

CRITICAL ROUND-UP

Herodotus and the Textual Tradition*

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ABSTRACT: A critical survey of the history of Herodotus' text and of its main editions, from the *Aldina* (1502) to Wilson (2015).

KEYWORDS: text history, manuscripts, papyri, editions, editorial technique, conjectures, Nigel G. Wilson.

SOME NOTES ON THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE TEXT

We do not know exactly how Herodotus published his work. It is possible that, as some ancient sources suggest, he gave public lectures of parts of it, or even of the whole.¹ In any case, the *Histories*, as we read them today, descends from a text that was written down by or for the author (as the use of the verb 'to write', γράφειν, in some passages shows) and was conceived for an audience virtually unlimited both in space (that is Panhellenic, see for example the self-definition as 'Halicarnassian' in the proem, or the reference to people both in the East and in the West at 4.99) and in time (in some passages Herodotus 'historicizes himself', having in mind a future reader).²

It may be that Herodotus dictated his text to one or more secretaries, which could help explain some 'corrections in stride', as Richmond Lattimore once called them, that find parallels in other texts we know for certain were dictated (compare for instance Hdt. 7.239 to ch. 120–2 of Marco Polo's *Devisement dou monde*).³ Be this as it may, Herodotus' text contains some passages that can, on the contrary, be interpreted as later additions inserted by the author into a previous draft.⁴ The famous variant reading 'Thurian' instead of 'Halicarnassian' in the proem, attested in a passage of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* suspected by some to be spurious (3.9, 1409a27), could point to a 'second edition' — if either the former or the latter is not, on the contrary, a correction made by an inappropriately zealous grammarian.⁵

We know for a fact that Herodotus' text drew the attention of ancient grammarians. More than one commentary was devoted to it after Aristarchus', and it was probably in Alexandria that the *Histories* were divided into nine books.⁶

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¹ See, among others, Flory 1980 and Johnson 1994.

² See esp. Rösler 1991.

³ Lattimore 1958, Canfora and Corcella 1992: 447–8; on 7.239, see Corcella 1985.

⁴ For Herodotus' possible second thoughts, see esp. Stein 1869–71: 1.xlii–iii; more will be said below.

⁵ See Dillery 1992 and Wilson 2015b: 1–2; for a more original view, see Bravo 2012b: 238–9.

⁶ For ancient commentaries, see Montana and Esposito 2019; for the book division, see Corcella 2013: 87–114.

Benedetto Bravo has recently raised the suspicion that in the first century AD a not very clever scholar (in fact little more than a dabbler) completely revised the text by interpolating several passages: in his opinion, both the style and the content of these additions revealed their nature. The idea has not gained wide acceptance, but needs to be addressed seriously.⁷

In any case, the text of Herodotus is likely to have been revised by ancient grammarians, at least at the level of its linguistic *facies*. The matter is complicated by the fact that we do not know exactly what Herodotus' idiolect sounded like, and according to which orthographic rules, if any, it was fixed in writing.⁸ The manuscript tradition — including papyri — offers a picture that is not fully consistent. Forms that can be considered equally legitimate in Ionian (for example, the plural forms of accusative πόλις and πόλιας) are variously attested, and may alternate in the same manuscript. More problematic is the presence of forms that, although not impossible, are ungrammatical: this is the case of the aorist infinitives of the type βάλειν ('to throw', with double *epsilon*), an analogical form that had been adopted in the written texts of Homer, probably in order to preserve the prosody of different original forms. Even non-Ionic forms like τοῖσδε, at first glance mere trivializations of the Ionic τοισίδε due to copyists, can be read in Homer and so we cannot exclude the chance that Herodotus too employed them. It is possible, in principle, that Herodotus may have used a literary dialect, influenced by current Homeric texts; moreover, his own grammatical habits and orthography could have been inconsistent (and if he employed different secretaries a certain degree of variability in the original text would be even more likely). On the other hand, it is possible that forms inspired by Homer or wrongly supposed to be more Ionic were introduced by grammarians. It is thus not easy to decide which form can be accepted or, in the case of variant readings, which one should be preferred in any given instance.⁹

Unfortunately, we possess only scant traces of the activity of the grammarians who worked on Herodotus' text. No proper corpus of scholia is preserved that could confidently be considered derived from ancient commentaries. Some rather sporadic lexicographic scholia may in fact contain ancient materials.¹⁰ A scholion in one of the most ancient manuscripts, reporting a different version of an oracle derived from the little known author Theseus, and two scholia added to another manuscript by a hand of the twelfth or thirteenth century, where a particular genealogy of Achaemenes and a fragment of the lost historian Dionysius of Miletus are found, are probably due to Byzantine erudition.¹¹ As for the *lexeis* (elementary explanations of some words present, in two recensions, in a number of manuscripts), though they too might go back to ancient traditions, they appear

⁷ See esp. Bravo 2012a, 2012b and 2018: 15–25 (with references to previous contributions).

⁸ Legrand 1932: 194–223 offers a still useful exposition of the matter.

⁹ For an excellent assessment of all these much-debated issues, see Tribulato 2022. The same problems are faced by the editors of the *Corpus Hippocraticum*: see, among others, Kühlewein 1894: lxxv–cxxviii and Jouanna 2002: 133–55.

¹⁰ See Cantore 2013: 69–113.

¹¹ See Corcella 1996 and 2003: 261–8.

to have been compiled in their current forms between the Late Antique and the Middle Byzantine age.¹² It is noteworthy, however, that Herodotus' linguistic usages were taken into consideration by the authors of Atticistic lexica.¹³

The papyri of Herodotus show that different linguistic variants were already circulating in antiquity (a result in some measure confirmed by the indirect tradition and by the language of those authors who artificially revived Ionic in the imperial age, such as Lucian or Arrian).¹⁴ More substantially, these papyri offer on the one hand a number of readings that appear to be better than those attested in the medieval tradition, nor can we discern in them true prefigurations of the two main medieval families. On the other hand, all medieval manuscripts share a number of common mistakes, while some other mistakes characterizing each family clearly depend on misreadings of capital letters. This points to the origin of our medieval tradition being a late ancient *vulgata* (or 'palaeotype', as some say), from which two different lines of descent were derived.¹⁵ In the Byzantine age, Herodotus was perhaps not as popular as authors whose Attic or Atticistic language could be more easily imitated, but was actively read in schools and within some circles, which helps to explain the existence of these two transliterations and the presence of different recensions of the text, as well as of extensive contamination.¹⁶

In what follows, I shall first provide a general picture of the manuscript tradition according to the most recent studies and then a summary historical account of the investigation of this tradition, in order to illustrate the value of the different editions, from the *princeps* to the newest ones.

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE MEDIEVAL TRADITION

As I have already mentioned, the manuscripts of Herodotus can be grouped into two main families, usually defined as *stirps Florentina* (a) and *stirps Romana* (d). The most ancient representative of the *stirps Florentina* is MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, plut. 70.3 (A), from the early tenth century (but its first part, up to 6.23.4, has been suspected to be the result of a restoration made in the Palaeologan age).¹⁷ MS Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, gr. 83 (B), from the second half of the tenth century, carries an almost identical text, but it cannot be positively proven that it is a copy of A. On the contrary, it seems to be a further copy of

¹² See Montana 2015.

¹³ See Tribulato 2016 (with Corcella 2018: 206).

¹⁴ After Paap 1948, the most relevant studies on Herodotus' papyri are Alberti 1983 and West 2011; for a recent, balanced view, see Reinard 2021 (with further literature). On texts written in Ionic in the Hellenistic and imperial age, see Cassio 1996. On the indirect tradition, see the literature quoted in Riemann 1967 and Ehrhardt 1988 (the more recent Priestley 2014, Priestley and Zali 2016, and Kirkland 2022 are focused on reception in a wider sense).

¹⁵ See esp. Alberti 1982, 1983 and 1998. The main points had already been clearly defined in Pasquali 1952: 306–18, while Hemmerdinger 1981 is essential reading (in spite of some 'muddle': Reeve 1985: 287); a brief but well-balanced sketch can be found in Fowler 2021.

¹⁶ See e.g. Luzzatto 2000 on Tzetzes' scholia, and Cantore 2002 on Herodotus' quotations in Eustathius; along with Thucydides, Herodotus is reported in the so-called *Anecdoton Hierosolymitanum*, a list of authors read in the rhetorical schools of the Komnenian age (Wendland 1901: xvi). For a recent general survey, see Jeffreys 2019.

¹⁷ The thesis was advanced in Luzzatto 2000, on which see Cantore 2012.

the same uncial model from which A descends.¹⁸ As for MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Conventi soppressi 207 (C), from the early eleventh century, it might descend from A, but has a number of disjunctive errors against it, and also probably authentic readings, which must be explained by postulating contact with an otherwise lost branch of the tradition. Alternatively, it might descend from another copy of the model of A.¹⁹ Close to C, at least from 2.135 on, is MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, plut. 70.6 (T), written in 1318, which offers several interesting readings probably deriving from contamination or conjecture. The first part of the text, up to 2.134, is on the contrary founded on the *stirps Romana*, but does not have some of the lacunae typical of this family, so that we have to suppose they had been filled in the model. MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, grec 1633 (P), of the fourteenth century, shows affinities with CT, but appears to have been widely contaminated with the other branch of the tradition, the *stirps Romana*.²⁰

The *stirps Romana*, for its part, is characterized by some common innovations, among which the most apparent is the absence of some chapters in the first book, due to the intervention of a redactor who abridged and bowdlerized the text. Its most ancient representative is MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 2369 (D), from the second half of the tenth century. The other manuscripts of this family are more recent and almost all appear to descend from a lost common ancestor (usually called ‘β’, renamed ‘r’ by Wilson) which, as Leo Weber saw, carried variant readings:²¹ it was therefore a contaminated manuscript, or, in other words, the result of the activity of Byzantine scholars who collected *variae lectiones* (in part from the *stirps Florentina*) and tried to emend the text. The main surviving descendants of this lost ancestor are dated to between the fourteenth and the fifteenth century: MSS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, A 163 sup. (Z); Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. gr. 215 (E), Urb. gr. 88 (U, from 3.27 on), Vat. gr. 122 (X, apart from some sections), Vat. gr. 123 (R); Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, hist. gr. 85 (V) — to which the first part of T, as already noted, should be added.²² As we shall see, the contaminated nature of β gave rise to a wide debate as to whether it is a descendant of D or derived from a parallel line. Some years ago, Raffaella Cantore showed that the second hypothesis is more likely to be true and reconstructed a persuasive

¹⁸ See Corcella 2003: 254–6.

¹⁹ See esp. Alberti 1960: 342–5, 1998: 5–6 and 2007: 115–6, as well as Galligani 2001. C, however, deserves further study (and some attention should be reserved for the fragment of an eleventh-century manuscript published in Manfredini 1975, which shows affinities with C).

²⁰ For T and P, see esp. Alberti 1959 and 1999; for the history of T, see Bianconi 2022.

²¹ Weber 1911.

²² MS Cambridge, Emmanuel College, 30 (S), often used by editors, appears to be a copy of V, but contains several conjectures (cf. Hemmerdinger 1981: 135–42 and Wilson 2015b: xxiii–iv); other copies of V are MSS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, I 23 sup. and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. F.4.3. For U (whose first part, up to 3.26, descends from T or from a manuscript very similar to T) and X (in which the lacunae in the first book were filled by incorporating two quires containing a text close to that of T), see De Gregorio 2002; MS Madrid, Biblioteca nacional de España, 4568 (N 31) (N) is a copy of the latter. MS Jerusalem, Patriarchikê bibliothékê, Panaghiou Taphou 79 (J) contains only 1.192–2.65 and 9.1–29.

stemma of this subfamily.²³ Somewhat apart from the other witnesses of the *stirps Romana* stands MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. gr. 176 (Y), from the fifteenth century: it is a *recentior* and bears clear traces of contamination and conjectural intervention, but at least in some parts it might preserve a more genuine memory of the original text of the *stirps Romana*.²⁴

The remaining manuscripts of Herodotus are, generally speaking, *descripti* (that is, copies of surviving manuscripts) and/or the result of further contamination between the two main branches.²⁵ As I have already said, the *stirps Florentina* and the *stirps Romana* independently descend from an ancient *vulgata*; when they diverge, editors have to rely on their own judgement. In principle, A and D are the purest representatives of the two branches. However, each of them of course has its own mistakes, which can only partially be corrected by turning to the other manuscripts. Within the *stirps Florentina*, the contribution of B is limited, inasmuch as its text is very similar to that of A, while C, and more rarely T, offer some good readings. As for the *stirps Romana*, apart from a small number of good contributions from Y, readings of β that are not coincident with those of D might in principle represent the original text of the family, obliterated in D, but might also be conjectures or, when they coincide with those of A, result from contamination with the *stirps Florentina*. Thus it may be useful to give notice of all the concordances between A and β in the apparatus, but their consensus does not necessarily represent the original text, which could be preserved only in D.

In sum, the choice of the readings to be accepted into the text often depends on the personal judgement of an editor, who is called upon to establish the value of the wording of one *stirps* against the other — or simply of A against D. But apart from A and D, whose readings must always be mentioned and taken into account, the amount of information on the readings of the other manuscripts of the two *stirpes* to be given in the apparatus also remains a matter of choice on the part of the editor. If we add — as we have already seen — that the manuscript tradition abounds in variant readings of a more or less purely orthographic nature that may represent forms of some interest from the point of view of the dialect (or idiolect) used by Herodotus, the question of what is really worthy of appearing in the critical apparatus admits no easy answer. This has led to very different responses from editors.

FROM ALDUS TO WILSON

As is often the case, Herodotus' *editio princeps*, published by Aldus in 1502, was based on recent, contaminated manuscripts that had several particular copy errors.²⁶ In his 1570 and 1592 edition, Henri Estienne (or Henricus Stephanus,

²³ Cantore 2013.

²⁴ After Colonna 1945: 70–81 and Alberti 1960: 341–2, see Cantore 2005 and 2013: 139–75.

²⁵ Many of them show affinities with T or with P; an almost complete catalogue is found in Hemmerdinger 1981: 27–45 (with discussion of their relationships throughout). For Herodotean excerpts in Byzantine collections, see Rosén 1987–1997: 1.xliv–vii and Alberti 2002: 3–7.

²⁶ For the *Aldina* (Manutius 1502), after Hemmerdinger 1981: 48–51, see Mondrain 1995 (on MS Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cent. V. App. 10 as the direct source of the edition).

in Latinized form) substantially reproduced Aldus' text, annotating some variant readings in the margins;²⁷ and Stephanus' text was in turn reprinted in the 1608 edition by Gottfried Jungermann, whose best service to Herodotus' text was that of introducing the chapter division still in use.²⁸ It took over a century before a more solid knowledge of the most authentic tradition was attained. In the meantime, the *textus receptus* gave scope to emendations by conjecture (*ope ingenii*, as philologists use to say) that, founded as they were on a text of limited authority, were bound to be useless.

To take just one example, at 9.27.4 Aldus prints ἔστι δὲ ἡμῖν ἔργον εὖ ἔχον καὶ ἐξ Ἀμαζονίδας, τὰς ἀποθήκας τὰς ἀπὸ Θερμῶδοντος ποταμοῦ ἐσβαλούσας κοτὲ ἐς γῆν τὴν Ἀττικὴν,²⁹ where the general meaning is clear, but the words τὰς ἀποθήκας ('the store-houses', or 'the stores'), inserted as they are within the clause 'the Amazons coming from the river Thermodon', are hardly intelligible. In fact, they are missing in the main manuscripts and only appear in some recentiores (for example, in MS Modena, Biblioteca Estense universitaria, a.O.4.2). Stephanus printed the same text, but annotated in the margin the variant reading ἐξ Ἀμαζονίδας τὰς ἀπὸ Θερμῶδοντος ('the Amazon coming from Thermodon'). In 1679 Thomas Gale observed that τὰς ἀποθήκας had to be eliminated from the text, since it was missing in the tradition known to Stephanus, in Valla's translation and in a manuscript of the *stirps Romana* he had directly consulted, the MS Cambridge, Emmanuel College, 30 (S).³⁰ This sound conclusion did not prevent subsequent scholars from trying bold emendations: Jan Cornelis de Pauw proposed τὰς αὐθελόστας ('the self-willed Amazons') and Gronov τὰς ἀποθήκας ('the undesirable Amazons'), whereas John Taylor rephrased the sentence as Ἀμαζονίδας, τὰς ἀπὸ Θεμισκύρας τῆς ἐπὶ Θερμῶδοντος ποταμοῦ ('the Amazons from Themiscyra on the river Thermodon') and Friedrich Ludwig Abresch postulated a complicated hyperbaton, some ellipses and the possible insertion of an ἐξ before τὰς ἀποθήκας, in order to mean something like 'in the stores of our great deeds we have the action we performed against the Amazons'. It was Peter Wesseling who, in a 1758 dissertation and then in his 1763 edition, finally put an end to this wasteful display of ingenuity, by observing that most of the manuscripts he knew did not have the words τὰς ἀποθήκας, which could not therefore be considered ancient tradition, albeit corrupted, but were probably the result of a dittography found only in some secondary and negligible witnesses of the text.³¹

The point is that Wesseling had now achieved a clearer vision of the nature of Herodotus' tradition. In his 1715 edition Jakob Gronov had given an account of his collation of A, made when he was living in Italy between 1672 and 1674;³² so

²⁷ Stephanus 1570 and 1592, on which see Hemmerdinger 1981: 51–3.

²⁸ Jungermann 1608, who chose to divide some longer chapters (2.121, 5.92, 6.86, 7.8–10, 7.16, 8.60, 8.68, 8.140, 9.7) in subsections marked by Greek letters but for the rest did not adopt a further subdivision in paragraphs, which was introduced only in Hude 1912.

²⁹ 'There is also the successful campaign of ours against the Amazons coming from the river Thermodon, who once invaded Attica.'

³⁰ Gale 1679: 31. For S, see above, note 22.

³¹ Wesseling 1758: 132–3 and 1763: 704 (where the references for the conjectures mentioned in the text can be found).

³² Gronov 1715.

Wesseling could make use of it, along with B and another manuscript descending from A, the Cambridge, University Library, Nn. II.34. As for the *stirps Romana*, Wesseling had at his disposal collations of SV and of some Vatican and Parisian manuscripts — but not of D, which, although it had already been used in the sixteenth century by Marc-Antoine Muret, was then unknown. Thus Wesseling was able to recognize the ‘bifide’ nature of the most authentic tradition (that is, its division into two branches), which remained a fixed point for subsequent scholars.³³

However, while the *stirps Florentina* was represented by a manuscript of the tenth century, for the *stirps Romana* only witnesses of the fourteenth and fifteenth century were known. In addition, these manuscripts were clearly contaminated. These circumstances could not favour one correct definition of the value of each branch over the other, a problem that occupied scholars throughout the nineteenth century. The question of the respective authority of the two *stirpes* became a matter of bitter dispute soon after the middle of the century, when Karl Abicht was preparing a school commentary for Teubner and an edition for Tauchnitz, while Heinrich Stein was doing the same for Weidmann, with the result that scientific discussion was partly influenced by competition in the publishing market.³⁴ The highly interesting (and in its own way instructive) history of this feud, with all its polemical excesses, cannot be fully explored here.³⁵ It will suffice to remember that Abicht was an ardent supporter of the *stirps Florentina*, whereas Stein initially defended the value of the *stirps Romana*. Yet, as he deepened his knowledge of Herodotus’ manuscripts, he persuaded himself that the best tradition was preserved in the *stirps Florentina*, and that the readings of the *stirps Romana* (especially of R) could be taken into consideration when they were supported by the further authority of P.

Even though, in a sense, the feud ended in a sort of reconciliation between the two rivals,³⁶ Stein was in fact the real winner. His commentary, continuously revised for more than fifty years, remains the main means of correctly understanding Herodotus’ language and thought. Abicht’s exegesis is not of the same quality, and it is not surprising that subsequent commentaries often depend

³³ For more details on Wesseling’s edition and the subsequent editions before Abicht and Stein, see Hemmerdinger 1981: 59–68.

³⁴ Stein’s commentary was first published in five volumes between 1856 and 1862 (Stein 1856–62), but was then subjected to a process of continuous revision, which led to a series of new editions of the single volumes, up to 1908 (for a table, cf. Corcella 2018: 47 n. 42). Abicht’s commentary too, first published in five volumes between 1861 and 1866 (Abicht 1861–6), was variously reissued, but only with minor changes (for a table, cf. Corcella 2018: 50 n. 56). Stein’s *editio maior* was published in two volumes between 1869 and 1871, and was followed by a *minor* in 1884 (Stein 1869–71 and 1884); Abicht’s *editio Tauchnitziana* was issued in 1869 (Abicht 1869).

³⁵ See Hemmerdinger 1981: 68–77 and Corcella 2018, where information on the commentary that the great but somewhat isolated scholar Karl Wilhelm Krüger printed in those same years for his own publishing house will also be found (Krüger 1855–6; the first volume received a second edition in 1866, the second and the third respectively in 1881 and 1875, revised by Wilhelm Pökel).

³⁶ As Abicht recognized: see Abicht 1888.

on Stein.³⁷ Similarly, whereas Abicht's edition of the text is of little use, Stein's *editio maior* remains a masterpiece, and his *minor*, as well as the most recent issues of his commentary, offer several new textual choices and conjectures that should always be taken into due consideration, founded as they are on Stein's incomparable knowledge of the text. During those years, many other conjectures were proposed by Dutch scholars, notably by Carel Gabriel Cobet and Henricus van Herwerden.³⁸

The preference for the *stirps Florentina* cannot obscure the fact that the *stirps Romana* also preserves ancient tradition, as it was energetically vindicated by Cobet in 1882.³⁹ Thus, in the apparatus of his 1886 edition, Alfred Holder ventured to introduce a comprehensive notation: α for AB, β for RSV.⁴⁰ In 1883, Martin Wehrmann expressed his regret that the *stirps Romana*, derived as it was supposed to be from ancient tradition, did not have any representative better than R.⁴¹ In fact, however, a better witness had survived and been rediscovered some years before: D, which Karl Dilthey had consulted in 1868 in the library of the Collegio Romano at Rome. He could, however, collate only the first book, and his collation had remained unpublished; then, as a consequence of the annexation of Rome to Italy in 1870, the manuscript had disappeared. In 1911 Leo Weber gave an account of Dilthey's collation, revealing the existence of a more ancient and authoritative witness of the *stirps Romana*.⁴² At this point Karl Hude, who in 1908 had produced a not especially innovative edition of Herodotus for Oxford Classical Texts,⁴³ hastened to publish a second edition, with an appendix that reported the new readings of D made known by Weber, along with some others attested in papyri.⁴⁴ At the end of the new preface, he expressed the hope of soon being able to produce a fresh edition with an apparatus based on new witnesses.

³⁷ How and Wells 1912 (reprinted with corrections in 1928 and many other times) hugely depends on Stein, while more original are Macan 1895 and 1908, where Herodotus' text is faced with 'courage and candour', as Enoch Powell said (Powell 1939b: 80 n. 2). The interest in textual and linguistic analysis is not dominant in the Italian commentaries for the Fondazione Lorenzo Valla (Asheri 1988, Lloyd 1989, Asheri and Medaglia 1990, Corcella and Medaglia 1993, Nenci 1994 and 1998, Asheri and Corcella 2003 and 2006, Vannicelli and Corcella 2017; English translation of the commentaries to Books 1–4 in Asheri et al. 2007), whereas it is more widely present (but not always with innovative results) in the volumes that have so far appeared in the Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics (Flower and Marincola 2002, Bowie 2007, Hornblower 2013, Hornblower and Pelling 2017, Dewald and Munson 2022). Commentaries on Book 2 about Egypt are, of course, a genre *per se*, whose latest and best example is Lloyd 1975–93.

³⁸ Cobet 1882; 1883a, b, c; 1884a, b, c, d, e. Herwerden printed his conjectures in various articles, and then in a school edition (Herwerden 1884–9).

³⁹ Cobet 1882.

⁴⁰ Holder 1886.

⁴¹ Wehrmann 1883: 42.

⁴² Weber 1911; cf. Hemmerdinger 1981: 69 and 122–3.

⁴³ Hude 1908.

⁴⁴ Hude 1912.

Some years later, he succeeded in finding and fully collating D, which had in the meantime reappeared in the Vatican Library. The result was his third Oxford edition, published in 1927.⁴⁵

If, as Felix Jacoby decreed,⁴⁶ Hude's first edition did not supersede Stein, his third edition represented a decisive advance. Once the value of the *stirps Romana* had finally been confirmed by the new witness, Hude decided to follow in Holder's footsteps and adopt the comprehensive siglum 'a' for the *stirps Florentina* (including C) and 'd' for the *stirps Romana*, thus signalling graphically that the extensive presence of a good ancient tradition in the *stirps Romana* could no longer be disputed and the two branches were on the same level. He did not, however, draw a stemma, and the debate, now focusing on the relationships among the manuscripts within each family, was aimed at gaining a better reconstruction of their hyparchetypes. Paul Maas soon noticed the importance of the new acquisition, and, concentrating on the *stirps Romana*, considered D and β two parallel descendants of the same hyparchetype: to his eyes, Herodotus' tradition was the typical example of a 'bifid' stemma with one branch further divided into two lines.⁴⁷ The matter was more complicated, especially because of contamination, a circumstance that Maas tended to consider as an exceptional feature but which is rather the rule for widely read texts. Thus, in the second half of the last century, Bertrand Hemmerdinger and Giovan Battista Alberti debated the exact relationship between D and β : according to Hemmerdinger the latter was a descendant of the former, whereas Alberti considered them to be two independent witnesses of the same hyparchetype, even though, in his final contributions, he came to assume a position closer to that of Hemmerdinger.⁴⁸ As we have seen above, β is probably not a copy of D, but because of extensive contamination it cannot simply be used to eliminate the singular errors of D. Something similar is probably true for the *stirps Florentina*, and also in this case Hemmerdinger ventured to consider B a copy of A, while recognizing that C and T were in contact with an otherwise lost branch of the tradition.⁴⁹ As we have seen, the latter hypothesis might be true; in any case, not only CT but also B cannot be easily collocated within a 'closed recension'.

This may explain why — with the partial exception of Haiim B. Rosén — subsequent editors, following Hude's example, showed little inclination to draw a full stemma of Herodotus' tradition. Philippe-Ernest Legrand edited Herodotus for the Collection Budé between 1932 and 1954.⁵⁰ According to Hemmerdinger, he simply copied Hude's third edition by converting its negative apparatus into a positive one.⁵¹ It is true that Legrand did not make significant contributions as

⁴⁵ Hude 1927. On the reappearance of D, see now Potenza 2022.

⁴⁶ Jacoby 1913: 520.

⁴⁷ Maas 1937: 292 n. 2 (then resumed in the *Textkritik*, see Maas 1958: 46–7). On the contrary, in a first moment the rediscovery of D escaped the attention of Giorgio Pasquali, who was warned of his mistake by the same Maas and had to write a palinody: see Pasquali 1952: xxii and 306–18, Bossina 2010: 295 and Corcella 2018: 553–4.

⁴⁸ See, among others, Hemmerdinger 1952, 1954, 1961, 1981; Alberti 1960, 1982, 1998.

⁴⁹ Hemmerdinger 1981: 9 (stemma) and throughout.

⁵⁰ Legrand 1932 (introduction) and 1932–54.

⁵¹ Hemmerdinger 1981: 80.

far as the *recensio* of manuscripts is concerned, but Hemmerdinger's derogative judgement cannot be fully endorsed, since Legrand made his own choices regarding, for instance, the forms of Herodotus' dialect, and also proposed a number of conjectures.⁵²

Herodotus' language was the main point of interest for the subsequent editor, Rosén, who published his edition for Teubner between 1987 and 1997. In the nineteenth century, the studies on Herodotus' manuscripts on the one hand and Greek dialects on the other had led to the elimination of many of the pseudo-Ionic forms present in ancient editions but scarcely attested in the most authentic tradition, and to the establishment of a sort of new linguistic *vulgata* (Immanuel Bekker's 1845 edition was a decisive step in this process).⁵³ Stein and Hude founded their choices on this tradition, recognizing the possibility of some variations within the text (for example, between the accusative forms $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\eta\nu$ and $\Xi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\xi\epsilon\alpha$).⁵⁴ However, as mentioned above, many problems remained. Rosén, who had published a grammar of Herodotus' language,⁵⁵ acted as a 'linguiste en fonction d'éditeur' ('a linguist in the role of an editor').⁵⁶ He believed that Herodotus' language was eclectic, and that all the forms variously attested in the tradition might therefore be authentic. More exactly, Rosén thought that these forms alternated in the text according to specific rules and principles, which he tried to define. In order to apply these rules to every single passage, however, he was often compelled to elaborate very idiosyncratic interpretations of Herodotus' sentences, by postulating convoluted syntactic constructions or introducing unusual punctuation. The result is a text that is at the same time very conservative and very innovative, and while Rosén often rejected seemingly obvious corrections by fabricating complex grammatical rules, he was far too willing to cancel words that appear in a non-Ionic form, even in only part of the tradition.

These limits to Rosén's method have been pointed out by more than one reviewer, and there is no need to insist on them.⁵⁷ He explored, however, some manuscripts that had been neglected and his apparatus gives much information both on these witnesses and the indirect tradition (unfortunately not free from inaccuracies). Special attention to the indirect tradition also characterizes some volumes of the edition for the Lorenzo Valla series, whose text — edited by different scholars — often offers new conjectures, while the introductions give an updated picture of the debate on Herodotus' tradition.⁵⁸

The most notable event in recent Herodotean scholarship, and one which deserves a fuller discussion, is Nigel Guy Wilson's 2015 edition, intended to replace Hude's edition in the Oxford Classical Texts series.⁵⁹ Since Oxford editors

⁵² See Tribulato 2022: 259–60.

⁵³ Bekker 1845.

⁵⁴ See here Tribulato 2022: 257–9.

⁵⁵ Rosén 1962.

⁵⁶ This is the definition he gave of himself in Rosén 1976: xxv.

⁵⁷ See esp. McNeal 1989, Corcella 1989, 1991 and 1998, Renehan 1991, as well as Tribulato 2022: 260–1.

⁵⁸ Asheri 1988, Lloyd 1989, Asheri and Medaglia 1990, Corcella and Medaglia 1993, Nenci 1994 and 1998, Asheri and Corcella 2003 and 2006, Vannicelli and Corcella 2017.

⁵⁹ Wilson 2015a.

are required to provide their texts with short annotations ('breui adnotatione critica'), Wilson could not give too much information in his apparatus (as, on the contrary, Rosén was allowed to do for Teubner) and conveniently decided to accompany his edition with a book, *Herodotea*, in which he discusses some of his choices.⁶⁰ The preface to the edition is also very succinct, and must be integrated with what Wilson says in the introduction to *Herodotea*. That said, as far as the manuscripts are concerned, Wilson chose to report the readings of A, with those of BC used only sporadically, which is a sound choice. As for the *stirps Romana*, he was persuaded that β (which he renames 'r') is independent from D, and in order to gain a better knowledge of this subfamily he decided to use UX, whose readings he frequently mentions in the apparatus. As Raffaella Cantore has noted, this choice is not entirely correct, since the special character of UX in the first book, which drew Wilson's attention, is due to the fact that for this part of the text they descend from T, or from a manuscript similar to T: Wilson should rather have used T, at least up to 2.134. After that point, T changes its nature and becomes a witness of the *stirps Florentina*, while X after 1.112.2 and U after 3.26 become more ordinary representatives of the *stirps Romana*.⁶¹

Wilson does not appear to have made new collations of the main manuscripts, and, especially for the *stirps Florentina*, he depends substantially on previous editors.⁶² In comparison to Hude, however, he had access to many more papyri (including some not yet published), and the presence of their readings in the apparatus represents an indisputable advance. Unfortunately, the restrictions imposed by the need for brevity do not allow Wilson to give information about the exact extent of the text contained in each papyrus, with the consequence that, in some cases, due to the negative nature of the apparatus, we cannot be certain whether in a certain passage a papyrus has the same reading of the codices or a lacuna. Apart from that, Wilson does not generally overestimate the authority of the papyri against the medieval tradition. This is reasonable, since papyri contain mistakes, just like any other manuscript. As a consequence, a papyrus should not be quoted in order to deny the opportunity of a conjecture (therefore, in the apparatus at 7.167.1, I would not have written 'ἐθύετο καὶ del. Abicht, *sed* praebat iam P. Oxy. 1376', 'Abicht deleted ἐθύετο καὶ ['he sacrificed and'], *but* the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus nr. 1376 already had these words' [my italics]). For the same reason, on the other hand, a papyrus does not necessarily provide incontrovertible confirmation to a modern conjecture; and yet, as once observed by Hemmerdinger, when a papyrus has a reading that coincides with an independently formulated conjecture, it is the conjecture that confirms the reading of the papyrus, inasmuch as it shows that the text of the latter is exactly what 'reason and the facts' (*ratio et res ipsa*, as Bentley said) demand.⁶³ Wilson is

⁶⁰ Wilson 2015b.

⁶¹ See Cantore 2016.

⁶² If a skilled palaeographer like Wilson had personally collated A, at 7.98 he would not have repeated the mistake of Stein and Hude (but not of Gronov!), according to which the manuscript has Ματην̄ν: just like BC, A also reads Ματη̄ν (fol. 284v), with the same rendering of ττ, usual in early minuscules, that can be found, for instance, in Ἀττικ̄ν at 7.10.β1 (fol. 268r).

⁶³ Hemmerdinger 1981: 177.

thus right when, at 1.116.1, he reports (indeed with a misprint) that the reading ἐλευθεριωτέρη ('too outspoken'), accepted into the text, is attested not only in *P.Monac.* 2.40, but also in Aemilius Portus' *Dictionarium Ionicum* (where, in fact, it is not certain whether Portus wrote ἐλευθεριωτέρη as his own conjecture, or because he found this form in a now lost witness, or even due to a happy accident).⁶⁴ For the same reasons, at 2.100.3 greater attention should have been paid to the unfortunately fragmentary *P.Oxy.* 3376, which reads ξει[instead of the καινοῦν (καὶ νοῦν, καὶ νῦν) of the medieval manuscripts: Wilson considers the possibility of writing ξείνια ('hospitable entertainment'), but should have taken into account ξεινεῶνα ('guest-house'), which would make good sense and had been proposed by Jonathan Toup.⁶⁵

More generally, although in comparison to Hude much more information on the indirect tradition can be found in Wilson's apparatus, the ancient history of the text does not seem to have been of special interest to the new editor.⁶⁶ This may explain why Wilson has failed to provide consistent treatment of the so-called *reclamantes*, the catchlines that were put at the end of each roll showing the first words of the next, in order to ensure their proper order. Following Hude, he does not note that in the *stirps Romana* the *reclamans* is also attested at the end of Book 5 (in fact the *reclamantes* appear at the end of all books, with the exception of Book 1, which was copied from an abridged edition). When in the manuscript tradition they are written both at the end of a book and at the beginning of the subsequent one (which happens in Books 7–9), he chooses to print them in the wrong place.⁶⁷ Wilson has, however, ventured some considerations on the most ancient history (or prehistory) of Herodotus' text: following in Stein's footsteps, he has used a double asterisk to mark some passages that — as we saw above — may be taken as later additions made by the author, sometimes without adjusting the context accordingly — a solution that an intelligent and witty reviewer has proposed to call '*remedium Steinianum* and ... now ... *remedium Wilsonianum*'.⁶⁸

By resorting to this expedient, and by appealing to the idea that Herodotus' original text, inasmuch as it was intended to be read aloud before a large audience, is likely to have contained many repetitions and redundancies, Wilson has been able to reject some expunctions and corrections proposed by previous scholars. That is why he can declare that his attitude is on the whole conservative.⁶⁹ This is true, perhaps, in comparison to the practices of scholars like Cobet or Herwerden, but the opposite is true when Wilson's text is compared to that of Stein or Hude,

⁶⁴ See Portus 1603 (s.v. ὑπόκρισις).

⁶⁵ Toup 1766: 193–4, on which see Corcella 1991: 509–11 (Wilson accepts a conjecture by Toup at 1.27.4). For a different reconstruction of the text of the papyrus, see Bravo 2012a: 35–40 (with the postscript at 62–5).

⁶⁶ A more thorough examination of the indirect tradition would probably have led him not to print Ἀλιζῶνες in Book 4: see Corcella 1994.

⁶⁷ The treatment of this problem in Wilson 2015b: 154 is not fully adequate. See Corcella 2013: 87–114; for the witness of *P.Oxy.* 3382, cf. also Mirończuk 2012: 230.

⁶⁸ Liberman 2016. Wilson seems to have followed the example of Powell, who in his translation used square brackets for the same purpose (Powell 1949: 1.iv and throughout); the two scholars, however, only partially agree in singling out the supposed additions.

⁶⁹ Wilson 2015a: 1.vii and 2015b: xxvi.

since it is richer in conjectures and has an even richer apparatus than either of those. In fact, one could say that the main contribution of this new edition consists in the large amount of conjectures that Wilson reports or adopts. Apart from Cobet and Herwerden, who along with Frederick Henry Marvell Blaydes and Herbert Richards are among the scholars most frequently mentioned in the apparatus, he has given due recognition to the conjectural attempts of Karl Wilhelm Krüger and Stein, whose proposals were underrepresented in Hude's edition,⁷⁰ and Legrand's interventions have been extensively reported. More originally, Wilson has unearthed some conjectures, partly unpublished, made by the Danish scholar Victorinus Pingel,⁷¹ as well as several corrections that Paul Maas formulated in the marginal annotations to his own copy of Hude's third edition (which Wilson published in full some years ago).⁷² As Wilson mentions, and other sources make clearer, Maas worked on Herodotus in constant dialogue with his friend John Enoch Powell, who during the 1930s and 1940s produced many conjectures on Herodotus' text, in a series of articles and then in the critical appendix to his 1949 translation.⁷³ Wilson has reported most if not all of these conjectures in his edition, adopting a good number of them in the text and citing Powell's name almost five hundred times in the apparatus (and more than three hundred times in *Herodotea*).

The high quality of Pingel's, Maas' and Powell's conjectures cannot be disputed, even if most of them may sound a little too 'logical'. Indeed, Pingel was known for his 'radical rationalism' both in science and in politics,⁷⁴ and the same could be said of Powell, on whom A. E. Housman's lectures in Cambridge made a lasting impression. Maas, a very acute reasoner who generally showed appreciation for Powell's proposals, described one of them as 'pedantic'.⁷⁵ Apart from their value, however, the quantity of the conjectures accepted or reported seems overabundant and risks giving the impression of an edition for the use of editors (*in usum editorum*, as philologists say), if not of a partial substitute for that repertory of conjectures

⁷⁰ Wilson, however, did not consult all the successive editions by Stein, who often changed his mind. At 1.67.5, for example, Wilson adopts Stein's ἐξιόντων ('outgoing', in the genitive case), but confesses that he has not been able 'to trace it' (Wilson 2015b: 9); in fact, Stein proposed this conjecture in the second edition of the first volume of his commentary (1864), but then gave it up in the later editions. At 1.202.4, on the contrary, Wilson did not find the conjecture <Ἡρακλέων> in Stein's 'fifth edition with commentary (1883)' (Wilson 2015b: xii), but he should have looked for it in the sixth edition of 1901. As for <ἀντι>στασιώτησι at 1.61.2 (Wilson 2015b: 8), Stein proposed this correction in the apparatus of his *editio minor* (Stein 1884: 1.29), where some other conjectures that Wilson only knows through Powell or others can also be read (cf. Wilson 2015b: 26, 44, 56, 108).

⁷¹ Beyond Pingel 1874 (a very rare *Gymnasialprogramm*, only recently made available online: <https://skolehistorie.dk/701363.pdf>, accessed 21 January 2023), Wilson explored Pingel's papers kept in the Royal Library of Copenhagen.

⁷² See Wilson 2011.

⁷³ See Wilson 2015b: vi, xxv–vi and 69 and the statement by Maas himself in the letter published in Bossina 2010: 295. For Powell's conjectures, see esp. Powell 1935a, 1935b, 1938, 1939a and 1949: 2.687–722 (and throughout: see below, note 84).

⁷⁴ See Höeg 1940: 42.

⁷⁵ See Wilson 2011: 63; Maas referred to Powell's ταύτην for τοῦτον at 3.87, a conjecture which Wilson did not hold back from reporting in his apparatus.

whose absence Wilson regrets.⁷⁶ Signalling a doubt, even with a ‘diagnostic’ aim, is always a better option than merely accepting an implausible or improbably motivated conjecture, but the number of *cruces desperationis* (‘crosses of despair’, that is symbols indicating that all attempts to correct the text have failed) and signs of lacuna in Wilson’s text also seems to me somewhat disproportionate.

As an example, I shall quote a case in which Wilson seems to have not so much responded to a real difficulty in the text as exhibited his exquisite taste for rare discoveries. At 1.52 Herodotus is describing a spear (αἰχμή) ‘whose shaft is made of gold just like the points’ (τὸ ξυστὸν τῆσι λόγχησι ἐὼν ὁμοίως χρύσειον). So read the manuscripts, and all previous editions; Wilson prints τῆ λόγχῃ, ‘the point’, and in the apparatus explains: ‘τῆ λόγχῃ “S. Y.” (1824)’. This rather enigmatic reference points to an article, titled ‘Remarks on obscure passages in the ancient classical writers’, which appeared in Abraham John Valpy’s *Classical Journal* for September 1824. It is a collection of not-so-original reading notes, by an author whose initials, ‘S. Y.’, appear on a few other articles published in that journal between 1822 and 1825, and who may perhaps be identified as Solomon Young (1783–1827), classical tutor at the Stepney Academical Institution from 1815 to 1826.⁷⁷ The remark on Herodotus 1.52 reads as follows:⁷⁸

Had it been τῆ λόγχῃ, αἰχμῆν would have included with clearness and precision the handle and the point of the spear. But in one αἰχμή is one handle, but more than one point. I know not whether this singularity of expression has been before observed.

I am not certain that the author really intended to emend Herodotus’ passage. In any case, in dealing with it the commentators have often observed that ancient spears did have two ‘points’, one at the top and the other at the bottom, and Krüger referred to a highly persuasive parallel in Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, where the Chalybes are said to carry a spear ‘with only one point’ (μίαν λόγχην ἔχον, 4.7.16), thus clearly implying that Greek spears, on the contrary, usually had more than one point.⁷⁹ This is only one example among several where, at least in my opinion, Wilson unnecessarily modified a text that a more thorough examination allows us to defend.⁸⁰

It must be noted, finally, that in more than two hundred passages Wilson proposes in the apparatus or accepts into the text his own fresh conjectures. This is not surprising. As Powell wrote in 1938, ‘it says much for the delusive simplicity

⁷⁶ Wilson 2015a: 1.xii.

⁷⁷ This is not, of course, the place for a detailed discussion. On Solomon Young and his teaching of classics at Stepney, see Samuel Tomkins’ memoir in Young 1832: 3–50 and Payne 1942: 233–7.

⁷⁸ Y[oung?] 1824: 80.

⁷⁹ Krüger 1855–6: 1.30.

⁸⁰ Even in a case like the first line of the oracle at 7.140.2, where Wilson’s choice to follow Reiske in writing φύγ’ ἐς ἔσχατα γαίης (‘fly to the ends of the earth’) may at first sight seem unassailable, the manuscripts’ reading φεῦγ’ ἔσχατα γαίης should probably be preserved, since it finds a perfect parallel in the adverbial use of ἔσχατα γαίης by Hesiod (*Th.* 731): see Vannicelli and Corcella 2017: 469.

of Herodotus that it is still possible to reap a critical crop from an author who has been read by Reiske, Dobree and Cobet⁸¹ — and by Powell as well, we may add. Several of Wilson’s conjectures I find intelligent and elegant (for example, ἀφανιεῦνται, ‘they will remove’, at 7.236.3), but I am not convinced by many more, even among those adopted in the text, especially when they read more like trivializations or embellishments of the text than solutions to real problems. (I cannot persuade myself, for instance, that at 3.86.2 the highly ironical ἐκ συνθέτου τευ, ‘by an agreement’, should be changed to a dull ἐκ θεοῦ τευ, ‘from a god’, or that at 7.81 we really need to write ἀπαξοί, ‘single’). The evaluation of a conjecture, however, is often bound to remain a highly subjective matter, and the quantity of conjectures that an editor should adopt or report is hardly a matter to which generally agreed standards apply. Furthermore, someone may well take the discussions above as showing the usefulness of signalling doubts and making ‘diagnostic’ proposals that lead to the formulation of better conjectures, or even to a more motivated defence of the transmitted text.⁸²



In conclusion, Wilson’s choice to report so many modern conjectures may seem somehow idiosyncratic, and in spite of the reasoned arguments exposed in *Herodotea* one does not always feel compelled to agree with the proposals printed in the text or reported in the apparatus.⁸³ The new Oxford edition, along with the accompanying volume, no doubt provides a timely reminder that textual criticism is a practice for people who ‘have a head, not a pumpkin, on [their] shoulders, and brains, not pudding, in [their] head’.⁸⁴ But arguing in defence of a transmitted text that is not *prima facie* obvious also implies having a head on one’s shoulders, as well as being open to less plain truths in different linguistic and historical contexts. In a given culture, spears may have, or may usually have, two points, and thus travellers who venture into foreign lands are called upon to understand local traditions before judging them, καὶ ὀρθῶς μοι δοκεῖ Πίνδαρος ποιῆσαι νόμον πάντων βασιλέα φήσας εἶναι (‘in my opinion, Pindar was right to

⁸¹ Powell 1938: 211.

⁸² For a recent discussion on conjectural emendation, starting from the seminal pages in Paul Maas’s *Textkritik* (Maas 1958: 10–7), see among others Wettlaufer 2013 and Tarrant 2016: 65–84.

⁸³ One last example. At 3.81.2, κῶς γὰρ ἂν γινώσκοι ὅς οὔτ’ ἐδιδάχθη οὔτε εἶδε καλὸν οὐδὲν οὐδ’ οἰκίον (‘How could anyone know what is noble without either having been taught it or having innate awareness of it?’), the adjective οἰκίον, far from being ‘difficult’ and needing emendation (Wilson 2015b: 60), marks the distinction between virtue acquired by ‘education’ (ἐδιδάχθη) and the ‘innate knowledge of something noble’ (which is very appropriate for the oligarch Megabychos), as all commentators noted. Yet οὐδ(έ), deleted by Valckenaer, can also be retained, with the sense ‘not even’, as Rosén 1987–97: 1.307 saw (for the accumulation of negatives, see Corcella 1991: 520). Wilson is here following Powell, who obelized the adjective, and contextually made the more interesting proposal — ignored by Wilson — to interpret the whole clause as a parenthesis (Powell 1949: 2.700).

⁸⁴ Housman 1921: 84.

have said that custom is king of all').⁸⁵ That is why Wilson's edition, admirable as it is for its ingenuity, cannot be treated as the new standard one, and should not have been chosen by Irvine's *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* to replace Legrand's.⁸⁶

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⁸⁵ Needless to say, Powell deleted this notorious sentence (Hdt. 3.38.4), as Wilson reports. In this case, I think Wilson performed a good service, since this conjecture, which would solve more than one exegetical problem, may easily escape the attention of scholars: in his translation, Powell just printed the corresponding English sentence in italics, without mentioning his intervention in the critical appendix (see Powell 1949: 1.216 and 2.699, as well as 1.iv for the meaning of the italics).

⁸⁶ See Pantelia 2022: 385.

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