modern scholarship.

The idea that, by and large, the dialectal *mélange* of Herodotus' language is authentic was relatively popular in 19th-century scholarship. Influential works which endorsed it include Ferdinand Bredow's treatise on Herodotus' dialect (1846), Heinrich Stein's edition of the *Histories* (1869–71), and Wilhelm von Christ's history of Greek literature (1898).¹⁷ The last maintained that Herodotus grafted some non-epichoric elements onto his East Ionic dialect in order to imitate epic poetry as well as other literary genres, e.g., tragedy. To be sure, none of these scholars was so naïve as to take the manuscript tradition at face value. They all recognised that certain epic, Attic, or pseudo-Ionic features arose in the course of textual transmission, but explained these later alterations by the hypothesis that Herodotus' language had been composite from the start.¹⁸

In the same period, another interpretative approach sought an answer not in the historian's stylistic craft, but in the early transmission of his text. In two contributions devoted to the vocalism of Herodotus' dialect, Reinhold Merzdorf criticised those scholars, including Stein, who considered the

¹⁷ Cf. Bredow (1846) 4–5; Stein (1869–71) I.xlviii–xlix, who admits some epic features as original; Christ (1898) 333 with n. 1. The idea, however, can be traced back to at least 1838, when the Italian scholar Amedeo Peyron published a pamphlet comparing the Greek dialects (i.e., literary languages) with Dante's diction. Peyron maintained that Herodotus, in order to ennoble his prose, created a form of 'ionico illustre' (the expression is a calque on Dante's theorisation of a *volgare illustre* ('illustrious vernacular') in his treatise *De vulgari eloquentia*) by using Homer's Ionic as a basis and mixing it with more recent Ionic features and with Doric (Peyron (1838) 60–1). All these and later theories that Herodotus created his own *Kunstsprache* use Hermogenes (cf. above, §2) as evidence that this interpretation was already ancient.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Bredow (1846) 43–4, and his subsequent list of altered forms, *ibid.* 44–88; Stein (1869–71) I.xlix.

mixture of Ionic and Doric an authentic feature of the historian's language.¹⁹ Merzdorf defended the necessity of tackling each grammatical and editorial problem in its own right, because not all the fluctuations could have the same origin. For instance, while he criticised Stein's acceptance of typically epic uncontracted and 'distended' forms such as *κομῶσι* for *κομῶσι*,²⁰ he also made a case for accepting uncontracted verbal forms in *-εε-* against the evidence of Ionic inscriptions, proposing that Herodotus adopted these elements of 'older Ionic' to make his diction more elegant than the 'vulgar language' of everyday communication.²¹

The 19th century saw a steady flow of contributions (mostly published in Germany) dealing with elements of Herodotus' language, though not all of them specifically addressed the issue of its origin and authenticity.²² Because of important and fast-paced advances in the fields of epigraphy, dialectology, and textual criticism in this period, the study of Herodotus' language often transcended the boundaries of Herodotean scholarship *stricto sensu* and was encompassed within broader investigations. Two milestones in this respect are Friedrich Bechtel's *Die Inschriften des ionischen Dialekts* (1887)—a 'Vorarbeit' which would later feed into the third volume of his *magnum opus*, *Die griechischen Dialekte* (1924)—and the grammar of Ionic by H. W. Smyth (1894). Bechtel's earlier work was the first complete collection of Ionic inscriptions provided with a linguistic commentary and considerably eased the work of scholars who were interested in comparing Herodotus' usage with inscriptions from Ionia.²³ In the later work, *Die griechischen Dialekte*, Bechtel endorsed the idea that Herodotus wrote in the Ionic dialect of Samos, which

¹⁹ Merzdorf (1875); (1876); see especially Merzdorf (1875) 127–9. Cf. too the review of his work by Fritsch (1876) 105.

²⁰ Merzdorf (1875) 130.

²¹ Merzdorf (1875) 147.

²² Other works of this period which address the issue of Herodotus' language though not specifically that of its origin are Struve (1828–30), who deals with pronouns, nouns in *-εὺς*, and the spelling of *θαῦμα*; Lhardy (1844–46), on the augment and contract verbs; Dindorf (1844) i–xlvii, who provides a grammar of the dialect aimed at explaining the textual choices of his critical edition; Abicht (1859), who deals with verbs in *-έω*; and Meyer (1868), Spreer (1874), and Norén (1876), who all address contract verbs, and sometimes compare Herodotus' usage with Homer's.

²³ It may be recalled that at that time there was not yet a dialectological treatise on Ionic, since Ahrens' *De Graecae linguae dialectis* (1843) had not covered Ionic and Hoffmann's *Die griechischen Dialekte in ihrem historischen Zusammenhange* (published 1891–98), Bechtel's *Die griechischen Dialekte* (published 1921–4) and the relevant volumes of the *Inscriptiones Graecae* were yet to come.

he heightened in direct speeches and other parts through the use of epic 'words and forms'.²⁴ However, Bechtel also denounced the usefulness of Herodotus' text for a dialectological description of Ionic, acknowledging that '[ancient] scholars worked on making Herodotus' language comply with Homer's'.²⁵ One of the examples he chose to exemplify the kinds of problems linguists face were vocalic hiatuses and their radically different treatment in inscriptions and Herodotus.

The dialectological focus of Smyth's book, whose ambition was to write the 'missing volume' (on Ionic) of Ahrens' *De Graecae linguae dialectis*, explains not only Smyth's appreciation of Bechtel's *Inschriften*, but also his criticism of previous accounts of Herodotus' dialect, *in primis* Bredow's, which was seen to 'rest upon incomplete and defective collations of the MSS'.²⁶ Smyth does not deny that a number of epic features may be authentic in Herodotus—indeed, in this more pronounced epic flavour may consist, in Smyth's opinion, the difference between early Ionic prose and Herodotus—but overall he is convinced that Herodotus did not make 'constant use of Homeric forms as such' and that 'save in passages that bear the unmistakable stamp of deliberate recurrence to epic formulae, the system of phonology and inflection is that of the soil'.²⁷ On the whole, Smyth championed a balanced approach, acknowledging that not everything in Herodotus' dialect may be 'epichoric' Ionic but that nevertheless this need not constitute proof that the historian devised a highly mixed *Kunstsprache* from the start. Like Merzdorf before him, Smyth does not subscribe to a linguistic interpretation of Hermogenes' passage on Herodotus' *ποικιλία*, preferring a stylistic reading.

Faith in the possibility of reaching an approximation of Herodotus' original language based on inscriptions pervades other works with a dialectological focus. A case in point is Albert Thumb's *Handbuch der griechischen Dialekte* (1909), later reworked by Scherer, where the testimony of

²⁴ Bechtel (1924) 10. He gives a list of passages influenced by Homer, *ibid.* 19.

²⁵ Bechtel (1924) 11.

²⁶ Smyth (1894) x. For the comparison between Herodotus and the Ionic logographers, see *ibid.* 89: '[t]here seem to be certain indications making for the conclusion that the language of the earliest logographers was in closer touch with the idiom of the soil than that of Herodotus'.

²⁷ Smyth (1894) x and 90 respectively. See too *ibid.* 97–8. This interpretation is closely followed in Miller (2013), on which see below, p. 253.

inscriptions is used to solve some discrepancies in the text.²⁸ Other contributions of this period examined Herodotus' text with a more philological methodology. The most influential, in fact, are not specifically studies on Herodotus but bear the stamp of two outstanding authorities: Diels and Wilamowitz. Hermann Diels, an expert on Ionic fragmentary literature, advanced the hypothesis (which later became standard, also thanks to endorsement of Jacoby in his foundational 1913 *RE* article) that Herodotus' text must have become corrupt not in the Imperial age, but already around the fourth century BCE because of the transition from the late-archaic writing system to the Classical alphabet.²⁹ In the same years, Wilamowitz too attributed the pseudo-Ionic veneer of the text to a combination of fallacious *metacharactērismos* and philological activity, the latter aimed at restoring a form of 'authentic' language based on ancient ideas of what Classical Ionic should look like. According to Wilamowitz, by the Imperial age this activity of correction and *diorthōsis* produced the 'horribly devastated' text transmitted by manuscripts, with *monstra* such as uncontracted *δοκέει* and *κέεται* or analogical forms such as the accusative *δεσπότεα* (for *δεσπότην*) and the masculine genitives *αυτέων*, *τουτέων* for *αυτῶν*, *τούτων*.³⁰

In the twentieth century there continued to be a sharp focus on the *Textgeschichte* of Herodotus, which informed interpretations of his language. Yet it would be incorrect to conclude that the idea of the *mélange* as a conscious authorial choice had been abandoned. We find it used, to different purposes and with different nuances, both in contributions specifically dealing with Herodotus' language and style—such as Aly (1927),³¹

²⁸ Cf. Thumb–Scherer (1959) 238. Another work which compared Herodotus with inscriptions is the *Thesaurus* by Favre (1914). I am grateful to Aldo Corcella for this reference.

²⁹ Diels expressed this belief in a footnote in a contribution dealing with pseudo-Pythagorean writings: see Diels (1890) 456 n. 13. For the early history of the Herodotean text see the overview below, §4.

³⁰ Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1884) 315. He assumed that second-century CE scholars already dealt with a text which had been edited in an earlier age, probably around 200 BCE: see also Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1904) 640. His idea was approved by Jacoby (1913) 518 (on whom see below, §4), and Hartmann (1932) 92–4, who also attributed most of the epic forms in Herodotus to ancient philological practice, which created a 'Phantasiedialekt' that modern editors ought to correct following Ionic inscriptions (Hartmann (1932) 107, 109). On the extent of the hyper-Ionicisation of Herodotus' text, see also Galligani (2001).

³¹ Aly (1927) 92 explains phono-morphological variations in certain sets of words as evidence of the 'insatiable receptivity' with which Herodotus absorbed expressions from various dialects and languages.

Hoffmann's *Die griechischen Dialekte*,³² and the *Geschichte der griechischen Sprache* by Hoffmann and Scherer³³—and in non-linguistic studies: *in primis* Jacoby's *RE* article;³⁴ Meillet's *Aperçu*,³⁵ and Hemmerdinger's volume on Herodotus' textual transmission.³⁶ This view is still upheld in Miller (2013), a recent volume addressing the linguistic fabric of Greek literary languages. Heavily drawing on Smyth (1894), Miller defines Herodotus' language as a 'variety of literary Milesian', a 'high style' which does not correspond to 'the contemporary spoken language' and which yet, save for the lexicon, 'resembles epic only in clear imitations'.³⁷

An attempt to combine the two interpretative approaches reviewed in this section was put forward in Rosén (1962), a grammar of Herodotus' language which formed the basis for his later edition of the *Histories* (see below, §4 for this work). Its underlying hypothesis is that much of the linguistic variation transmitted by the manuscripts is authentic and paralleled in inscriptions. Rosén dismisses the theory of a later 'Homerisierung' of Herodotus' text as based on biased arguments.³⁸ However, he also departs from previous scholarship in that he proposes that Herodotus' highly composite language is not an artificial *Kunstsprache*, but his personal reproduction (an 'idiolect') of the dialect(s) spoken around Halicarnassus in his time.³⁹ Rosén's grammar is no easy reading, because of its idiosyncratic theories, technical terminology,

³² He firmly believed that Herodotus used epic features to heighten his diction: see Hoffmann (1898) 185–6.

³³ Hoffmann–Scherer (1969) 130–1.

³⁴ See Jacoby (1913) 519: '[w]as für den Stil gilt ..., gilt auch für die Sprache. Für ein solches Werk genügt das einfache Ionisch, dessen sich das tägliche Leben und die milesische Wissenschaft von vor 50 Jahren in ihren knappen Aufzeichnungen bediente, nicht. *Da bedarf es einer Kunstsprache*' (my emphasis). See too Mansour (2009) 203–4, discussed further below.

³⁵ Cf. Meillet (1920) 161: 'L'ouvrage a passé par les mains des copistes sans doute en grande partie athéniens ou du moins de langue attique; des éditeurs ont dû travailler à y rétablir le type ionien; et l'on ignore dans quelle mesure ces philologues antiques ont procédé suivant des principes a priori et dans quelle mesure ils s'appuyaient sur de vieux exemplaires vraiment ioniens' (he then goes on to list some elements that find a parallel in Homer). Other interpretations in this direction are Untersteiner (1948) 17–8; Pasquali (1952) 315, who concludes that Herodotus wrote in a very composite language that may not have complied with 'pure' Ionic; McNeal (1983) 119–20 and (1989) 556.

³⁶ See Hemmerdinger (1981) 173–4.

³⁷ Miller (2013) 169, 170, and 171 respectively.

³⁸ Rosén (1962) 244–5. Cf. criticism in Galligani (1995) 88.

³⁹ Rosén (1962) 248. McNeal (1989) approves of this view.

and confusing presentation of data, and has met with ample criticism.⁴⁰ One point that Rosén makes, however, is useful to summarise the diverse approaches that the topic of Homeric language in Herodotus has elicited in the scholarship reviewed so far. As mentioned in §2, Rosén denies that the ancients really equated Herodotus with Homer on a linguistic basis. He rightly recalls that *On the Sublime*—a treatise on style, not on language—compares the two authors as regards vocabulary and flow (*vâμα*), not phonomorphology.⁴¹

Rosén's *caveat* reflects well the later developments of scholarship. The detailed grammatical methodology of 19th-century investigations has gradually given way to 'linguistic' approaches which examine the Homeric fabric of the *Histories* more from a stylistic, lexical, narratological, and rhetorical point of view than from a strictly formal one. These new approaches have broken much ground in the understanding of the 'Iliadic' or 'Odyssean' development of the *Histories*' narrative, their use of catalogues, *Ringkomposition* and direct speeches, the shape of the *prooimion* and its Homeric resonances, and specific allusions or imitations in lexicon and imagery.⁴² The increasing attention towards the role of orality in Herodotus' compositional technique—a topic which does not concern language only—has also brought back an interest in certain features of the (poetic) lexicon as markers of orality.⁴³

Among the recent contributions that have addressed the stylistic devices which bring the *Histories* close to epic, a special place is held by those which

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Whatelet (1962) 416, Collinge (1963) 717, and Schmitt (1967) 177, all critical of Rosén's approach to the Greek verb.

⁴¹ Rosén (1962) 233. The point had already been made, though in different terms, by Norden (1915) 40–1, who argued that Herodotus had intentionally imitated Homer, and by Pasquali (1952) 315–6, who admitted that many epicisms may be considered suspicious, but concluded that some other epicisms (such as unaugmented aorists and typically Homeric iterative verbs) must be genuine.

⁴² The bibliography on Herodotus' literary technique and its debt towards epic (and not just Homer) is now vast. Starting from classic references such as Jacoby (1913) 502–4, Schick (1953), Huber (1965), and Strasburger (1972), works published roughly in the last thirty years include Giraudeau (1984), Calame (1986), Nagy (1987), de Jong (1999), Rengakos (2001), Boedeker (2002), Griffiths (2006) 135–6, Marincola (2006), Papadopoulou-Belmehdi (2006), Pelling (2006a) and (2006b), and Berruecos Frank (2015). Many other recent works on Herodotus deal with Homer only in passing (e.g., Zali (2014)).

⁴³ On orality in Herodotus, see, e.g., Bakker (1997) 119–22, Thomas (2000) 257–69, Slings (2002), Rösler (2002) 85–8, and Boedeker (2002). Some of the contributions cited in the previous footnote also deal with oral strategies. An older classic is Lang (1984).

re-propose, in a new methodological light, the old (and never quite extinct) theory that entire sequences of the *Histories* hint at poetic rhythm, or indeed that they consciously adopt it.⁴⁴ Mansour, for instance, concludes that dactylic or anapaestic rhythms are part of the poetic elements (ranging from 'phonopoétismes' such as alliterations to lexical and syntactic features) which Herodotus consciously adopts to enhance the Homericness of his style, and which speak in favour of the essentially oral character of his prose.⁴⁵ Differently, Kazanskaya, building on remarks made by Simon Hornblower,⁴⁶ champions a more cautious approach, which distinguishes between almost *verbatim* citations and 'archaic' turns of phrase which could have a wider background than Homer and belong to the literary and cultural milieu in which Herodotus wrote his work. I shall return to these approaches in the last part of the paper, where I discuss the paths through which -έειν infinitives may have spread in the language of the *Histories*.

It is now time to pause and take stock of this overview of scholarship on Herodotus' language and its relationship with Homer. The presence of epic or epic-looking elements in Herodotus is an undeniable fact. What is equally indubitable is that Herodotus' text is closer to epic language than to fifth-century Ionic inscriptions. The approaches to this state of affairs diverge. On the one hand, several scholars have defended much of what is transmitted by the manuscripts, endorsing a view of Herodotus' dialect as conscious linguistic mélange. On the other hand, other scholars have more strongly advocated the idea that our Herodotean text is heavily interpolated and that this process of linguistic variation arose at some point in the long transmission path of the *Histories*. Those who subscribe to this second view face the problem of deciding which features are unoriginal, and how they should be corrected. Thus, any assessment of a given phonological, morphological or even lexical and syntactic feature in Herodotus—especially when one is interested in its presumed 'Homeric' character—must take account not only of the history of the text, but also of the ways in which it has been edited in modern times.

⁴⁴ For earlier theories in this respect, see Hemmerdinger (1981) 170–1: 'la prose d'Hérodote était chantée Si Hérodote puise simultanément dans 3 morphologies, c'est pour pouvoir donner à sa prose des rythmes dactyliques, anapestiques, spondaiques. D'où sa noblesse et son caractère poétique'.

⁴⁵ Mansour (2009) 15. See also Mansour (2007) for a shorter study.

⁴⁶ Kazanskaya (2013); Hornblower (1994) 66–7.

4. Herodotus' Language between Textual Transmission and Modern Editorial Practices

The *Histories* have been transmitted by medieval manuscripts and papyri. The medieval tradition is split into the 'Florentine' family, the most authoritative witness of which is cod. Laur. Plut. 70.3 (A), a very good early tenth-century copy, perhaps the best; and the 'Roman' family, the main exemplar of which is cod. Vat. gr. 2369 (D), another good tenth-century copy, later than A.⁴⁷ The *c.* 40 surviving papyri span a period of five centuries, from the first century CE and to the fifth/sixth century CE, with Book 1 being the best represented. With the possible, but controversial, exception of P.Duke 756 + P.Mil.Vogl. 1358 (MP³ 474.110), dated to the second/first century BCE by Soldati, there are no papyri from the Ptolemaic period.⁴⁸

The relationship between the two manuscript families, and between them and the papyri has been a matter of ongoing debate.⁴⁹ Before the third edition of Hude's OCT (see below), critical editions tended to lend more weight to the Florentine family because cod. Vat. gr. 2369 (D) had not been completely collated yet.⁵⁰ In the classic account of Aly (1909) the Florentine family is considered to descend from an ancient 'scholarly' *recensio* possibly produced by Aristarchus.⁵¹ Aly maintained that the Roman family, in contrast, represented a second-century CE *recensio* going back to a pre-Alexandrian *vulgata*, intended for school use and heavily interspersed with

⁴⁷ The latter has been newly studied by Cantore (2013).

⁴⁸ Soldati (2005). The most recent survey is that of S. R. West (2011); see also Bandiera (1997). Another batch of Herodotean papyri is forthcoming in *P.Oxy.*

⁴⁹ See Pasquali (1952) 310. Although outdated, Pasquali's account of the intricate problems affecting the textual transmission of Herodotus (*ibid.* 306–18) is still a very lucid introductory overview. Other classic and more recent discussions of the transmission are Aly (1909), Colonna (1940), Paap (1948), Hemmerdinger (1981), Wilson (2015a), the prefaces in Hude (1927), Legrand (1932–54), Rosén (1987–97), Asheri (1988), Wilson (2015b), and Corcella's note on the text he edits for the Fondazione Valla Herodotus (the latest in Vannicelli–Corcella–Nenci (2017) 6–16). In these accounts views often vary substantially: suffice it to mention that Hemmerdinger (1981) goes as far as to reconstruct 'l'autographe perdu d'Aristarque', while Wilson (2015b) ix–x refrains from giving a *stemma codicum* (in Wilson (2015a) xiii he entertains the idea that the two families may go back to an early Byzantine archetype reporting variant readings).

⁵⁰ See Hemmerdinger (1981) 122–3.

⁵¹ Aly (1909) 591–3. Cf. Jacoby (1913) 516–7.

pseudo-Ionic features following handbooks which taught writers of the Imperial age the basics of the Ionic dialect.⁵² Aly was already criticised by Jacoby, who followed Wilamowitz in attributing many of the epicising and hyper-Ionic forms to a combination of wrong *metacharactērismos*, Hellenistic uncertainty over Ionic correctness, and early Alexandrian interventions on the copies which reached the Hellenistic libraries.⁵³ During the twentieth century there was a gradual rehabilitation of the value of the Roman family, which is the source of many variants accepted in the text of Legrand, Rosén, and Wilson (on which see below).

Papyrological evidence shows that 'already in the Imperial period Herodotus' text was infected with epicism, hyperionisms, and Atticisms'.⁵⁴ The conclusion is that many of the linguistic tendencies witnessed in the medieval tradition go back to much older habits, though the lack of perfect agreement between manuscripts and papyri shows that the division into two families post-dates the fourth century CE and leads to the somewhat surprising conclusion that there existed more than one ancient edition and that consequently the transmission of the text was rather fluid.⁵⁵ This makes it difficult to reconstruct or imagine both an ancient archetype of the text and the language which it employed, which explains why the same artificial linguistic feature may elicit very different assessments. In what follows I exemplify this issue by considering the case study of forms such as $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\epsilon\alpha$ and how they are treated in the major critical editions, starting from Stein (1869–71).⁵⁶

Despite having been published in the later nineteenth century, Stein's edition is still an important text chiefly because of its rich apparatus, which is more complete than the negative one in Hude's later OCT edition. Based on the knowledge of Herodotean manuscripts available at the time, Stein reconstructed an archetype of the *Histories*, presumed to be the ancestor of the whole tradition.⁵⁷ Since Stein believed Herodotus to have written in a

⁵² Aly (1909) 593–4, with criticism in Jacoby (1913) 517.

⁵³ Jacoby (1913) 518.

⁵⁴ S. R. West ap. Bowie (2007) 32.

⁵⁵ Jacoby (1913) 515.

⁵⁶ I refrain from considering the earlier editions by Dindorf (1844), Bekker (1845), and Abicht (1869), which were superseded by Stein's. The first two editors have played a great role in the elimination of pseudo-Ionic forms in Herodotus' vulgate.

⁵⁷ Stein (1869–71) I.xxxix–xliv.

dialectal *mélange*, he retained those variants which he considered authentic and not due to later scribal interference.

Because it resorts to fewer normalising emendations, Stein's edition appears to be more conservative than those by Hude and Legrand; at the same time, Stein's belief that the *mélange* was largely authentic makes him less cautious an interpreter of the evidence than his successors. Let us take as an example the case of alternative first-declension accusative masculine forms in *-ην/-εα*, such as *Ξέρξηην* and *Ξέρξηεα*.⁵⁸ The former is the regular accusative of first-declension names in *-ης*, while the latter is a secondary formation analogical on third-declension names such as *Σωκράτης* (whose accusative is *Σωκράτεα* in Ionic). The analogical *Ξέρξηεα* is attested only once by all principal testimonies (at 7.4), and is then reported in various other instances as a variant reading of *Ξέρξηην*, especially in the manuscripts of the Roman family. Stein accepts *Ξέρξηεα* 7 times,⁵⁹ while in all other instances he opts for *Ξέρξηην*, even when some manuscripts have *Ξέρξηεα*. The dialectological sketch which Stein offers in the Introduction to the edition explains the rationale behind these choices: he believes that both accusatives in *-ην* and in *-εα* are authentic.⁶⁰

Is *Ξέρξηεα* really an ancient, perhaps original, reading or is it the result of a later modification of the text? We may recall here that both Diels and Wilamowitz antedated the introduction of hyper-Ionic features to the Hellenistic age, but nothing prevents us from believing that the instances of *Ξέρξηεα* go back to a much later time. Papyri are of little help, since they transmit none of the passages in which the accusative of Xerxes' name occurs. The other forms for which we have alternative forms of the accusative routinely end in *-ην* in the papyri, but we have one instance of *Γύγεα* at 1.8.2 in *P.Oxy.* 48.3372 (first/second century CE); this reading has not made its way into the new edition by Wilson (2015b), on which see below.⁶¹ The textual evidence is thus overwhelmingly in favour of *-ην*. It is

⁵⁸ Apart from personal names such as *Ξέρξης*, *Ἄρταξέρξης*, and *Γύγης*, accusatives in *-εα* are attested for *δεσπότης*, *κυβερνήτης*, and *ἀκινάκης*. They are more common in manuscripts of the Roman family, but by no means limited to them (see Legrand (1942) 218).

⁵⁹ At 4.43.17 (against the testimony of ABCd), at 7.4.9 (where this reading is unanimously attested by all manuscripts), 7.27.3 (against the testimony of ABd), at 7.139.16 (following PRz, whose testimony he usually discards), at 7.151.7, 7.151.9 and 7.152.3 (always against R; in two cases the name is actually *Ἄρτοξέρξης*).

⁶⁰ Stein (1869–71) I.lxxiii.

⁶¹ Before the publication of the substantial new batch of Herodotean papyri in vol. 48 of *P.Oxy.*, scholars assumed that no accusative in *-εα* was attested in the papyri: see Paap (1948)

fair to say, however, that if an *-εα* accusative should crop up in a newly published Ionic inscription, our perception of the artificiality and late character of *-εα* accusatives would considerably change. As a parallel, we may consider the case of the plural forms of *γη*, 'earth', which in Herodotus have a stem in *γε-*. These forms were once thought to be artificial, but after the publication of a late-archaic lead tablet from Himera (*SEG* 47.1431) we now have evidence the *γε-* stem was also extended to the singular in some 'real' Ionic varieties. Although Himera's dialect is Euboean (West Ionic) and Herodotus hailed from East Ionic Halicarnassus, the presence of the genitive *γέης* in the colonial world confirms that what we find in Herodotus (whatever is actual origin) may not necessarily be 'bad' Greek.⁶²

Let us now turn to the OCT critical edition by Karl Hude, first published in 1906 and revised two other times (the third edition, published in 1927, has remained the reference one), which immediately distinguished itself from previous editions for its economical apparatus. Hude constituted his text granting more weight to the testimony of the Florentine family, but he also took the Roman family into account because of its great number of better readings, often coinciding with the testimony of grammarians.⁶³ Like Stein, at 4.43 Hude accepts *Ξέρξεα* of the Roman family against *Ξέρξην* of the Florentine; he also accepts this 'Ionic' form at 7.4 (no annotation in apparatus) but, contrary to Stein, discards this reading at 7.27, where he prefers *Ξέρξην* of the Roman family, at 7.139, against the testimony of the very same Roman family, and again at 7.151 and 7.152.⁶⁴

The next important edition of Herodotus in the twentieth century is the ten-volume edition of Philippe-Ernest Legrand for the Collection Budé, begun in 1932 and reprinted at several stages, which also remains the standard translation and commentary in French. Legrand firmly believed that both manuscripts and papyri went back to the same ancient edition, from which he thought they diverged in a negligible way, mostly because of

91, Untersteiner (1948) 83–4, and Thumb–Scherer (1959) 270. This belief is reiterated in more recent works as well, e.g., Mansour (2009) 179.

⁶² Another example discussed in the literature is the variant *πρήγμα* for *πρήγμα*, which Schulze (1926), followed by Pasquali (1952) 311, defends on the basis of epigraphic evidence.

⁶³ Hude (1927) viii–ix.

⁶⁴ I quote the third edition (Hude (1927)), which shows the same choices as the first (Hude (1908)). The lines in these paragraphs are sometimes different from those in Stein's edition: I have not indicated them to avoid confusion.

copyists' errors.⁶⁵ Although Legrand notes the higher reliability of the Florentine family, he defends an 'eclectic' approach to his *constitutio textus*, which leads him to privilege sometimes one family and sometimes the other whenever a certain reading seems preferable to him.⁶⁶ Concerning matters of morphology and dialect, Legrand declares his despair at reaching a trustworthy representation of the original text.⁶⁷ He tends to 'unify' doublets, but admits that he may not have been consistent throughout.⁶⁸ He mostly prefers to keep (older) Ionic forms such as uncontracted verbs, and restores them even in places where the best *testimonia* or indeed the consensus of all manuscripts have a different reading.⁶⁹

Concerning $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\eta\nu/\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\epsilon\alpha$, Legrand assumes that forms in $-\epsilon\alpha$ 'ont, à un moment donné, fait partie de la langue parlée', but the absence of any such form from the papyri known to him leads him to conclude that they did not belong to the original Ionic layer of Herodotus' language and were only introduced into the text by 'des copistes ioniens ... par negligence'.⁷⁰ The consequence of this reasoning is that he always corrects $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\epsilon\alpha$ to $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\eta\nu$, even at 7.4 where, as noted, $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\epsilon\alpha$ is actually transmitted by *all* manuscripts. Legrand thus contradicts the criterion that he applies elsewhere for other features, where morphological variation is preserved and readings follow the majority of testimonies.

Rosén's edition, published in two volumes in 1987 and 1997, marks a stark difference from all previous texts. Based on the linguistic principles set out in the grammar (Rosén (1962)) and, from a philological point of view, on Stein's method,⁷¹ this edition tends to preserve the high variation represented in the manuscripts rather than normalise it on the basis of a preconceived idea of Herodotus' language. Editorial interventions are scanty if compared to the heavily normalising re-writing of 'deviant' forms carried out by other editors. Despite this seemingly 'descriptive' approach, Rosén's

⁶⁵ See Legrand (1942) 186: '[m]anuscripts et papyri semblent dériver tous, pour ce qui concerne le fond du texte, d'une même recension, d'une même édition antique, qui, dès les premiers siècles de notre ère, devait être la plus répandue; ils n'en sont, si je puis employer une expression moderne, que des "tirages" plus ou moins exacts et plus ou moins soignés'.

⁶⁶ Legrand (1942) 191.

⁶⁷ Legrand (1942) 195.

⁶⁸ Legrand (1942) 200–1.

⁶⁹ Legrand (1942) 201–4.

⁷⁰ Quotations from Legrand (1942) 219–20.

⁷¹ Cf. McNeal (1989) 555.

work is in fact the final product of a very personal *interpretation* of linguistic and compositional matters based on a strict (albeit idiosyncratic) set of theoretical premises. Following from his idea that Herodotus' language was eclectic from the start, Rosén may adopt the majority variant of a certain feature against the choice he has just made for the same feature in another passage of the text.⁷² For instance, he keeps both $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\epsilon\alpha$ and $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\eta\nu$, working from the assumption that they both existed in Ionic. He goes out of his way to explain that the alternation between the two forms in the manuscripts is not haphazard, but depends on 'regular' rules of syntactic *sandhi*: simply put (Rosén's list of rules is much more complex), Herodotus used $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\eta\nu$ before a word beginning with a vowel and $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\epsilon\alpha$ before a word beginning with a consonant.⁷³

Rosén's text, therefore, represents Herodotus' language according to a set of standards which he believes to be genuinely Herodotean, as opposed to the inevitable later alterations.⁷⁴ This method has met with severe criticism, for reasons lucidly explained by Corcella.⁷⁵ However, Rosén's otherwise unorthodox edition has an indubitable advantage: it provides readers with a rich apparatus on the basis of which they can judge manuscript readings for themselves (though errors abound).⁷⁶ This proves invaluable when one is interested in the treatment of a given feature across the whole manuscript tradition,⁷⁷ something which is usually impossible to assess through the apparatus of most of the other editions, with the exception of some of the volumes of the Valla Herodotus. I refrain here from discussing the textual choices made in the Valla Herodotus because the volumes have been edited by different scholars;⁷⁸ I will consider specific points of interest

⁷² See McNeal (1989) 559 for examples and the ratio of Rosén's choices.

⁷³ His reasoning is actually more complicated and involves an amount of special pleading: see Rosén (1962) 69–74, and particularly the last two pages on $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\eta\varsigma$. On the inconsistent application of these criteria to the edition, see Corcella (1989) 245–6.

⁷⁴ Cf. Rosén (1987–97) I.v.

⁷⁵ Corcella (1989) and (1998).

⁷⁶ Cf. Rosén (1987–97) I.xxiv. It should be noted that Rosén does not appear to have personally collated all manuscripts, which means that his apparatus is often erroneous: see Corcella (1989) for many examples.

⁷⁷ He thus often reports the readings of Humanistic manuscripts, such as M and Q (see the next section for examples). Rosén is much less dutiful in reporting variants in papyri: cf. McNeal (1989) 561.

⁷⁸ The Valla Herodotus begins with the edition of Book 1 by Asheri (1988); the latest addition is Book 7 by Vannicelli–Corcella–Nenci (2017).

when dealing with $\text{-}\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$ infinitives in the next section.

Compared to Rosén's hypertrophic apparatus, the new OCT edition of the *Histories* by Wilson (2015b), which follows Hude's but contains fundamental new conjectures, may seem too spare to some users, though it is now indispensable because of its up-to-date and more trustworthy use of papyri. Wilson's textual choices often restore 'correct' Ionic forms, based on the assumption that 'in matters of dialect manuscripts are unreliable'.⁷⁹ However, there is no section, in either the Introduction to the edition or in the accompanying volume of *Herodotea*, which defines the dialect with more precision. Wilson also mentions that Herodotus' language may have entailed variation from the start, either because of Herodotus' 'change of mind over time' or of 'free variation in Ionic', and he is inclined to dismiss the idea that variations are owed to ancient editorial activity since 'specific evidence of the alleged activity was not found'—but he essentially takes no sides.⁸⁰ Concerning $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\epsilon\alpha$ accusatives, Wilson admits them into his edition in only two cases: at 4.43.19 and at 7.4.2. In neither case does he tell his readers where this minority reading is attested and the two cases are not the same: at 7.4 $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\epsilon\alpha$ is the only transmitted reading (as noted by other editors: see above), but at 4.43 it is not. In general, it seems that Wilson prefers accusatives in $-\eta\nu$ to those in $-\epsilon\alpha$, even when the latter form is supported by a more ancient testimony: see the case of the above-mentioned $\Gamma\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\epsilon\alpha$ of 1.8.2, where Wilson prefers the reading $\Gamma\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\eta\nu$ of A and the whole Roman family against $\Gamma\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\epsilon\alpha$ of *P.Oxy.* 3372.⁸¹

This overview of modern editions has provided a basis for assessing an interesting case-study, the treatment of thematic infinitives in $\text{-}\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$ in Herodotus' text. In approaching these suspiciously inauthentic features, we should pay attention to the fact that despite the many advances in epigraphy and philology, every edition of the *Histories* remains not only a modern interpretation of the textual transmission (*ça va sans dire*), but the 'child' of a given editor's preconceived idea about Herodotus' Ionic. The guiding principle in these editorial choices is not always the actual variant readings in manuscripts, since these show alternative treatments of the same

⁷⁹ Wilson (2015b) vi.

⁸⁰ Wilson (2015b) vi.

⁸¹ Both the edition (Wilson (2015b)) and the accompanying volume of *Herodotea* (Wilson (2015a)) are succinct in their elucidation of Wilson's views of the relationship between testimonies: Wilson also refrains from providing a *stemma codicum*. On these aspects see the review by Stronk (2017).

phonological and morphological element, and often within the same word (i.e., one gets both contracted and uncontracted verbs, and both *φιλεῖν* and *φιλέειν*), but an abstract idea of correctness which is sometimes based on epigraphic evidence, as already advocated, e.g., by Bechtel,⁸² and sometimes on *ad hoc* rules.⁸³ The case-study provided in the next section is a practical example of how those interested in assessing the textual evidence for a certain linguistic phenomenon cannot only work with Wilson's (or Hude's) edition, but need to consult Rosén (because of his richer apparatus, if not for the solidity of his text) and double-check this evidence against Stein, Legrand, and the Fondazione Valla edition.

5. *-έειν* Infinitives in Herodotus and their Linguistic Background

Infinitives in *-έειν* are part of the large number of uncontracted forms transmitted in Herodotus' text, among which those from presents in *-έω* are especially common: consider for instance *φείδεο* for *φείδου*, *καλομένας* for *καλουμένας*, or *έφόρεε* for *έφόρει*. Contractions and the lack of them (vocalic hiatus) represent one of the thorniest linguistic issues that Herodotean scholars face when comparing Herodotus' manuscripts and papyri with Ionic inscriptions. *As a rule* (the emphasis is necessary here: see below) Herodotus' text has uncontracted *-εο-* or *-ευ-*. The latter is an orthographic rendering regularly attested in Ionic inscriptions from about the fourth century BCE, but sporadically evidenced also in earlier epigraphic texts.⁸⁴ Considering that epigraphic practice is conservative, it is not impossible that Herodotus really used forms in *-ευ-*, reflecting an earlier uncontracted stage as /εο/. Critical editions are unanimous in leaving such sequences uncontracted in *-έω* verbs, even when manuscripts may witness contracted *-ου-*. In

⁸² Bechtel (1924) 10–11.

⁸³ As in the case of Rosén (1962) and (1987–97). On the dangers of this method, see A. Corcella ap. Vannicelli–Corcella–Nenci (2017) 1–6.

⁸⁴ The modern treatment of this graphic rendering has crossed paths with Homeric philology, since *-ευ-* appears in the oldest copies of Homer. The question of whether this writing may represent an authentic phonological reality in Homer need not concern us here: for appraisals of this problem, readers can consult M. L. West (1998) 104, who considers it a mere graphic element, with no linguistic reality in the later phases of the Homeric epics (see also West (2001) 164); and the opposite view presented (in my opinion convincingly) by Passa (2001), namely that some instances of *-ευ-* in the Homeric text must be ancient. Passa (2001) 391–2, 410 also collects evidence for the use of *-ευ-* in Ionic inscriptions before the fourth century BCE.

other words, all editors work from the assumption that forms with hiatus are original and must be restored in place of contracted ones, considered to be trivialisations. All of them also keep some forms with *-ευ-* (e.g., *ποιούμενα* at 1.61.12 for *ποιεόμενα*, or *ἄνευμένοισι* at 1.165.2 for *ἄνεομένοισι* in Wilson's edition), side by side with forms with *-εο-* (e.g., the participle *καλεομένας* in 1.165.2 Wilson).

-εε- too is *mostly* left uncontracted in Herodotus' manuscripts. Here however the divergence from papyri and inscriptions is more pronounced. Papyri have many contracted forms (which may still be considered later trivialisations based on Attic or koine contract verbs), and no late-archaic or Classical inscription from Ionia has forms with uncontracted *-εε-* (an exception being, of course, epigrams: their diction imitates poetic, and especially epic, language). The treatment of *-εε-* in Herodotus may thus be explained in both the scenarios discussed above, §3, namely:

(1) Herodotus' original language could have complied with Ionic inscriptions: hence, uncontracted *-εε-* must have been introduced by ancient editors and copyists.⁸⁵

(2) Alternatively, many (or even all) instances of uncontracted *-εε-* could have been used by Herodotus to give his language a more archaic flavour: in this perspective, the contracted forms in *-ει-* attested in papyri and manuscripts could be trivialisations.⁸⁶

In both scenarios, the impression is that ancient editors or Herodotus himself adopted uncontracted *-εε-* to comply with its treatment in Homer. Modern critical editions, on their part, have a higher number of uncontracted *-εε-* forms than contracted *-ει-*.⁸⁷

Uncontracted infinitives in *-έειν* are of two types. In the present infinitive of *-έω* verbs, *-έειν* represents a regular stage, preceding the final contraction: thus, *φορέειν* derives from **phore-ēn*, a form in which the /e/ of the root has

⁸⁵ This view is endorsed, among others, by Bredow (1846) 319–20 and Bechtel (1924) 12.

⁸⁶ See, e.g., Merzdorf (1875) 147. Hemmerdinger thinks that uncontracted forms (as well as other linguistic features) are original and depend on the fact that Herodotus' text was originally *sung* (my emphasis): cf. Hemmerdinger (1981) 170.

⁸⁷ Generalisations are always dangerous when it comes to the complex topic of contractions (or the lack thereof) in the Homeric text, a topic which takes up thirty pages in Chantraine's *Grammaire Homérique*. Concerning *-έω* verbs, see Chantraine (1958) 39: 'Lorsque les deux ε en contact se trouvaient au temps faible les deux graphies contracte et non contracte sont admises par la métrique' (e.g., in the vulgate imperfects are usually uncontracted, but imperatives are usually contracted: this may be due to the graphic modernisation of the text).

not yet contracted with the /ē/ (written with the 'spurious diphthong' ει) deriving from the encounter between the thematic vowel and the inherited thematic infinitive ending (i.e., *-e-en* < *-e-hen*, a stage witnessed by Mycenaean, < **-e-sen*).⁸⁸ Present infinitives in *-έειν* are amply attested in the Homeric language.

The second type of *-έειν* infinitives are aorist formations such as *βαλέειν*. These are Homeric as well, but do not represent an original stage of the language. The starting point of the thematic aorist infinitive of *βάλλω* is the trisyllabic form **bal-e-hen* (from **bal-e-sen*), which regularly yields *βαλεῖν* after contraction: in *βαλέειν* there is one more syllable and hence the form is linguistically artificial. The rise of these *-έειν* aorist infinitives in the Homeric language has received different interpretations. Since all these forms occur either before a consonant or before a caesura, an older view maintained that they arose from the wrong *metacharacterismos* of archaic writings such as *BAΛEEN*, supposedly representing the original uncontracted stage of the aorist infinitive (i.e., *βαλέειν* + consonant). This interpretation was later abandoned. According to Pierre Chantraine, *-έειν* aorist infinitives were modelled on the present infinitives of *-έω* verbs: since, e.g., *φορέω* regularly had both *φορεῖν* and *φορέειν*, *βαλεῖν* was accompanied by an artificial form, i.e., *βαλέειν*.⁸⁹ However, Alexander Nikolaev rightly notes that '[i]t is unclear why thematic aorists should have been modelled precisely on the contract verbs in *-έε/ο-*, given the lack of any special paradigmatic connection between these two classes of forms'. He therefore proposes that the analogy was triggered by another class of verbs, the infinitives of asigmatic 'liquid futures' such as *ἔρεῖν/ἔρέειν*, 'which likewise had active infinitives both in contracted *-εῖν* and uncontracted *-έειν*'.⁹⁰

Nikolaev situates the creation of these analogical aorist infinitives in the last phases of the Homeric epics, when Ionic bards developed them to replace, in certain metrical environments, old Aeolic infinitives in *-έμεν* (e.g., *βαλέμεν*), themselves probably covering for older uncontracted forms (**βαλέειν*): this was possible when infinitives with the shape (C)ṼC-έμεν, like *βαλέμεν*, occurred before a consonant and therefore had an anapaestic shape which could be covered by the new analogical *-έειν*.⁹¹ An important

⁸⁸ On the early history of the Greek thematic infinitive ending, see García Ramón (1977).

⁸⁹ Chantraine (1958) 493.

⁹⁰ Nikolaev (2013) 82.

⁹¹ For the linguistic details of this process, see Nikolaev (2013) 83–5.

point that Nikolavev has contributed to stressing is that such aorist infinitives in $-\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$ were never part of epichoric Ionic. This is shown not only by the fact that they are never found in Ionic inscriptions (or in inscriptions in other dialects, save for some late poetic usages which will be tackled in §6 below), but also by their absence in Hesiod, who ‘did not have access to the poetic tradition where the thematic aorist infinitives in $-\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$ were available as substitutes for contracted (and therefore unmetrical) Ionic forms in $-\epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu$ ’.⁹²

Having clarified the Homeric background of both types of infinitives in $-\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$, let us go back to Herodotus. The textual tradition has $-\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$ for both the present infinitives of $-\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ verbs and a number of thematic aorist infinitives. Medieval manuscripts tend to have more present infinitives in $-\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$ than aorist forms, where the contracted (and regular) ending $-\epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu$ is far more common. As already noted by Paap,⁹³ the papyri comply with this distribution: uncontracted *present* infinitives in $-\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$ are amply attested in the papyrological tradition, but we also get at least two aorist forms as well (see below for these). In general, modern editors keep present infinitives such as $\phi\omicron\rho\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$ uncontracted, complying with their treatment of other $-\epsilon\epsilon$ -sequences, but tend to discard aorist infinitives in $-\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$, no matter what the manuscripts and papyri attest to individual forms.⁹⁴ This, however, makes life difficult for those who are interested in the minutiae of linguistic details since the real situation in manuscripts and papyri is not systematically acknowledged in the apparatus of these editions.

We can get an idea of the situation by considering how the thematic aorist infinitives of Herodotus Book 1 are treated in the five major current editions: Wilson (= *TLG*), Hude (1927), Legrand (1932), Rosén (1987), and Asheri (1988). There are 69 thematic aorist infinitives in Book 1. Most of them are transmitted in their regular contracted form (e.g., $\beta\alpha\lambda\epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu$) and all editors

⁹² Nikolaev (2013) 86. Cf. Porro (2014) 148 for a critique.

⁹³ Paap (1948) 86–7: ‘Permulti iam, inter quos Wilamowitzius invenitur, formis, quae $\epsilon\epsilon$ vel $\epsilon\epsilon\iota$ praebent, in codicibus fere traditis fiduciam negarunt. Titulis Ioniis poetisque contrahere solentibus et Herodotum sic fecisse putant. Sed nunc papyri nobis servatae— eae quoque, quae ante aetatem Antoninorum linguam antiquam amantem scriptae sunt— scripturam codicum confirmant. *Igitur antiquis temporibus hanc ortam esse constat*’ (my emphasis).

⁹⁴ Apart from Dindorf (1844) xxv, who makes a case for preserving most of the $-\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$ forms, and Rosén (1962) 156, who accepts them as ‘allomorphs’ of those in $-\epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu$, most scholars and editors have rejected these aorist infinitives: see, e.g., Bredow (1846) 324; Merzdorf (1875) 154; Fritsch (1876) 107; Rosén (1987–97) I.ix; Legrand (1942) 202; Corcella ap. Vannicelli–Corcella–Nenci (2017) 16.

except Rosén always choose this form, even in the case of those infinitives for which there is evidence of variation in the manuscripts. These are:

- (1) *ἀποφυγεῖν* at **1.1.18 Wilson**. Transmitted by all main manuscripts except A; accepted by Wilson, Hude, and Legrand; Rosén and Asheri print *ἀποφυγέειν* of A.
- (2) *διαφυγεῖν* at **1.10.1 Wilson**. Accepted by all editors except Rosén and Asheri, who print *διαφυγέειν*. This variant is transmitted by all main manuscripts (see apparatus in Hude and Legrand).
- (3) *περιδέειν* at **1.24.14 Wilson**. Accepted by all editors. Rosén is the only one to note that cod. M has *περιδέειν*.⁹⁵
- (4) *ιδεῖν* at **1.32.8 Wilson**. Accepted by all editors. Rosén is the only one to note that codd. MQ have *ιδέειν*.
- (5) *παθεῖν* at **1.32.8 Wilson**. Accepted by all editors. Rosén is the only one to note that codd. MQ have *παθέειν*.
- (6) *ἐπισχέειν* at **1.32.37 Wilson**. Accepted by all editors. Rosén is the only one to note that codd. MQ have *ἐπισχέειν*.
- (7) *έλειν* at **1.36.9 Wilson**. Accepted by all editors except Asheri, who prints *έλέειν* of the codices. The apparatus of the other editions registers the presence of the variant *έλέειν* in different ways (Wilson and Legrand: 'codd.'; Hude: 'L'; Rosén: 'A').
- (8) *συνεξελεῖν* at **1.36.17 Wilson**. Accepted by all editors. Rosén is the only one to note that the variant *συνεξελέειν* is attested in C.
- (9) *έκμαθεῖν* at **1.73.12 Wilson**. Accepted by all editors. Rosén is the only one to note that codd. MQ have *έκμαθέειν*.
- (10) *συνδραμεῖν* at **1.87.7 Wilson**. Accepted by all editors. Rosén is the only one to note that cod. M has *συνδραμέειν*.
- (11) *ἀποφυγεῖν* at **1.91.3 Wilson**. Wilson, Hude and Legrand print *ἀποφυγεῖν* but note the presence of the variant *ἀποφυγέειν* in codd. Rosén and Asheri print *ἀποφυγέειν* as found in the manuscripts.
- (12) *διαλαβεῖν* at **1.114.12 Wilson**. Accepted by all editors. Rosén is the only one to note that *διαλαβέειν* is transmitted by cod. M.

⁹⁵ Here and elsewhere Rosén registers the variants of the later codices M (16th century) and Q (end of 15th century), which were the basis for the Aldine *editio princeps* (cf. Mondrain (1995)). These manuscripts report readings which are otherwise unknown to the rest of the tradition: they could be later unsystematic innovations, though it is not impossible that some of them originated in antiquity.

Book 1 is the best represented in the papyri, but none of the published ones has preserved the lines in which the twelve infinitives for which there is evidence of variation occur. It may perhaps seem otiose to check the amount of variation that characterises a morphological class unanimously defined as artificial and often transmitted only as *variae lectiones* in minor manuscripts, but this exercise is useful for pinpointing the factors behind the presence of *-έειν* aorist infinitives in Herodotus' text. According to Legrand, they were introduced by 'absent-minded copyists' and must always be corrected.⁹⁶ This approach stands in contradiction to his acceptance of other uncontracted *-εε-* forms, which he defends because of their frequency in both manuscripts and papyri and because he cannot rule out that these uncontracted forms 'ne remonte pas à Hérodote lui-même'.⁹⁷ Why can the same not be applied to *-έειν* infinitives? These too were features of the Homeric language which ancient editors (or, in principle, Herodotus himself) could have introduced into the text according to a precise reasoning. The comparatively smaller number of *-έειν* infinitives in relation to those in *-εῖν* may be due to linguistic normalisation in later (i.e., Byzantine) stages of the text. At first sight, the meagre papyrological evidence weighs in favour of 'normal' *-εῖν* forms. However, as I propose below, the distribution follows a morphological rationale that reinforces the suspicion that at least *some* aorist *-έειν* infinitives may have already been present in Herodotus' ancient text.

A better look at the available evidence allows us to see that a morphological criterion could have guided the variation in aorist infinitive endings and that this may still be quite well represented in the manuscripts. The aorist infinitives of Book 1 for which the manuscripts transmit variants in *-έειν* mostly derive from thematic aorists which have the shape (C)ṽC: (-)φυγεῖν, ἰδεῖν, παθεῖν, (-)έλεῖν, (-)μαθεῖν, (-)δραμεῖν. In other words, most of these forms comply with the epic conditions for the creation of *-έειν* aorist infinitives: a root with a short syllable which, attached to *-έειν*, forms an anapaest and can be accommodated across two hexametric feet. Of the attested 12 variants in *-έειν* of Book 1, 6 have exactly this shape: ἰδέειν, παθέειν, ἐλέειν, συνεξελέειν, ἐκμαθέειν, and συνδραμέειν (notice that the compounded forms, too, could fit the hexameter). The impression,

⁹⁶ '[L]es forms en *-έειν* que les manuscrits des deux familles présentent ça et là ont été calquées par des copistes distraits sur les infinitifs présents non contractés des verbes en *-έω*; elles sont à corriger': Legrand (1942) 204.

⁹⁷ Legrand (1942) 202.

therefore, is that whoever inserted these infinitives into the text did so by applying the criteria which he observed at work in the Homeric language.

Of course, it may be objected that the 6 other infinitives (*ἀποφυγέειν* repeated twice, *διαφυγέειν*, *περιιδέειν*, *ἐπισχέειν*, and *διαλαβέειν*) do not have a shape that would fit the hexameter; moreover, the verbs *ἀποφεύγω*, *διαφεύγω*, and *διαλαμβάνω* (in whatever tense) are never found in the Homeric epics. These 6 forms, however, cease to look like an exception once we realise that, except for *ἐπισχέειν*, their uncompounded base verbs all produce aorist infinitives in *-έειν* which have the required shape and are attested in both Homer and Herodotus, namely *φυγέειν*, *ιδέειν*, and *λαβέειν*. A counter-proof that this principle is at play in the opposition between aorist infinitives in *-εῖν* and in *-έειν* is the fact that the 9 instances of *ἐλθεῖν* in Book 1 never have the variant *ἐλθέειν* in the manuscripts, because its cretic prosody is incompatible with the hexameter.⁹⁸ A further check on Books 2 and 3 confirms that *ἐλθεῖν* never occurs as *ἐλθέειν*.

The evidence collected so far suggests that the distribution of *-έειν* infinitives in the tradition of Herodotus' text is not at all casual: not only does it depend on the comparison between Herodotus' language and Homer's, but the criteria governing the use of *-έειν* infinitives in Homer are also reinforced in the Herodotean tradition.⁹⁹ Scholarship has neglected this fact. For instance, neither Bredow nor Merzdorf,¹⁰⁰ who diligently produced a catalogue of *-έειν* aorist infinitives transmitted by manuscripts, noticed that they tend to be of the 'anapaestic' type or, in the case of preverbed forms that would be unmetrical in the hexameter, that they are still compounded forms of 'anapaestic' infinitives. For his part, Rosén in his edition strangely states: 'ignoro, qua ratione vel ex historia vel e structura linguae illud *βαλέειν* explicari possit'.¹⁰¹ As far as I can tell, Smyth is the only one to note that 'all of these forms are Homeric, though the prepositions do not always agree'¹⁰²

⁹⁸ The only forms used by Homer are *ἐλθέμεν* and *ἐλθεῖν*: see Porro (2014) 153.

⁹⁹ A similar criterion would be at play in the treatment of other verbal forms (e.g., *ὀρέωντες*) discussed by Galligani (2001) 27–35 as concerns cod. Laur. Conv. Suppr. 207 (C), forms which she attributes to ancient editors, not Byzantine copyists.

¹⁰⁰ Bredow (1846) 324–7; Merzdorf (1875) 154.

¹⁰¹ Rosén (1987–97) I.ix.

¹⁰² Smyth (1894) 499. Smyth's statement refers to the forms 'in which there is absolute consensus' in the manuscript tradition, namely *βαλέειν* (with compounds *συμβαλέειν*, *ἀποβαλέειν*, *ὑπερβαλέειν*), *έλέειν*, *ἀποθανέειν*, *ιδέειν*, *παθέειν*, *πεσέειν* (with compounds *συμπεσέειν*, *μεταπεσέειν*), *φαγέειν*, *ἀποφυγέειν*, *διαφυγέειν*: see Smyth (1894) 499 n. 3.

and that ‘Hdt. is never made guilty of an attempt to create an *ἐλθέειν, an *εἰπέειν, or an *ἀγαγέειν, forms which could not find admission into the hexameter’.¹⁰³ His conclusion is that these infinitives are ‘a signal instance of the effort to render poetical the diction of the historian’ perpetrated by ‘pseudo-Ionicizing grammarians and scribes’.

Is it possible to lend more plausibility to this interpretation? In §2 above, we saw that the evidence for this pseudo-Ionicising activity on Herodotus’ text is non-existent, if not completely lacking. A first answer could come from the papyri, which unfortunately do not transmit those passages of Book 1 where we have evidence of variation between -εἶν and -έειν. In two other cases, we have papyrological evidence for aorist infinitives in -εἶν which do *not* have -έειν variants in the manuscripts. εἰπεῖν of 1.199.15 Wilson is also reported in *P.Ross.Georg.* 1.15 (third century CE): here the lack of any variant *εἰπέειν confirms the hypothesis that only (C)VC stems received the ending -έειν. However, according to this rationale we would expect *P.Mil.Vogl.* inv. 1212 (second/third century CE) to have λαβέειν at 1.187.12, but the papyrus has λαβεῖν.

The results are slightly more encouraging when we turn to papyri transmitting other books of the *Histories*, though the evidence is limited. We have one case of an anapaestic βαλέειν (Hdt. 2.111.8 Wilson) in *P.Oxy.* 3376, fr. 25–7, col. ii.32, a ‘tall imposing roll’ in a ‘well-written hand’ (second century CE),¹⁰⁴ and three cases of infinitives in -εἶν which would not scan, were they to use the ending -έειν:

- (1) παρελθεῖν of Hdt. 3.72.11 Wilson, transmitted in *P.Oxy.* 1619, col. 37.446, one of the oldest Herodotean papyri (end first/beg. second century CE), written in a fine hand and showing evidence of ‘considerable revision’;¹⁰⁵
- (2) συναγαγεῖν of Hdt. 2.111.16 Wilson, transmitted in *P.Oxy.* 3376, fr. 28, col. i.6 (second century CE);
- (3) ἐπισχεῖν of Hdt. 8.5.2 Wilson, transmitted in *P.Oxy.* 3383, col. ii.2 (second/third century CE).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Smyth (1894) 499–500.

¹⁰⁴ See the description by M. Chambers in *P.Oxy.* 48.3376.

¹⁰⁵ See Grenfell’s and Hunt’s introduction to *P.Oxy.* 13.1609.

¹⁰⁶ I have checked all the Herodotean papyri currently listed in MP³. Most of them do not transmit passages where a thematic aorist active infinitive is used. *P.Ryl.* 1.55 does not preserve the part of 2.107.2 where μαθεῖν occurs; in *P.Oslo* inv. 1487 the infinitive ἀποθανεῖν is in lacuna.

Four forms perhaps are not enough to conclude that the papyrological tradition already followed the distribution posited above. It is telling, however, that no counter-example is to be found except for λαβεῖν in *P.Mil. Vogl.* inv. 1212. It is also noteworthy that the reading βαλέειν of *P.Oxy.* 3376 is paralleled unanimously by the medieval manuscripts.

The interpretation that we can advance on the basis of the evidence reviewed so far is not without discrepancies, but reveals that an overarching principle is at work in the distribution of variants or the lack of them. It seems that, by and large, both manuscripts and papyri tend to associate (C)ṼC stems (with Ṽ indicating a *long syllable* rather than only a long vowel), such as ἐλθ-, εἰπ-, βλαστ- and περισπ-, to infinitives in -εῖν.¹⁰⁷ There are no -έειν infinitives from these stems. An opposite tendency seems to be at work with (C)ṼC stems such as ἐλ-, μαθ-, φυγ-: they mostly receive variants in -έειν. In both cases, the resulting infinitive form would fit into a hexametric line. As noted, a very telling fact is that the exceptions to this distribution all concern compound forms of (C)ṼC stems. Although ἀναλαβέειν, ἀποφυγέειν, διαλαβέειν, διαταμέειν, ἐξευρέειν, ἐπισχέειν, μεταβαλέειν, συμβαλέειν, and συνδραμέειν would *not* fit the hexameter, they are still compounded forms of anapaestic *simplicia* which do fit the hexameter. If we posit that there existed a general rule that required one to attach -έειν to (C)ṼC stems, we can see why some of their compounds may have received this treatment too.

This 'poetic' treatment of thematic aorist infinitives is usually attributed to the intervention of ancient editors. However, within the scenario of Herodotus writing in an elaborate literary language, it is not a priori impossible that he used these infinitives himself. Given that we will never be able to prove this last hypothesis, it may not be idle to speculate further on the linguistic and extra-linguistic motivations that may have influenced the ancient editors in their treatment of thematic aorist infinitives. My personal hunch is that this characterisation of the text must have started early on and that the second-century CE *P.Oxy.* 3376, with its βαλέειν, represents not the *beginning* of this trend, but its *consolidation*. The background behind this editorial practice may be contextualised by turning to another type of evidence which has never been tackled to assess this question: metrical inscriptions. Granted that aorist infinitives in -έειν are literary artificial creations and hence absent from prose inscriptions, a re-assessment of their

¹⁰⁷ In producing these lists I have relied on the data collected in Bredow (1846) 324–7. Spot-checks on the apparatus in Rosén's edition confirm that Bredow's data are sound.

use in inscribed epigrams vis-à-vis the literary tradition offers some useful insights for the interpretation of their presence in Herodotus' text as well.

6. -έειν Aorist Infinitives in Inscriptions and Post-Classical Literature

A search for -έειν infinitives (both present and aorist) in the PHI database shows that such infinitives are completely absent from *all* types of inscriptional texts until about the middle of the fourth century BCE. As one would expect, given the poetic pedigree of both the uncontracted present infinitives and the artificial aorist forms, infinitives in -έειν all occur in poetic texts, mostly funerary epigrams. Present infinitives in -έειν first occur around the mid-fourth century BCE: the first attestation is ἐλεεῖν 'to mourn' in *SEG* 35.708, a funerary epigram from Amphipolis; they have about 16 attestations in total until the late-antique period.

The interesting fact is the date-range of the attestations of the aorist infinitives. The first known example, παθέειν, occurs in the so-called Delian aretology of Sarapis (*IG* XI.4 1299), an inscription in both prose and hexameters composed towards the end of the third century BCE to celebrate the history of this Egyptian cult at Delos.¹⁰⁸ The hexametric part (ll. 30–94) consists in a hymn to Sarapis composed by one Maiistas. As one would expect, its language is heavily influenced by the Homeric *Kunstsprache* and at the beginning of line 69 (ἦ τί χροῖ παθέειν) παθέειν occupies the same metrical position as in *Il.* 17.32 (= 20.198).

The second example occurs in a public funerary epigram from Thera for a priest of Apollos Carneios, Admetos Theokleidas (*IG* XII.3 868, l. 8), which can be dated to the late second century or early first century BCE based on other inscriptions mentioning the same person. The language of the epigram is not particularly Homeric, which shows that -έειν aorist infinitives had slowly become acceptable in metrical inscriptions even outside an epicising context.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Engelmann (1975). For the dating, see now Moyer (2008) 102.

¹⁰⁹ The epigram, preceded by a prose text in Doric, runs as follows: οὐ μόνον εὐχοῦμεν Λακεδαίμονος ἐκ βασιλῆων | ξυνὰ δὲ Θετταλῆς ἐκ προγόνων γενόμεν, | σάξω δ' Ἀδμήτου κατ' ἴσον κλέος ὡς ὄνομ' εὐχῶ. | εἰ δὲ δύω λείποντα τριηκοστοῦ ἔτεός με | Θεουκλείδα πατρός νόσφισε Μοῖρ' ὀλοή, | τετλάτω ὡς Πηλεὺς ὡς προπάτωρ [τ]ε Φέρης· | οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄρ[κε]σιν ἔσχεν· ἐπεὶ πάντως ἂν ὑπέστη | δις θανέειν [αὐ]τὸς [ζῶ]ντ' ἐ[μ<έ>] λειπόμενος.

The number of -έειν aorist infinitives starkly increases in Imperial poetry on stone. εἰσιδέειν occurs in *ISmyrna* 549, a funerary epigram for a woman named Paula dated to between the first and the second centuries CE.¹¹⁰ The epigram is not the best example of Greek poetry, but this adds to the impression that these artificial infinitives had become common trade even for less skilled local poets.

The next attestation, again of ἰδέειν, occurs in line 13 of a late second-century CE funerary epigram in eleven elegiacs from Pamphylia, mourning Konon who died away from home.¹¹¹ This carefully composed epigram, detailing the places to which Konon travelled before meeting an untimely death, employs all the typical features of the Homeric *Kunstsprache*, such as πτόλιν (l. 1), the participles with *diektasis* γελώσαν (l. 3) and εἰσορόων (l. 16), the unaugmented aorists δέξατο (l. 8), θῆκεν (l. 12), προσπτύξατο (l. 15) and ἄνυσσα (l. 17), the Ionic genitive singular ἡγεμονῆος (l. 11), and accusative plural γονῆας (l. 13) to mention only the most notable. In l. 13 the infinitive ἰδέειν occurs within what is probably an allusion to an Odyssean passage, whose emphatic repetition of πρὶν it imitates: ... ὁ δ' ἀρπάκτης, πρὶν χρόνον ἐκτελέσαι, | πρὶν πάτρην ἰδέειν με τὸ δεύτερον ἠδὲ γονῆας, | ἤρπασεν ... (cf. *Od.* 4.475–7: οὐ γάρ τοι πρὶν μοῖρα φίλους τ' ἰδέειν καὶ ἰκέσθαι | οἶκον

¹¹⁰ A later date, to the mid-second century CE, was proposed by Keil: see *ISmyrna*, p. 253. The text runs as follows: τέκνον ἐμὸν Παῦλα, φθινύθω δακρύοις σε βοῶσα / τοῖά τις ἀλκῶν παῖδας ὀδυρομένη. | κωφαὶ δ' ἀνταχοῦσι πέτραι καὶ τύνβος ἀπεχθής, | ὅς τὸν ἐμῶν τοκετῶν ἔσβεσεν ἠέλιον. | αἰεὶ δ' ὡς Νειόβη πέτρην δάκρυ πᾶσιν ὀρῶμαι | ἀνθρώποις ἀχ<έ>ων πένθος ἔχουσα μόνη. | ὦ τάφε καὶ δαίμων, μικρὸν μέθες ἰς φάος ἔλθειν | παῖδαν ἐμὴν Παῦλαν, δοῖς δέ μοι εἰσιδ<έ>ειν. | οὐ σοι Φερσεφόνη τόδε μέμψεται οὐδέ τις Ἄδῃ | ἦν τόσον †ANTHISEΣ† παῖδα ἐμὴν κατ' ὄναρ. In line 8 the engraver incised the 'normal' infinitive ΕΙΣΙΔΕΙΝ, but metre clearly requires εἰσιδέειν.

¹¹¹ Ed. Bean/Mitford 1970, no. 49: Βηρυτὸν τὸ πάροιθεν ὅτε πτόλιν ἦλθον ἐς ἐ[σθλήν] | Ῥωμαϊκῆς μούσης εἵνεκα καὶ νομίμων, | ἔλπωρῆν γελώσαν ἔχων καὶ δαίμονα πικρό[ν], | οὐκέτ' ἐπὶ πάτρην ἦλυθον ἡμετέρην. | ἀλλὰ με πρῶτον ἕδεκτο δικασπολίησι μέλοντα | ἄστῃ Παλαιστίνης ὄρχαμος ἀμφιέπων. | κείθεν δ' Ἀντιόχοιο φίλη πόλις, ἐκ δέ μ' ἐκείνης | Βειθυνῶν ἀγαθὴ δέξατο μητρόπολις. ἔνθεν ἐμὸν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα μῆτιν | Κέρτος ὀμηλικῆς πολλὸν ἀγασσάμενος | συνκάθεδρον Θήβης Νειλώιδος ἡγεμονῆος | θῆκεν. ὁ δ' ἀρπάκτης, πρὶν χρόνον ἐκτελέσαι, | πρὶν πάτρην ἰδέειν με τὸ δεύτερον ἠδὲ γονῆας, | ἤρπασεν ἐξαπίνης εἰς Ἀχέροντ' Αἰδῆς. | τηλ[όθε(?) δ'] ἐρχόμενός(?) με πατὴρ προσπτύξατο χερσί, | νεκρὸν ἐπὶ ξεινῆς κείμενον εἰσορόων. | ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς Νειλὸν τε μέγαν καὶ πόντον ἄνυσσα, | ἀντὶ γάμων στοναχῶν τοῦτον ἔχει<ν>(?) με τάφο[ν]. | μήτηρ δ' αὐτ' ὀδύνησι πεπαρμένη ἐν χθονὶ κίτα· | κείμε δ' ὡδε Κόνων ἀνὴρ Μούσησι μεμηλῶς, | ψυχὴν ἐς μακάρων νῆσσον ἔχων ἀγαθὴν. | ἀλλὰ, πάτερ Τρώϊλε, μὴ τόσον ὀδύρεο· καὶ γὰρ ἄριστοι | παῖδες ἐπουρανίων ἦλυθον εἰς Αἶδην.

ἐϋκτίμενον καὶ σὴν ἐς πατρίδα γαίαν | πρὶν γ' ὄτ' ἂν Αἰγύπτιοιο, διπετέος ποταμοῖο ...).

A similar rhetorical construction, with a repetition of *πρὶν*, characterises the two lines of *IGBulg V 5930*, a third-century CE funerary epigram for a mother and her small son from Nicopolis *ad Nestum*, which features the artificial infinitives *εἰσιδέειν* and *παθέειν*.¹¹² The epigram employs several typically epic phono-morphological elements: lack of contractions and omission of the augment, genitives such as ἔο (l. 2) and ἐμείο (l. 6), the form οὔνομα (l. 6), etc.

The later attestations of thematic infinitives in *-έειν* amount to eleven forms, almost all in funerary epigrams. Apart from the verbs which already occur in earlier epigrams, later inscriptions also contain *ἐκφυγέειν* (*TAM V.2 840*, Lydia, 253/254 CE) and *ἐκμαθέειν* (Marek, *Kat. Pompeiopolis 29*, undated): the latter shows that this artificial ending could be paired with verbs that have no epic pedigree (the first attestation of *ἐκμανθάνω* is in Herodotus).¹¹³

It is likely that the increasing use of *-έειν* aorist infinitives in Greek epigrammatic language depends on trends which had arisen in other literary milieus already in the Hellenistic period. As mentioned in the preceding section, despite being a Homeric feature, these infinitives are prominently *not* common in poetic language outside the Homeric epics. They never feature in Hesiod, being confined to the pseudo-Hesiodic poems.¹¹⁴ They later resurface in Hellenistic hexameter poetry, with the first examples in

¹¹² δέρκεο σῆμα, φέριστε, καὶ εἴρεο τίς κάμε τοῦτο. | Ἐρμογένης ποθέων με, χαριζόμενος δ' ἔο παιδί | Θέκλιμ εὐπλοκάμ<ω> γ' ἦν ἤρπασε Μοῖρα κραταιή | πρὶν γάμον εἰσιδέειν, πρὶν ἀνέρι λέκτρα συνάψαι, | πρὶν ψυχὴν παθέειν τι, ἀκήρατος ἐς θεὸν ἦλθεν. | εἰ δὲ θέλεις καὶ ἐμείο καὶ υἱέος οὔνομ' ἀκοῦσαι, | κλῶθι, φίλος· τέκε[ο]ς Δημοσθίνεος λάσιον κῆρ, | αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ Ματρῶνα, πόλις δέ μοι ἔπλετο Νίκη, | κέλμαι δ' ἐνθ[άδ'] ἔγωγε σὺν υἱεῖ παιδί τέτ[αρτ]ος.

¹¹³ The other seven attestations are: (1) *θανέειν*: *IScM III 148*, funerary epigram from Kallatis, Scythia Minor, third/fourth century CE; (2) *θανέειν*: *IC I xviii 177*, funerary epigram, Lyttos, third century CE (cf. *SEG 15.566[1]*); (3) *παθέειν*: *Milet VI.3 1403*, very fragmentary epigram, Miletus, fourth/fifth century CE; (4) *παθέειν*: Bernand, *Inscr. Métr.* 61, funerary epigram, Hermopolis Parva (?), Egypt, fourth/fifth century CE; (5) *εἰσιδέειν*, *θανέειν*: *MAMA V R 28*, funerary epigram from Nakokleia, Phrygia, undated; (6) *θανέειν*: *MAMA V Lists I(i)*, 182.85, funerary epigram from Dorylaion, Phrygia, undated; (7) *εἰσιδέειν*: *TAM II 913*, fragmentary epigram, Lycia, undated.

¹¹⁴ See Nikolaev (2013) 85–6. The forms in the pseudo-Hesiodic poems amount to eight (*ibid.* 87).

Callimachus,¹¹⁵ followed by Apollonius Rhodius and Pseudo-Theocritus.¹¹⁶ The distribution of -έειν aorist infinitives in these three *corpora* vis-à-vis that in Aratus and Nicander, who have *none*, suggests that we may be dealing with a specific trend in Hellenistic hexameter poetry that includes compositions close to Homer in subject-matter, but excludes 'didactic' poems.

If we zoom forward onto the Imperial age, we witness a very different situation: -έειν aorist infinitives are much more common. Oppian is so fond of these forms that he uses them sixteen times, against only one instance of a present infinitive (*φορέειν* at 5.505). Dionysius Periegetes too confines -έειν to thematic aorists. The evidence from prose texts is unfortunately less useful. Modern editions of Hippocrates, Megasthenes and other authors associated with Ionic prose routinely print -έειν for present infinitives of -έω, but mostly -έιν for aorist thematic forms. To assess to what extent this faithfully reflects the textual tradition is beyond the scope of this paper, but -έειν aorist infinitives are definitely attested as *variae lectiones* in many manuscripts, in a similar way to what we observe in the tradition of Herodotus' text.¹¹⁷ A telling fact is that the text of Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess* has at least two securely transmitted aorist infinitives: *λαθέειν* (21) and *παθέειν* (25). In principle we cannot be certain that these infinitives go back to Lucian himself, but their authenticity is very likely. Discussing the matter, Lightfoot identifies two factors that may account for Lucian's use of such epicising traits: on the one hand, 'the frequent lack of differentiation between epic and Ionic prose', on the other hand 'the fact that the texts of Herodotus available in the second century were already full of such pseudo-Ionisms and epicisms, overlaid on whatever poetic forms Herodotus himself had preferred'.¹¹⁸ She therefore agrees with those scholars who rule out the possibility that -έειν aorist infinitives may be authentic in Herodotus.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ *Hec. fr.* 326 Pfeiffer = 77 Hollis (*αἴθ' ὄφελος θανέειν κτλ.*: the infinitive, accepted by all editors, is a correction of R. Bentley); *Dian.* 63 (*οὐτ' ἄντην ιδέειν κτλ.*); and *Del.* 135 (*ἐμβαλέειν δίνησιν κτλ.*), all Homeric forms.

¹¹⁶ Apollonius has 22 forms, not all of them Homeric (e.g., *καμέειν*, *σημανέειν*, *ἀνασχεθέειν*), against only 4 present infinitives. In the Theocritean corpus aorist infinitives of this kind are only attested in the spurious *Idyll* 25, which employs epic language (*εἰσοδέειν*: l. 44; *ιδέειν*: ll. 184 and 222).

¹¹⁷ See Porro (2014) 145 n. 2.

¹¹⁸ Lightfoot (2003) 98.

¹¹⁹ Lightfoot (2003) 139–42 also shows how in this treatise Lucian sides with Aretaeus in the treatment of both contract verbs and aorist infinitives, but not with other Ionicising texts such as the pseudo-Herodotean *Vita Homeri* or Arrian's *Indica*.

Both the epigraphic and literary evidence reviewed in this section show that *-έειν* aorist infinitives were a ‘trendy’ feature of epicising poetic language as well as Ionicising prose of the Imperial period, but that their use outside strictly epic hexameter poetry had already begun in the early Hellenistic period. All of this does not prove beyond all reasonable doubt that Herodotus’ text acquired its *-έειν* aorist infinitives in the Imperial age, but it certainly proves that in this period they received special attention as Ionic (and not just epic) features; it also suggests that *-έειν* aorist infinitives *could* have entered Herodotus’ text already in the Hellenistic age.

The evidence from the *variae lectiones* in medieval manuscripts, paired with the meagre evidence from papyri, shows that the vast majority of *-έειν* aorist infinitives which first entered Herodotus’ text preserved the prosodic pattern allowed in hexametric poetry. A final point that I wish to discuss concerns precisely the question of metrical sequences in Herodotus’ text. Hermogenes makes a statement on this point, which has greatly influenced modern scholarship (*Id.* p. 408 Rabe):

οἱ γὰρ πλείστοι τῶν ῥυθμῶν αὐτῷ κατὰ τε τὰς συνθήκας καὶ κατὰ τὰς βάσεις δακτυλικοί τε εἰσι καὶ ἀναπαιστικοὶ σπονδειακοὶ τε καὶ ὄλως σεμνοί.

Most of his rhythms, which are created by the word order and the clausulae, are dactylic and anapaestic and spondaic and, generally speaking, solemn (transl. Wooten).

As we saw in §3, the idea that Herodotus purposely used metrical patterns in his prose has been entertained by several scholars. For example, Hemmerdinger maintains that the text was actually sung,¹²⁰ while Mansour positively concludes that

Hérodote ne connaît peut-être pas les rythmes habituels de la prose classique, reposant notamment sur des clausules spécifiques; mais il fait en revanche un large emploi de clausules dactyliques, ainsi que d’ouvertures de phrase et, plus largement, de séquences entières revêtant cette forme rythmique, et ce à tous les niveaux discursifs et narratifs de son oeuvre.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Hemmerdinger (1981) 171.

¹²¹ Mansour (2009) 448.

However, if we look at the contexts in which *-έειν* aorist infinitives occur as *variae lectiones* we realise that their ideally suitable metrical shape almost *never* fits a hexametric (and hence, 'epic') sequence. Going back to the infinitives of Book 1 (see above, §5), these comprise 6 non-metrical forms which contain a cretic (*ἀποφυγέειν* twice, *διαφυγέειν*, *περιδέειν*, *ἐπισχέειν*, *διαλαβέειν*) and 6 forms with an anapaestic shape, 3 of which (*ιδέειν*, *έλέειν*, *συνδραμέειν*) do not occur in prosodic contexts which may form a hexameter or part of it.¹²² We are left with two examples which, with some good will, *could* be seen to make up a dactylic sequence. The *varia lectio παθέειν* of 1.32.8 Wilson, which occurs after the sequence *πολλά δέ καί*, produces the second half of a pentameter (*πολλά δέ καί παθέειν*). However, the first part of the sentence (*ἐν γάρ τῷ μακρῷ χρόνῳ πολλά μὲν ἔστι ιδεῖν/ιδέειν τὰ μή τις ἐθέλει*) does not yield a meaningful metrical pattern. The *varia lectio συνεξελέειν* of 1.36.17, part of the sentence *καί διακελεύσομαι τοῖσι ἰούσι εἶναι ὡς προθυμοτάτοισι συνεξελεῖν ὑμῖν τὸ θηρίον ἐκ τῆς χώρας*, could be said to form a sequence of three dactyls with the preceding and following words (*προθυμοτάτοισι συνεξελέειν ὑμῖν*), but it is hard to see the point of the dactylic rhythm in this context.

The impression, therefore, is that these *-έειν* infinitives were not inserted (be it by ancient scholars, Byzantine copyists, or perhaps Herodotus himself) to specifically imitate epic prosody. This validates an observation that Simon Hornblower makes in passing, namely that 'it is a noticeable feature of such [epic] echoes that they often avoid perfect metricality'.¹²³

The origin of *-έειν* aorist infinitives in Herodotus remains uncertain. On balance, it seems safer to assume that they are not originally Herodotean. However, they certainly represent an important feature through which Herodotus' text could hint at epic style, broadly understood. They prove the extent of Homer's influence on Herodotus' language and its ancient

¹²² The passages are: *τὰς μὲν δὴ πλεῦνας τῶν γυναικῶν ἀποφυγέειν*, *τὴν δὲ Ἰοῦν σὺν ἄλλῃσι ἀρπασθήναι* (1.1); *ὁ μὲν δὴ ὡς οὐκ ἐδύνατο διαφυγέειν*, *ἦν ἐτοῖμος* (1.10); *ἀπειληθέντα δὲ τὸν Ἀρίονα ἐς ἀπορίην παραιτήσασθαι*, *ἐπειδὴ σφί οὕτω δοκέοι*, *περιδέειν* *αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ σκευῇ πάσῃ στάντα ἐν τοῖσι ἐδωλίοισι αἰεῖσαι*. *αἰέσας δὲ ὑπεδέκετο ἑωυτὸν* (1.24); *πρὶν δ' ἂν τελευτήσῃ*, *ἐπισχέειν* *μηδὲ καλέειν κω ὄλβιον*, *ἀλλ' εὐτυχέα* (1.32); *κατεργάσεσθαι τὴν πεπρωμένην μοῖραν ἀδύνατά ἐστι ἀποφυγέειν* *καὶ θεῶ* (1.91); *ἐκέλευε αὐτὸν τοὺς ἄλλους παῖδας διαλαβεῖν*, *πιθομένων δὲ τῶν παίδων ὁ Κῦρος τὸν παῖδα τρηχέως κάρτα περιέσπε μαστιγέων* (1.114); *ὄκη γὰρ ἰθύσειε στρατεύεσθαι Κῦρος*, *ἀμήχανον ἦν ἐκείνο τὸ ἔθνος διαφυγέειν* (1.204).

¹²³ Hornblower (1994) 67.

reception, but they also help us to define its borders, since they do not seem to have been used to make the text *prosodically* more poetic. Perhaps editors should give these *variae lectiones* more credit.

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Abbreviations

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| ICI | M. Guarducci, ed., <i>Inscriptiones Creticae, vol. 1: Tituli Cretae mediae praeter Gortynios</i> (Rome 1935). |
| IG XI.4 | P. Roussel, ed., <i>Inscriptiones Graecae XI: Inscriptiones Deli, Fasc. 4</i> (Berlin 1914). |
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