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How Did Pelasgians Become Hellenes? Herodotus I. 56–58

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These chapters are a nightmare. Anyone who comes unwarned upon Herodotus' first ethnographic digression is bound to share Reiske's despairing judgment: "Haec de vetusta nationum duarum principum Graeciam incolentium origine narratio obscura, intricata et inconstans maleque cohaerens esse videtur."¹ Suddenly the sunlit landscape of the tale of Croesus disappears, and we are plunged into the fog and quicksand of an antiquarian mire. What is wrong? Clearly Herodotus is none too precise about his theories. This much it may be fair to say. But these chapters also bristle with major textual and grammatical problems.

This paper is a discussion of four separate topics: textual emendation, narrative structure, vocabulary and grammar, and Herodotus' own logic. What ties all these topics together is their relevance to internal criticism, that is, the establishment of the text. What, in short, does the text say?

Apart from trying to clarify an important but very difficult passage, I want to emphasize the necessity of recognizing internal and external criticism as separate operations. To establish a text is one thing; to discuss its significance in the light of other sources is something else. The historian can of course be his own textual critic; but the editing of a text has to precede its use as a historical document. Failure to

¹ J. J. Reiske, *Animadversionum ad Graecos Auctores*, Vol. III (Lipsiae 1761), p. 87.

make this distinction has caused unnecessary problems in the interpretation of chapters 56–58.

1. *The Initial Antithesis*

The first problem (56. 2) has been recently treated elsewhere.² We are to read ταῦτα γὰρ ἦν τὰ προκεκριμένα <ἔθνεα> τὸ ἀρχαῖον, τὸ μὲν Πελασγικόν, τὸ δὲ Ἑλληνικὸν ἔθνος.

Croesus discovered that the Spartans and the Athenians were the most powerful peoples of Greece, the former Doric and the latter Ionic. “The Spartans and Athenians were of old the pre-eminent nations, the one Pelasgian, the other Hellenic. The former never migrated, but the latter moved a good deal.” This reading involves (1) Porson’s substitution of ἔθνεα for ἔοντα and (2) the use of the medieval punctuation.³

Herodotus gets off to a bad start by insisting on an antithesis which is dubious at best and which even he will shortly confound. The Spartans were Doric, Hellenic, and migratory. The Athenians were Ionian, Pelasgian, and stationary. The repeated τὸ μὲν refers first to the Athenians, then to the Athenians who were once Pelasgians.

Despite some good arguments in favor of this interpretation of τὸ μὲν, the best argument remains to be made. Lines 23–27 of Hude’s Oxford text show a carefully contrived chiasmic structure which immediately explains the seeming difficulties of reference beginning with τὸ μὲν Πελασγικόν.

- A: Lacedaemonians
- B: Athenians
- A: Doric
- B: Ionic
- B: Pelasgian
- A: Hellenic
- B: Stationary
- A: Migratory

Chapters 56–69 constitute a so-called digression embedded within the logos of Croesus. Having mentioned the result of Croesus’ inquiries, that is, the conclusion of the story, Herodotus goes backward to sketch the historical events which will justify his statement that, in Croesus’ time, the Spartans and Athenians were the most powerful

² R. A. McNeal, “Herodotus 1.56: A Trio of Textual Notes,” *American Journal of Philology* 102 (1981), pp. 359–61, where see relevant bibliography.

³ J. W. Blakesley, *Herodotus* (London 1854), p. 37, makes a simple transposition: τὰ προκεκριμένα τὸ ἀρχαῖον, ἔοντα κτλ.

of the Greek peoples. Retrospective narrative, as van Groningen has called it,⁴ begins with the end point and then works forward. By its very nature the narrative assumes a circular form, beginning where it ends. Thus in chapter 69 Croesus, having learned why the Spartans because of their past were more powerful than the Athenians, concludes an alliance with them. The narrative then resumes the statement of events in their proper temporal sequence.

But chapters 56–58 play a special part in this narrative. A. G. Laird deserves credit for having seen this point over fifty years ago.⁵ Chapters 59–64 give us a tale of the establishment of Peisistratos' tyranny at Athens, and 65–68 the early history of Sparta. Chapters 56–58 form an introduction to this larger digression. Having established an initial antithesis in 56. 1–2, Herodotus expands this antithesis twice, once in 56. 3–58 and again in 59–68. The following pattern emerges:

- A: Primitive Dorian movements: 56. 3
- B: Primitive times in Athens: 57–58
- B: Peisistratos' tyranny: 59–64
- A: Early Sparta: 65–68

The early wanderings of the Hellenes who were to become Spartans follow directly on the statement that the Dorians were migratory. Then, abruptly shifting to the second term of his antithesis, Herodotus speculates on the original language of the Pelasgians, some of whom would become Athenians: ἤντινα δὲ γλώσσαν κτλ. All of chapters 57 and 58 refers to the Pelasgians and their relationship with the early Athenians. There is no question of original Hellenes becoming Pelasgian, or of the Dorians as a whole emerging from some barbaric Pelasgian ancestry.

2. *Creston / Croton*

The major difficulty with the start of chapter 57 is the vexed question of Πελασγῶν τῶν ὑπὲρ Τυρσηνῶν Κρηστώννα πόλιν οἰκούντων. Dissatisfaction with the state of the text began at least as early as the sixteenth century, and it is not hard to see why. Herodotus himself always uses Τυρσηνοί to refer to Etruscans in Italy. If we read Κρότωνα, or Κροτώννα, that is Cortona in Etruria, then his Pelasgians are to be thought of as having migrated in the past to Italy, where they

⁴ B. A. van Groningen, *La Composition Littéraire Archaique Grecque* (Amsterdam 1958), esp. pp. 57–58.

⁵ A. G. Laird, "Herodotus on the Pelasgians in Attica," *American Journal of Philology* 54 (1933), pp. 97–119.

maintained their non-Greek language down to the fifth century.⁶ Thus Herodotus' use of "Tyrsenians" can be made consistent.

But the argument from internal consistency cuts two ways. Though there is no mention of a town of Creston in Thrace which must be wholly independent of Herodotus, the historian himself does elsewhere mention a town of Creston in Thrace (V. 3) and says that Xerxes' army twice passed through Thracian Crestonia, which lay east of Mygdonia and the river Echeidorus (VII. 124; VIII. 116). These statements at least are quite compatible with a Thracian Creston in chapter 57. And of course Thucydides, who knew the north Aegean well, says specifically (IV. 109) that the Crestonians living in Thrace were Pelasgian and Tyrrhenian.

The major reason why editors want to change the text of Herodotus is to bring it into conformity with that of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (I. 28 and 29).⁷ Dionysius, in discussing the origins of the Etruscans, quotes Hellanicus, who, in his *Phoronis*, had equated the Pelasgians and Etruscans (fr. 4). Having been expelled from Greece, the Pelasgians captured the city of Croton, from which they began their settlement of the country now called Tyrrhenia. Presumably Herodotus, though he prefers to derive the Etruscans from Lydia (I. 94), had some knowledge of Hellanicus' view that the Pelasgians once lived in Thessaly and migrated to Italy. Hence the text of Herodotus must have read "Croton" and "Crotoniatai."

This line of argument is perverse. Herodotus nowhere else mentions the town of Croton in Etruria and nowhere else says anything about Pelasgians migrating to Etruria. Indeed, the Lydians under Tyrsenus came "to the Umbrians." If Herodotus is going to be made a partner with Hellanicus in the equation of Pelasgians and Etruscans, some rather dubious assumptions have to be made about the relationship of their texts in antiquity. To say that the reading of Herodotus ". . . deriva evidentemente da una correzione forse ancora ignorata o giustamente repudiata da Dionigi, sotto l'influenza del luogo di Thucydide IV, 109 . . ." ⁸ is to resort to purely futile speculation. We simply have no knowledge of the history of either

⁶ H. Stephanus (ed.), *Herodoti Historiarum Libri IX*² (Paris 1592), p. 23. "Crotona" and "Crotoniatai" appear only in the marginal commentary to the Latin translation which accompanies the Greek text.

⁷ Lionel Pearson, *Early Ionian Historians* (Oxford 1959), p. 158; F. de Ruyt, "La citation d'Hérodote, I, 57 par Denys d'Halicarnasse, I, 29, au sujet de Crotona pélasgique et des Étrusques," *L'Antiquité Classique* 7 (1958), pp. 281-90; V. Costanzi, "Cortona non Crestona presso Erodoto I,57," *Athenaeum* N.S. 6 (1928), pp. 205-14. Both articles have full bibliography.

⁸ Costanzi, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-06.

text before the Middle Ages (papyrus fragments do not affect the argument here), and it makes no sense to say that a manuscript of the one author was used at some time in antiquity to "correct" and thereby falsify a manuscript of the other author. The only reasonable course is to leave Herodotus' "Creston" alone unless there is some legitimate palaeographical reason for making a change.

Mere internal consistency will not suffice as a reason since, as I have already indicated, Herodotus will be inconsistent with some other part of his text in either case. Indeed, his carelessness in matters of consistency is so notorious that few readers will be troubled by one more nod.

There is of course no manuscript evidence for anything but "Creston." MS b does read Κροητῶνα. Though perhaps a falsification of "Croton," this is just as likely a mistake for "Creston." Thus there is no help here.

Changing the text to make it refer to Italy is the usual course; but some historians, who accept Thrace, still want to introduce unnecessary emendations. Reiske set the fashion for this alternative by reading ὑπὲρ Γυρτηνῶν, a city in Macedonia.⁹

What this textual crux illustrates very well is one of the more dubious legacies of the Lachmannian school of editing—the tendency, one might almost say the psychological need—to force a text into submission at all costs. Not content to leave a problem unresolved, the radical critic rushes to bend the text into compliance with predetermined views. Readers who are willing in this case at least to tolerate a measure of ambiguity are in the minority.¹⁰

3. Fifth-century Pelasgians

Whatever position one takes on the problem of Creston, this textual crux has no real bearing on the logic of the chapter. Herodotus sets

⁹ Reiske, *loc. cit.* The following are desperately and needlessly elaborate attempts to save the manuscripts' "Creston": H. Riedel, "Ad Locum Herodoti I.57," *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Paedagogik* 4 (1836), p. 594, who omits ὑπὲρ; E. Schwartz, *Quaestiones Herodoteae* (Rostock 1890), p. 7, who reads ὑπὲρ (Μυγδονίης χώρας); W. Christ, "Griechische Nachrichten über Italien," *Sitz. d. phil. und hist. Klasse bay. Akad. der Wissens. zu München* (1905), pp. 92–95, who omits ὑπὲρ Τυρσηνῶν as a gloss; Erik Wikén, "Τυρσηνοί bei Herodot 1.57," *Hermes* 73 (1938), pp. 129–32, who understands Τυρσηνοί as the inhabitants of Mygdonian Τίρσαι, but does not change the text's Τυρσηνῶν.

¹⁰ A. della Seta, "Erodoto ed Ellanico sull' origine degli Etrusci," *Rendiconti dell' Accademia dei Lincei* 28 (1919), pp. 173–82, gives a number of complex arguments for the retention of the manuscript reading. Also in favor of retention is J. Bérard, "La question des origines étrusques," *Revue des Études Anciennes* 51 (1949), p. 218.

out to make a linguistic judgment on the basis of *two* groups of fifth-century Pelasgians: (1) τῶν . . . Κρηστώννα . . . οἰκούντων: those of Creston, who once were neighbors of the present Dorians when the Dorians still inhabited Thessaliotis (here Herodotus gives the Dorians a name which, by his own admission, they did not have until they had entered the Peloponnesus!); and (2) τῶν Πλακίην τε καὶ Σκυλάκην . . . οἰκησάντων:¹¹ the settlers of Plakie and Skylake on the Hellespont, who were once dwellers with the Athenians and (with) other communities which, though once Pelasgian, changed their name.

A serious grammatical problem is involved with ὄσα ἄλλα Πελασγικὰ . . . μετέβαλε. All modern editors take the first three words as the equivalent of ἄλλων πολισμάτων and make the clause a *third* group of fifth-century Pelasgians. Supposedly Herodotus is also including in his linguistic judgment some other groups of Pelasgian speakers whose position he does not specify. Thus ὄσα ἄλλα . . . πολισμάτα is effectively a third genitive dependent on τοῖσι νῦν ἔτι ἐούσι.

But this reading is wrong. Herodotus is saying that, just as some Pelasgians moved away from the Athenians, who then changed their name, so other Pelasgians lived elsewhere in the southern Aegean in the early days and retreated, allowing their former communities to take on a new character and new names. The Peloponnesus, for example, was once full of Pelasgians. The Arcadians too were once Pelasgian, but changed their name and language (I. 146). Herodotus seems to be consistent in his view that ancient Pelasgia, or what would become the later Greece, had many communities which, like Athens, were to see far-reaching ethnic changes with the appearance of the Hellenes.

The phrase ὄσα ἄλλα . . . πολισμάτα is the equivalent of ἄλλοις πολισμάσι ὄσα and ought to be connected closely with Ἰαθηναίοισι.

4. *The Mechanism of Cultural Change*

Herodotus' second group of Pelasgians, the settlers of Plakie and Skylake, is the source of much trouble. What relationship had these Pelasgians with the Athenians, with whom they once dwelt?

This second group, originally resident in the south Aegean, was pushed aside by the arriving Hellenes; and some of them went to the north Aegean, where Herodotus found their descendants in his

¹¹ The MSS read τῆν Πλακίην. P. Wesseling, *Herodoti Halicarnassei Historiarum Libri IX* (Lugdunum Batavorum 1763), p. 26, prefers <τῶν> τῆν Π. P. P. Dobree, *Adversaria*, ed. by G. Wagner, (Berlin 1874), pp. 1-2, suggests τῶν Π. The latter is the modern consensus.

own time. The Pelasgians of Plakie and Skylake had come *from* Athens, where they had resided for some unspecified time.¹² The inhabitants of Athens before this departure were autochthonous, that is, Pelasgian and non-Greek. A body of them went off to the north Aegean, where they and their descendants maintained their aboriginal character and language in foreign surroundings right down to the fifth century. But the inhabitants of Athens, presumably because of the contact which they had with the Hellenes who came to live with them, adopted a Greek character. This change involved language of course, but it must have involved much else. Unfortunately Herodotus does not specify what else the change consisted in.

Over against this idea must be set the words οἱ σύνοικοι ἐγένοντο Ἀθηναίοισι. This clause is totally at variance with the notion of a unified body of autochthonous Pelasgian Athenians. Indeed, Herodotus seems to be thinking of two separate groups of people. The Pelasgians are almost resident aliens. Precisely the same confused interpretation appears in II. 51. 2, where the Pelasgians “dwell with” the Athenians, just as the latter are passing into the Hellenic body: Ἀθηναίοισι γὰρ ἤδη τηνικαῦτα ἐς Ἑλληνας τελέουσι Πελασγοὶ σύνοικοι ἐγένοντο ἐν τῇ χώρῃ, ὅθεν περ καὶ Ἑλληνες ἤρξαντο νομισθῆναι.

Herodotus is inconsistent about the Pelasgian background of the Athenians. He is probably conflating different traditions without reconciling them, something which he does often enough elsewhere. The notion of Pelasgians as a distinctly separate group of resident aliens appears again in greater detail at VI. 137, where there is no question of a unified Athenian population, some part of which departed from the main body for a new home in the northern Aegean. In Book VI Herodotus clearly thinks that the Pelasgians were a separate population of guest workers, however autochthonous, and were then expelled because of their rapacious behavior. That I. 57 and VI. 137 should give different versions of the Athenians' Pelasgian past is no surprise. What is surprising is the confusion which runs through the relatively short account in chapter 57: within the space of four lines appear two separate definitions of “Pelasgian.”

5. *The Meaning of τὸ Ἑλληνικόν*

The next major problem is the subject of the participle ἀποσχισθέν. This participle must refer to τὸ Ἑλληνικόν, since no other subject is introduced after the start of the chapter. But what is meant by τὸ Ἑλληνικόν? Since at least the time of Valla's Latin translation of 1474,

¹² Laird, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

the phrase has been universally understood to mean “the Greek nation,” or “the Greeks.” But it really means “the Greek part,” or “element.” And yet “the Greek part” of what? Surely Herodotus means the Greek-speaking Athenians. The population consisted of an aboriginal part which spoke a Pelasgian language and an intrusive Greek-speaking part. With the departure of at least some of the Pelasgians, the population as a whole came to speak and to be Greek. Thus a Pelasgian town became Hellene. Herodotus refers to the Athenians in their new role as Hellenes. After the departure of the Pelasgians, the Athenians were weak, but later grew in numbers and power. Laird is right to say that we do not have here a digression on the growth of the Hellenic people generally, but we are dealing with an increase in the power of the Athenians prior to the time of internal strife and the foundation of the tyranny.¹³ Thus chapter 58 is concerned with the Athenian half of the introductory antithesis, not with the Spartan half. There is no question here of a discussion of the Dorians or of *their* supposed origin from a Pelasgian people.

Indeed, Herodotus nowhere derives the true (that is, original) Hellenes from a barbarian background. They are remarkably pure in their origins. Except for the Cynurians (VIII. 73), the Dorians do not attach to themselves any barbarian peoples.

That the phrase τὸ Ἑλληνικόν is partitive, that it can include more or fewer Greeks as the context demands, is evident from the difficult and commonly misinterpreted sentence in I. 60. 3: ἐπεὶ γε ἀπεκρίθη ἐκ παλαιτέρου τοῦ βαρβάρου ἔθνος τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἔδν καὶ δεξιώτερον καὶ εὐθήης ἡλιθίου ἀπηλλαγμένον μάλλον (“they contrived a device by far the silliest that I can discover since the time when, in the distant past, τὸ Ἑλληνικόν was distinguished from the barbarian nation by being [ἔδν] more clever and more free from idle folly”). The correct interpretation in this sentence is not “the Greek nation” as a whole, but “the Greek part” of the Athenians. The Athenians’ separation from the Pelasgians (βαρβάρου ἔθνος) set them on the road to greater cleverness. One can expect folly from barbarians, but not from Athenians once they transcended their barbarian origins.¹⁴

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁴ I follow the reading of MS b and of Aldus, which is the modern consensus. The Florentine MS A, together with P and c, gives τὸ βάρβαρον ἔθνος τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ, which must be wrong. Whatever credit Herodotus gives the barbarians, he does not believe that they are superior in intelligence to the Greeks. In this regard Paul Shorey, “A Note on Herodotus I.60,” *Classical Philology* 15 (1920), pp. 88–91, rightly refutes Wilamowitz. But Shorey’s interpretation of the final clause of the sentence (αἱ καὶ τότε γε οὗτοι ἐν Ἀθηναίοις τοῖσι πρώτοις λεγομένοις εἶναι Ἑλλήνων σοφίην μηχανῶνται τοιάδε) is strangely labored. Believing, as many do, that ἐπεὶ γε is causal, he makes αἱ

6. *A Case for Editorial Conservatism*

If the issue of τὸ Ἑλληνικόν is satisfactorily resolved, there remains one last major textual problem. I give below the readings of the two important manuscripts A and b, just as the relevant text appears. The Roman family of manuscripts, chiefly D and R, omits this part of the *Histories*.

- A. αὐξήται ἐς πλῆθος τῶν ἐθνέων πολλῶν μάλιστα προσκεχωρηκότων αὐτῷ καὶ ἄλλων ἐθνέων βαρβάρων συχνῶν
- b. αὐξήται ἐς πλῆθος τῶν ἐθνέων πολλῶν μάλιστα προσκεχωρηκότων αὐτῷ· καὶ ἄλλων ἐθνέων βαρβάρων συχνῶν

Aldus has the same text as b, but replaces the first two upper, or full, stops with commas. This text continued to be printed until Gronovius' edition of 1715, when the comma after πλῆθος was placed, for no reason that I can discover in Gronovius' notes, after πολλῶν.¹⁵

Modern attempts to improve the text fall into three main categories: (1) Matthiae's simple deletion of τῶν ἐθνέων πολλῶν as a gloss of ἐθνέων βαρβάρων συχνῶν; (2) Reiske's ἐς πλῆθος ἐθνέων πολλὸν μάλιστα, προσκεχωρηκότων κτλ.; and (3) Sauppe's ἐς πλῆθος ἐθνέων πολλῶν, <Πελασγῶν> μάλ. προσ. κτλ., a course adopted by Stein and Hude. Legrand inserts Πελασγῶν before πολλῶν.¹⁶

Sauppe's option, which is the modern consensus, is the most violent. The fact that it has no manuscript support is perhaps the best argument against it. But the redefined subject of διαχρᾶται, ἀποσχισθῆν, αὐξήται provides further ground for rejecting Πελασγῶν. Is Hero-

καὶ . . . τοιάδε a second and even stronger confirmation of the judgment implied in εὐθρόστατον. The clause αὐ καὶ . . . τοιάδε is supposed to mean "inasmuch as." This clause does mark even stronger surprise or indignation on the part of Herodotus. But *both* clauses are temporal. Reiske at least understood this point, though he unnecessarily wanted to emend ἐπέ γε to ἐπέτε (loc. cit.). How absurd, says Herodotus, if even then [at a time when the Greek element had long been separated], the Peisistratidai could concoct such a scheme in the hope of deceiving the Athenians, said to be foremost in wisdom among the Greeks.

¹⁵ Aldus Manutius (ed.), *Herodotou Logoi Ennea* (Venice 1502); J. Gronovius (ed.), *Herodoti Halicarnassei Historiarum Libri IX* (Lugdunum Batavorum 1715). The notes are more readily accessible in Wesseling, *op. cit.*, p. 62 (Notae Gronovii).

¹⁶ Reiske, *loc. cit.*; Aug. Matthiae & Henr. Apetzius (eds.), *Herodoti Historiarum Libri IX* (Lipsiae 1825–26), Vol. II, p. 286; H. Stein (ed.), *Herodotos*⁵, Vol. I (Berlin 1901 [1869]); C. Hude (ed.), *Herodoti Historia*³, Vol. I (Oxford 1927); Ph.-E. Legrand (ed.), *Hérodote, Histoires*, Vol. I, Cléo (Paris 1932). The reading which Stein first attributes to H. Sauppe is, I presume, correct. But herein lies a problem. Despite long effort, I could not verify this attribution in those of Sauppe's works available to me. Given the mass of his writings and their obscure locations, this failure is not surprising. But Stein surely knew whereof he spoke.

dotus telling us that, *after* the initial departure from Athens of the Pelasgians, the Athenians grew powerful because of the adhesion of more Pelasgian tribes? He may imply such an idea because the terms "Pelasgian" and "barbarian" have a habit of being synonymous for him. But he nowhere states specifically that the Athenians themselves later gained Pelasgian adherents after passing into the ranks of the Hellenes.¹⁷ He does say that the Ionians as a whole (I. 146) were a notoriously motley group who had all sorts of diverse origins, but the Hellenized Pelasgians who constituted the population of Athens grew to power precisely in proportion as they gave up their Pelasgian-barbarian character and language. The point which Herodotus seems to want to make is that after the Pelasgians' departure, still other barbarians helped the Athenian people to grow. Who were they? He does not say. But Sauppe's Πελασγῶν is misleading and unnecessary.

The most conservative editorial treatment of this passage (and the best way to deal with it) would do no more than enclose the words τῶν through μάλιστα in daggers to alert the reader to a possible crux. The corruption, if corruption there really is, lies here.¹⁸

But can we do any better? I suggest the following: ἐς πλῆθος τὸ <νῦν ἔτι> πολλόν, μάλιστα κτλ. As a variant of Reiske's solution, this conjecture tries to remove the dubious τῶν ἐθνέων and to change the punctuation to show just how Herodotus understood μάλιστα.

If one keeps the manuscript reading of A and b, then the words τῶν ἐθνέων, the worst problem, must be either dependent on πλῆθος or they must be the first part of a compound subject in a genitive absolute. In either case ἐθνέων has to be explained. What are these many mysterious tribes which have attached themselves to the Hellene-Athenians? Herodotus nowhere mentions them, and a search through the tangle of Athenian mythology will not reveal them. Of course precisely the same argument can be applied against ἄλλων ἐθνέων βαρβάρων. These tribes too must remain a mystery, whatever we do with the preceding words. Even Sauppe's conjecture will not solve this latter problem.

¹⁷ Laird, *op. cit.*, *passim*, is correct to dismiss the theory of Myres and Meyer that there was a late Pelasgian migration *into* Attica, after the departure of some of the autochthonous inhabitants. Herodotus at least nowhere says that Pelasgians *came* to Attica. The theory of Myres can be traced at least as far back as H. Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. 592.

¹⁸ I include the adverb only because E. Powell, *Herodotus* (Oxford 1949), Vol. II, p. 688, wants to omit it. I find nothing offensive in its presence.

7. Conclusion

This journey through the wastes of textual criticism may bore the historian, but it is necessary to go back to basics if we are to have any hope of understanding this digression. I have tried to assemble the evidence, and in particular to see how the text has been interpreted over the centuries. Apart from playing the antiquarian, I have set out the possible avenues which alternative explanations might take.

Implicit in this handling of the evidence is a very conservative editorial method: the text should be left alone, even at the expense of ambiguity, unless there are good *palaeographical* reasons for making changes.

What has emerged from an analysis of the textual problems and of Herodotus' own logic are some ethnographical theories which may not suit our own modern taste. Herodotus gets himself into verbal difficulties because on the one hand he wants to establish an antithesis between Spartans and Athenians and carry it into the distant past, and because on the other hand he has to square this contrast with the respective traditions of these two peoples. Autochthonous Pelasgian Athenians must somehow become Greek. They do so by adopting the new language of the intrusive Hellenes. As for the Hellenes themselves, they were always, since the time of their divine and heroic begetters, a recognizable body of people. As flawed as these ideas may be, we should at least accord Herodotus the credit which he deserves for a truly intelligent and honest inquiry, in the best Ionian tradition, into what clearly was for him a very difficult problem. The wonder is that he managed as well as he did.

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