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The Date of Herodotus' Publication

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The *communis opinio* regarding the time at which Herodotus published his researches into the causes and progress of the conflict between the Greeks and the Persians is that the work which we now refer to as *The Histories* was brought before the public between approximately 430 and 425 B.C., the latter date being regarded as a secure *terminus* because of certain alleged references in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, produced at the Lenaea in that year.¹ This view has recently been challenged by Charles W. Fornara,² who uses arguments both negative and positive to show that Herodotus was still writing his history after 425. On the one hand Fornara argues that the passages in Aristophanes which have been considered to be allusions to Herodotus' work do not in fact presuppose a familiarity with the writings of the historian; on the other he seeks to show that certain passages in Herodotus require the assumption that they were composed late in the decade of the 420s. I should like here to examine Fornara's argument in order to see whether a revision of the traditional view is called for. I will concentrate on one of the passages that Fornara

¹ E.g. F. Jacoby, *RE Suppl.* 2 (1913), col. 232; Schmid-Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* I² (Munich 1934), p. 591; J. L. Myres, *Herodotus. Father of History* (Oxford 1953), pp. 15-16; most recently J. Hart, *Herodotus and Greek History* (London 1982), p. 174.

² "Evidence for the date of Herodotus' Publication," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 91 (1971), pp. 25-34 and "Herodotus' Knowledge of the Archidamian War," *Hermes* 109 (1981), pp. 149-56. The latter is in response to criticisms by J. Cobet, *Hermes* 105 (1977), pp. 2-27.

discusses, namely the apparent reference to the first book of Herodotus at *Acharnians* 523 ff., because I believe that it admits of a definitive statement. The lines in question come from Dicaeopolis' great speech in which he justifies his private peace-treaty with the Spartans on the grounds that the Spartans are not wholly responsible for the present hostilities. In giving his version of the origin of the Peloponnesian War Dicaeopolis first recounts the consequences of the Megarian Decree and then continues:

καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ σμικρὰ κάπιχώρια
 πόρνην δὲ Σιμαίθην ἰόντες Μεγαράδε
 νειανία κλέπτουσι μεθυσκοότταβοι·
 κῆθ' οἱ Μεγαρήs ὀδύνας πεφυσιγγωμένοι
 ἀντεξέκλεψαν Ἀσπασίας πόρνας δύο
 κἀντεῦθεν ἀρχὴ τοῦ πολέμου κατερράγη
 Ἕλλησι πᾶσιν ἐκ τριῶν λαικαστριῶν.

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These lines are regularly regarded as a parody of, or at least an allusion to, the account with which Herodotus opens his history, according to which certain unnamed Persians allegedly attributed the origin of the hostilities between the Greeks and Persians to the series of abductions that involved Io, Europa, Medea and Helen. But those who³ consider the passage in Aristophanes to be a reference to Herodotus tend not to present arguments that would make this assumption convincing, and Fornara deserves credit for insisting⁴ that more is needed than a bald assertion of the comic playwright's dependence upon the historian. Fornara does not commit himself to identifying the reference in Aristophanes' lines—to be fair, Fornara is not concerned to do so, but merely to show that the reference is not to Herodotus—but he does hint at “the obvious possibility that verses 523 ff. allude to the *Telephus* of Euripides.”⁵ Since there are undoubted parodies of the *Telephus* in Dicaeopolis' speech, it is not unreasonable to look to Euripides as the source of these lines in

³ H. Stein *ad Hdt.* I. 4; J. van Leeuwen *ad Ach.* 524 ff.; W. Nestle, *Philologus* 70 (1911), p. 246; W. Rennie *ad Ach.* 528; Jacoby (above, note 1); Schmid-Stählin (above, note 1); J. E. Powell, *The History of Herodotus* (Cambridge 1939), p. 77; Myres (above, note 1); P. Pucci, *Memorie dell' Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* series 8, vol. 10.5 (1961), p. 283; W. G. Forrest, *Phoenix* 17 (1963), pp. 7–8; P. Rau, *Paratragodia* (Zetemata 45, Munich 1967), p. 40; G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca 1972), p. 240; K. J. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* (Berkeley 1972), p. 87; H.-J. Newiger, *Yale Classical Studies* 26 (1980), p. 222; L. Edmunds, *ibid.*, p. 13; Hart (above, note 1), pp. 174–75.

⁴ *Journal of Hellenic Studies* (above, note 2), p. 28 and *Hermes* (above, note 2), pp. 153–55.

⁵ *Journal of Hellenic Studies* (above, note 2), p. 28.

Aristophanes. Indeed, this has been suggested previously but, again, without anything resembling a decisive argument.⁶

How are we to decide, then, whether *Ach.* 523 ff. are a parody of Herodotus or of Euripides' *Telephus*? Let us look first at what we know of the latter, to see whether we can find anything in Euripides' tragedy⁷ that might have prompted these lines. The speech of Dicaeopolis from which the lines come, like the speech of Mnesilochus in *Thesmophoriazusae* (466–519), is obviously based on the speech in Euripides' play in which the disguised hero addresses an audience that is hostile to the argument which he advances. Thus we run the risk of arguing in a circle, since the evidence we must use to reconstruct *Telephus*' speech is precisely the speech of Dicaeopolis, the relationship of which to its original we are seeking to determine. But we are fortunate in possessing the speech of Mnesilochus as well, as it provides us with an independent check on our reconstruction. To begin with, it is safe to assume that those elements which the speeches of Dicaeopolis and Mnesilochus share have a common origin in the speech of Euripides' *Telephus*.⁸ Euripides' hero appeared in disguise, lest the Greeks discover his true identity and recognize his personal motivation in urging the Greeks not to make war. And so Dicaeopolis and (with much greater dramatic relevancy) Mnesilochus deliver their speeches in disguise. Both Aristophanic characters begin their speeches in a similar fashion. Mnesilochus (*Thesm.* 469–70) and Dicaeopolis (*Ach.* 509) attempt to ingratiate themselves with their potentially hostile audiences by asserting that they too hate "the enemy," respectively Euripides and the Spartans. Mnesilochus (*Thesm.* 472) and Dicaeopolis (*Ach.* 504) further identify themselves with their audience by adopting a confidential tone and saying, in effect, "We are alone. There is no danger that the enemy will find out what we say here. Therefore we can speak frankly." Both Mnesilochus (*Thesm.* 473) and Dicaeopolis (*Ach.* 514) do then speak frankly and raise the awkward question of whether "we" are justified in assigning all the blame to "the enemy." The remainder of each speech then consists of the

⁶ E. Schwartz, *Quaestiones Ionicae* (Rostock 1891), p. 10; W. J. M. Starkie *ad Ach.* 524 ff.; A. Rostagni, *Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica* 5 (1927), pp. 323–27 (although he does not rule out the possibility of Herodotean influence as well).

⁷ For the fragments, see C. Austin, *Nova Fragmenta Euripidea in Papyris Reperta* (Berlin 1968), pp. 66–82. Reconstructions of the play in E. W. Handley and J. Rea, *The Telephus of Euripides* (*Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement* 5, London 1957); F. Jouan, *Euripide et les légendes des Chants Cypriens* (Paris 1966), pp. 222–44; Rau (above, note 3), pp. 19–50; T. B. L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London 1967), pp. 43–48.

⁸ It does not, of course, follow that elements unique to one speech or the other do not derive from the speech of *Telephus*.

speaker's reasons⁹ for believing that "we" are acting precipitately and for regarding the actions of "the enemy" as justifiable. Mnesilochus ends his speech (*Thesm.* 518–19 = Eur. fr. 711 N) with the rhetorical question, "Why are we angry with Euripides when we have suffered nothing worse than we ourselves have done?" Dicaeopolis ends his (*Ach.* 555–56 = Eur. fr. 710 N) by suggesting that, *mutatis mutandis*, "we" would have acted just as "the enemy" has done.¹⁰

Now, when we attempt to recover the Euripidean original on which Aristophanes' two parodies are modeled, it is essential that we understand who "the enemy" is whose actions Telephus sought to justify. In other words, when Mnesilochus (*Thesm.* 473) asks *τί ταῦτ' ἔχουσαι κείνον αἰτιώμεθα*; and Dicaeopolis (*Ach.* 514) *τί ταῦτα τοὺς Λάκωνας αἰτιώμεθα*; what was the object of the verb in the Euripidean line to which these lines refer? In their reconstruction, based on van de Sande Bakhuyzen, Handley and Rea¹¹ paraphrase this section of Telephus' speech, "Why do we blame Telephus/the Trojans?" But Euripides must have written either the one or the other,¹² and it ought to be possible to decide which. The choice is easy. In the fragments that can be attributed to Telephus' speech, Telephus is named twice (fr. 707 and 710 N), Paris and the Trojans not at all. What Telephus is concerned to do (apart from finding a cure for his wound) is to dissuade the Greeks from attacking his own territory in reprisal for the reverse which they had earlier suffered at his hands. He does this by showing that Telephus was justified in his attack upon the Greeks inasmuch as it was the Greeks who had initiated the hostilities and who had acted wrongly in so doing. Just so Mnesilochus seeks to dissuade the women at the Thesmophoria from attacking Euripides by showing that the women, by their immoral behavior, provoked and deserved Euripides' verbal attacks upon them. And so Dicaeopolis seeks to dissuade the Athenians from prosecuting the war against the Spartans by showing that the Athenians (or, at

⁹ Note γάρ, *Ach.* 515, *Thesm.* 476.

¹⁰ Perhaps Telephus' speech ended:

τὸν δὲ Τήλεφον
οὐκ οἴομεσθα; κῆρα δὴ θυμούμεθα
παθόντες οὐδὲν μείζον ἢ δεδρακότες;

¹¹ Above (note 7), p. 34.

¹² Or, perhaps, "the Mysians" or "Paris." Perhaps merely "the barbarians." Lest anyone suggest, following *Thesm.* 473, that Euripides wrote *τί ταῦτ' ἔχοντες κείνον αἰτιώμεθα*; it should be pointed out that this idiom, which differs from *ἔχω + ptcpl.* (W. J. Aerts, *Periphrastica* [Amsterdam 1965], p. 160), does not seem to be tragic and is likely colloquial: *Ar., Av.* 341; *Ecl.* 853; 1151; *Lys.* 945; *Nub.* 131; 509; *Ran.* 202; 512; 524; *Men., Sam.* 719; *Eubul.* 107. 6; *Greek Literary Papyri* 67. 22 Page; *Pl., Euthyd.* 295C; *Gorg.* 490E; 497A; *Phdr.* 236E.

least, some of them) were at fault: first they imposed a boycott upon Megara and then they abducted the Megarian courtesan Simaetha. It is at this point that we are asked to believe that Aristophanes is parodying a passage in Telephus' speech in which "the disguised hero seems to have thrown contempt upon the motives which had induced the Greeks to undertake a campaign against Troy."¹³ That is to say, when Dicaeopolis speaks of the abductions of Athenian and Megarian courtesans, his words are based upon a passage in Euripides' tragedy in which Telephus referred to the abduction of Helen. But this is a specious view for, while Euripidean characters are known to cast discredit upon the causes of wars (and in particular of the Trojan War), there is a fatal objection to the assumption that Telephus included a reference to the rape of Helen. Apart from the fact that, as we saw above, Telephus is concerned to mitigate Greek hostility, not toward the Trojans, but toward himself and the Mysians, mention of Paris' crime can only detract from Telephus' main point, namely that the Greeks were in the wrong.¹⁴ Thus there is no reason to believe that *Ach.* 523 ff. had anything corresponding to it in Euripides' *Telephus*.

But if we can eliminate Euripides, does it follow that *Ach.* 523 ff. are a parody of Herodotus? Obviously it is not a necessary inference and, indeed, other possibilities have been explored. E. Maass¹⁵ implausibly proposed the suggestion that Aristophanes is here parodying Herodotus' source and, more recently, D. M. MacDowell¹⁶ has argued that the lines are not parody at all, but rather represent Aristophanes' comic version of the actual causes of the Peloponnesian War. I am not prepared to argue over the actual causes of the Peloponnesian War, but I do think it worthwhile to quote MacDowell's reasons for denying that Aristophanes is parodying Herodotus:

It is most unlikely that many Athenians were familiar enough with [Herodotus' book] to be able to recognize a parody of one particular part of it unless Aristophanes had given very obvious signals indeed

¹³ Starkie *ad Ach.* 524 ff. Similarly Handley and Rea (above, note 7), p. 35 and Jouan (above, note 7), p. 234.

¹⁴ One could, perhaps, envision Telephus attempting to deflect Greek hostility from the Mysians by convincing the Greeks that the Trojans, not the Mysians, had wronged them. But this is unlikely in view of the fact that Telephus is Priam's son-in-law. Indeed P. Oxy. 2460 fr. 10 seems to preserve part of a scene in which Telephus attempted to avoid acting as the Greeks' guide in their expedition against Troy, presumably on the grounds of his relationship with the Trojan royal family; so Handley and Rea (above, note 7), pp. 7 and 37; Jouan (above, note 7), p. 240; Rau (above, note 3), p. 26.

¹⁵ *Hermes* 22 (1887), pp. 590–91.

¹⁶ *Greece & Rome* 30 (1983), pp. 149–54.

to warn them that a parody of Herodotos was coming. But in fact there are no such signals. Dikaiopolis does not mention the name of Herodotos; nor does he mention the Persians or the Phoenicians or the Trojans or any of the other people who occur in Herodotos' opening pages. He mentions three prostitutes, but that would hardly have made the Athenians think of all those daughters of kings. Above all, Dikaiopolis does not use any Herodotean vocabulary or turns of phrase. Whereas the beginning and end of the speech do quote a few words from Euripides, the middle does not quote any words from Herodotos. There is really nothing in the speech which bears any resemblance to Herodotos at all.¹⁷

MacDowell is right to demand that specific parallels be pointed out, but his final sentence contains a considerable exaggeration. For surely it must be considered a "resemblance" between *Ach.* 523 ff. and *Hdt.* I. 1–4 that both attribute the origin of a great war to the abduction of a woman *and to the subsequent abduction of two further women*.¹⁸ For, according to the Persians whom Herodotos cites, the barbarians first abducted Io and, later, the Greeks abducted Europa and Medea. Aristophanes comically transforms these daughters of kings into three harlots, making the causes of the war even more ludicrous. As far as verbal similarity is concerned, it is not true that "Dikaiopolis does not use any Herodotean vocabulary or turns of phrase." The resemblance between *Hdt.* I. 2. 1 (ταῦτα μὲν δὴ ἴσα πρὸς ἴσα σφι γενέσθαι μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα . . .) and *Ach.* 523–24 (καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ σμικρὰ κάπιχώρια πόρνην δὲ . . .) has often been noted, but its real significance has not been recognized. For the particle combination μὲν δὴ is quite rare in Aristophanes.¹⁹ While the word δὴ itself occurs some three hundred times in Aristophanes, I am able to find it following μέν only here and in four other places. And the combination is used in a way that is, if not unparalleled in Aristophanes, at least strikingly unusual. It is here, to quote Starkie's note *ad loc.*, "used in summing up, so as to pass on to another subject." It is not so used at *Thesm.* 805, where its use is characterized by Denniston (above, note 19)

¹⁷ MacDowell (previous note), p. 151. Similarly Fornara, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* (above, note 2), p. 28: "there is no trace of verbal similarity. Yet I think that we have a right to expect it in a case such as this."

¹⁸ This point, which also tells decisively against the view that we are here dealing with an Aristophanic reference to Euripides' *Telephus*, was first made by G. Perrotta, on page 108 of an article that is too rarely consulted in this connection: "Erodoto parodiato da Aristofane," *Rendiconti dell' Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere* 59 (1926), pp. 105–14. Cobet (above, note 2), p. 11 note 46 also rightly points out that this motif is attested only in Aristophanes and Herodotos.

¹⁹ *Ach.* 523 is the only example cited from Aristophanes by J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (2nd ed. Oxford 1954), p. 258.

396 as “progressive,” nor at *Plut.* 728–29, where we find *καὶ πρῶτα μὲν δὴ . . . ἔπειτα*. In *νῦν μὲν γὰρ δὴ* (*Lys.* 557) the *δὴ* is not to be taken with *μὲν*; rather it emphasizes *γὰρ*, as in Xenophanes I. 1 West *νῦν γὰρ δὴ*.²⁰ The only real parallel in Aristophanes for the usage at *Ach.* 523 is to be found at *Plut.* 8: *καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ ταῦτα. τῷ δὲ Λοξία. . .* On the evidence of [Aesch.] *P. V.* 500, Hdt. I. 94. 1 and III. 108. 4, however, this may represent a common, stereotyped expression.

So the phrasing of *Ach.* 523 stands out as being uncharacteristic of Aristophanes. But, uncommon as the usage is in the comic poet, “*μὲν δὴ* is frequently used by the historians,” according to Denniston (above, note 19), “as a formula of transition, the *μὲν* clause often summing up the preceding section of the narrative.” Denniston cites seven passages from Herodotus, five from Thucydides and one from Xenophon. We are fortunate to possess J. E. Powell’s reliable *Lexicon to Herodotus*, which informs us exactly how frequent the combination is.²¹ Not only is the combination exceedingly common in the historian but, with Powell’s help, it does not take us long to discover that its most common use, as at I. 2. 1, is as a formula of transition.²² That this is a characteristically Herodotean locution is made even clearer by a comparison of the usage of the fifth-century tragedians. The combination *μὲν δὴ* occurs only ten times in the surviving works of each of the three dramatists,²³ and in only a handful of instances (e.g. Aesch. *Pers.* 200, Eur. *Alc.* 156, *Hec.* 603, *Suppl.* 456, *Hel.* 761) is it employed as a formula of transition. Therefore, while we cannot say that, when he uses the combination at *Ach.* 523, Aristophanes is “parodying” Hdt. I. 2. 1, it is fair to say that he is using a characteristically and recognizably Herodotean idiom. And this, combined with the fact that the idiom does occur in the passage concerned with reciprocal abductions and with the fact that the motif of reciprocal abductions is known to occur only in Herodotus and Aristophanes, makes all but inescapable the conclusion that the poet is parodying the historian’s account of the origin of the hostilities between Greeks and barbarians.

But this is not in the least surprising. For there is other (although, I believe, less convincing) evidence in the *Acharnians* of Aristophanes’

²⁰ For *γὰρ δὴ* see Denniston (previous note), p. 243.

²¹ Cambridge 1938. Under the heading *δὴ* A.III we find that Herodotus uses the combination *μὲν δὴ* 390 times.

²² In the first 20 pages of Book I alone: 2. 1; 9. 1; 11. 1; 14. 1; 21. 1; 26. 3; 32. 1; 36. 1.

²³ In Aeschylus only *Pers.* 200, *Eum.* 106 and fr. 102 M without a preceding *γε*; in Sophocles only *Ant.* 150, 162, *Phil.* 350 and 1308 without a preceding *ἀλλά*.

knowledge of Herodotus' work.²⁴ And there is also good reason to believe that, in his *Cresphontes*, a tragedy which was produced at about the same time as *Acharnians*, Euripides was influenced by a passage in Herodotus' fifth book.²⁵ Finally, Fornara presents an excellent argument to the effect that Herodotus' influence is to be found in Euripides' *Electra*.²⁶ Now, Fornara believes that this play was produced in 414 B.C., which date gives no more support to his view that Herodotus' history was published at the end of the Archidamian War than it does to the traditional view, that it was published in the first half of the 420s. But in fact, to date *Electra* to 413 or 414 is to ignore the potent arguments of G. Zuntz,²⁷ who shows that the play belongs rather in the period 422–416. Thus we have a fair amount of evidence for the influence of Herodotus on works of literature produced in the decade between 426 and 416 B.C. Fornara dismisses this evidence because, as he believes, Herodotus was still writing his history at the time of the Peace of Nicias. But what Fornara and, in his attack on Fornara, Cobet fail to perceive is that there is no inconsistency between Herodotus' influence on works written around 425 and his continuing to write after 421. The passages in *Acharnians* which are likely to be references to Herodotus are references to Book I. Fornara plausibly explains Euripides' reference to Helen at *El.* 1280–83 as inspired by Herodotus' account of Helen in Book II. Euripides' *Cresphontes* alludes to a Herodotean passage in Book V. It is not necessary to reject this evidence and all that it implies in order to accept Fornara's view that Herodotus refers in his history to events that occurred after 424. According to Fornara, Herodotus included a passage that "was written after the death of Artaxerxes and very probably after 421" in Book VI; he refers to the Athenian occupation of Cythera (424) in Book VII; he implies that the Archidamian War

²⁴ See, in addition to the works cited in note 3 above, Perrotta (above, note 18) and, especially, J. Wells, *Studies in Herodotus* (Oxford 1923), pp. 169–82.

²⁵ Compare Eur. fr. 449 N with Hdt. V. 4. 2. The cogent arguments by R. Browning (*Classical Review* 11 [1961], pp. 201–02) for Euripides' dependence are rejected on insufficient grounds by Fornara, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* (above, note 2), p. 25 note 3. For the date of *Cresphontes*, see Webster (above, note 7), p. 137; V. di Benedetto, *Euripide. Teatro e società* (Turin 1971), pp. 133–35; O. Musso, *Euripide. Cresfonte* (Milan 1974), p. xxvii. All date the play sometime in the period 428–423 B.C.

²⁶ *Journal of Hellenic Studies* (above, note 2), pp. 30–31. His view of the date of Eur., *El.*: p. 30 note 12.

²⁷ *The Political Plays of Euripides* (Manchester 1955), pp. 64–71. Most scholars now share Zuntz's view; see A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen* (3rd ed. Göttingen 1972), pp. 392–93, with bibliography. *Electra* is associated with *Cresphontes* on metrical and thematic grounds: Webster (above, note 7), pp. 4, 136 ff.

had come to an end by the time he wrote Book IX.²⁸ If Fornara is right,²⁹ we need only believe that a portion of Herodotus' history equivalent to what we now know as the first four books and the beginning of the fifth was written and "published" before the mid-420s B.C., and that Herodotus continued to compose and make available to the public the remainder of his history, "in substantially the same order in which we now have it,"³⁰ until some time around the end of the Archidamian War.

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²⁸ See *Journal of Hellenic Studies* (above, note 2), pp. 32–34; *Hermes* (above, note 2), pp. 149–51.

²⁹ I must admit that I find decision difficult. On these three passages, see also J. A. S. Evans, *Athenaeum* 57 (1979), pp. 146–47, who is less convinced than is Fornara of the unambiguousness of the evidence. Recently R. Meridor (*Eranos* 81 [1983], pp. 13–20) has plausibly shown that certain elements of the plot of Euripides' *Hecuba* (produced before 423 B.C.; for the date, see Lesky [above, note 27], p. 330) were suggested to the poet by events that occurred in Sestos after the end of the Persian War, when Xanthippus allowed the people of Elaeus to punish the Persian Artayctes. If she is right to argue that Euripides knew of these events from reading of them in Herodotus (IX. 116–20), then we are forced to admit that the final section (and, therefore, perhaps all) of Herodotus' work was published before the mid-420s. But it is not unlikely that this anecdote concerning Pericles' father circulated in Athens in versions other than that of Herodotus.

³⁰ R. Lattimore, *Classical Philology* 53 (1958), p. 18.

