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Σ Υ Μ Β Α Λ Λ Ε Σ Θ Α Ι

A N o t e o n C o n j e c t u r e s i n H e r o d o t u s

P a a v o H o h t i

On some occasions in his Histories Herodotus uses the word *συμβάλλεσθαι* to introduce both his own conclusions and those of other people. This word, used in the middle voice, in the sense 'to conjecture, to consider' does not occur, as far as I can see, in other historians. In fact, in addition to Herodotus, LSJ gives only one other case of such a usage, in Heraclitus.<sup>1</sup> The active form of the verb, on the other hand, is rather frequently used in its various senses from Pindar to Aristotle, especially in drama.<sup>2</sup> It seems that the conclusions characterized by the word *συμβάλλεσθαι* play a special part in Herodotus' historical terminology. It is possible that this use of the word is an Ionian idiom; to it would point the fact that this verb occurs in Heraclitus together with Herodotus. This paper is an attempt to define the specific nature of these conclusions and to discover how they differ from other kinds of conclusions.

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1 See LSJ s.v. *συμβάλλω*. The fragment is B 47 (D-K): *μη εἰκῆ περὶ τῶν μεγίστων συμβαλλόμεθα*.

2 It seems that the Latin *conicere* 'to form a conclusion about, conjecture, guess' is adapted through comedy. Oxford Latin Dictionary gives the following cases: Ter. Eu. 547, Ph. 166; Plaut. Cas. 94. It is many times used also by Cicero. For the use of *conicere* in connection of oracles see below n.15.

In his study *Form and Thought in Herodotus*, Henry R. Immerwahr<sup>3</sup> suggests that the expression *συμβαλλόμενος εὐρίσκω* is used when Herodotus draws a conclusion, basing it on a comparison of different variants of a story. Immerwahr cites four examples to support his suggestion (4,15,1; 7,24,1; 7,184,1; 8,30,1). None of these, however, includes an explicit statement that different variants existed or even that Herodotus had the idea of comparison in mind. Furthermore, there are similar expressions, which are used in the sense 'to compute'. The cases with *συμβαλλόμενος εὐρίσκω* do not form a unified group. Immerwahr's suggestion had already been called into question by H. Verdin,<sup>4</sup> though from a different standpoint. Verdin does not, however, offer his own suggestion for the meaning of this expression, but leaves the questions unanswered.

It is possible to distinguish first the cases with the technical connotation of 'to compute'. 7,184,1 clearly constitutes such a case, where Herodotus considers the number of the Persian ships; 7,187,2 provides an even more obvious example, where Herodotus computes the amount of grain needed by the Persian soldiers. On both occasions he uses the expression *συμβαλλόμενος εὐρίσκω*.<sup>5</sup> One of Immerwahr's examples, that which records Aristetas' apparition in Metapontion (4,15,1) also seems to be based on the idea of computing: ταῦτα μὲν αἰ

3 P.5 and n.11. Comparison is one of the basic connotations of *συμβάλλω* and occurs very often in Herodotus. See Powell, *A Lexicon to Herodotus*, s.v.

4 H. Verdin, *De historisch-kritische methode van Herodotus*. *Verhandelingen van de Kon. Vlaamse Acad. voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België*, Kl. der Letteren 69(1971)189-190.

5 To these we may add 2,31, which Powell gives under 'count', while the other cases are given under 'suppose, reckon'.

πόλλες αὖται λέγουσι, τάδε δὲ οἶδα Μεταποντίνοισι τοῖσι ἐν Ἰταλίῃ συγκυρήσαντα μετὰ τὴν ἀφάνισιν τὴν δευτέρην Ἀριστεῶ ἔτεσι τεσσαεράκοντα καὶ διηκοσίοισι, ὡς ἐγὼ συμβαλλόμενος ἐν Προκοννήσῳ τε καὶ Μεταποντίῳ εὕρισκον. It is natural to assume that Herodotus heard the stories both in Proconnesus and in Metapontion. It presupposes that he can compute the time between Aristeeas' disappearance and his return. Computing in its turn presupposes a comparison of the given data, the result being the number of years between disappearance and return. It is not a question here of a comparison of different variants in the sense of arriving at an evaluation of the truth, as Immerwahr's suggestion seems to indicate.<sup>6</sup>

There are three further cases where the participle συμβαλλόμενος is made the subject of εὕρισκω or δοκέω. In these cases the idea of conjecture is obvious. Herodotus speaks of the place where Darius crossed the Bosphorus as follows (4,87,2): τοῦ δὲ Βοσπόρου ὁ χῶρος τὸν ἔξευξε βασιλεὺς Δαρεῖος, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκέειν συμβαλλομένῳ, μέσον ἐστὶ Βυζαντίου τε καὶ τοῦ ἐπὶ στόματι Ἰροῦ. This statement is based, on the one hand, on the fact that Darius crossed the Bosphorus and, on the other, on geographical possibilities. In other words, Herodotus concludes that Darius chose the most suitable place for crossing.<sup>7</sup> The second case comprises Herodotus' judgement concerning Xerxes and the Athos canal. Herodotus thinks that the canal was made

6 Ph.E. Legrand (Hérodote IV,57 n.1) rightly points out that Herodotus made calculations. J. Feix in his Tusculum edition of Herodotus unnecessarily corrects the text and emphasizes the aspect of comparison: "wie ich durch Vergleich der Vorgänge in Prokonnesos und Metapontion fand".

7 Herodotus mentions the steles which once marked the place of crossing but which were later taken to Byzantium and to the temple of Dionysios (4,87,1).

because of Xerxes' μεγαλοφροσύνη (7,24) and says that Xerxes' purpose was to demonstrate his power and leave a μνημόσυνον: ὡς μὲν ἐμὲ συμβαλλόμενον εὐρίσκειν, μεγαλοφροσύνης εὔνεκεν αὐτὸ Ξέρξης ὀρύσσειν ἐκέλευε, ἐθέλων τε δύναμιν ἀποδείκνυσθαι καὶ μνημόσυνα λιπέσθαι. Here Herodotus considers Xerxes' aims and gives an account of the immense work being done on the canal; the result corresponds to what Herodotus thinks to be the reason behind it; the two parts complement each other. The same idea of fitness is also clear in the account of the Phocians (8,30,1): οἱ γὰρ Φωκῆες μῦνοι τῶν ταύτη ἀνθρώπων οὐκ ἐμήδιζον, κατ' ἄλλο μὲν οὐδέν, ὡς ἐγὼ συμβαλλόμενος εὐρίσκω, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ἔχθος τὸ Θεσσαλῶν. εἰ δὲ Θεσσαλοῦ τὰ Ἑλλήνων ἠὔξον, ὡς ἐμοῦ δοκέειν, ἐμήδιζον ἄν οἱ Φωκῆες. These three examples show that Herodotus forms his conclusions on the basis of two facts, which he considers together and then combines.

There are two important examples where συμβάλλεσθαι functions as predicate: 2,112,2 ἔστι δὲ ἐν τῷ τεμένει τοῦ Πρωτέος ἵρδον τὸ καλέεται Ξείνης Ἀφροδίτης συμβάλλομαι δὲ τοῦτο τὸ ἵρδον εἶναι Ἑλένης τῆς Τυνδάρεω, καὶ τὸν λόγον ἀκηκοῶς ὡς διαιτήθη Ἑλένη παρὰ Πρωτείῳ, καὶ δὴ καὶ ὅτι Ξείνης Ἀφροδίτης ἐπώνυμόν ἐστι. ὅσα γὰρ ἄλλα Ἀφροδίτης ἱρά ἐστι, οὐδαμῶς Ξείνης ἐπικαλέεται. 2,33,2 ῥέει γὰρ ἐκ Λιβύης ὁ Νεῦλος καὶ μέσην τάμνων Λιβύην. καὶ ὡς ἐγὼ συμβάλλομαι τοῦτοι ἐμφανέσι τὰ μὴ γνωσκόμενα τεκμαιρόμενος, τῷ Ἰστρῷ ἐκ τῶν ἕσων μέτρων ὀρμᾶται. Ἰστρος τε γὰρ ποταμὸς ἀρξάμενος ἐκ Κελτῶν καὶ Πυρήνης πόλιος ῥέει μέσην σχίζων τὴν Εὐρώπην. The first of these is the simpler. The two facts (the temple and the information heard) are clearly distinguished. By combining them, Herodotus forms his own conjecture. The latter case is more complicated. It includes, together with

συμβάλλομαι, another word, τεκμαιρόμενος, which is also used to form conclusions.<sup>8</sup> In this case, too, Herodotus combines two elements, the Ister and the Nile. These elements, however, do not as yet resemble each other fully (34,1): ὁ μὲν δὴ Ἴστρος, ῥέει γὰρ δι' οἴκειομένης, πρὸς πολλῶν γινώσκειται, περὶ δὲ τῶν τοῦ Νεῦλου πηγῶν οὐδεὶς ἔχει λέγειν· ἀοίκητός τε γὰρ καὶ ἔρημος ἐστὶ ἡ Λιβύη δι' ἧς ῥέει. Herodotus has some information regarding the Nile (34,1): περὶ δὲ τοῦ ρεύματος αὐτοῦ, ἐπ' ὅσον μακρότατον ἱστορεῦντα ἦν ἐξικέσθαι, εὔρηται. This seems to refer to the east west direction of the Nile and to the fact that it flows through Libya dividing it into two equal parts (31; 32,7). In addition Herodotus knows the sites of the mouths of both rivers. All this means that the rivers conform to a symmetrical pattern (34, 1-2): ἐκ Διδοῦ (sc. Nile) δὲ εἰς Αἴγυπτον. ἡ δὲ Αἴγυπτος τῆς ὀρεινῆς Κιλικίης μάλιστα κη ἀντίη κεῖται. ἐνθεῦτεν δὲ εἰς Σινώπην τὴν ἐν τῷ Εὐξεινῷ πόντῳ πέντε ἡμερῶν ἰθάεα ὁδοῦς εὐζώνῃ ἀνδρῶν· ἡ δὲ Σινώπη τῷ Ἴστρῳ ἐκδιδόντι εἰς θάλασσαν ἀντίον κεῖται. οὕτω τὸν Νεῦλον δοκέω διὰ πάσης τῆς Λιβύης διελθόντα ἐξισοῦσθαι τῷ Ἴστρῳ. Thus, what is known of Nile makes it possible to conclude analogically (τεκμαιρόμενος) that the rivers are similar. In other words, the known parts of Nile are used as a τεκμήριον to infer the unknown parts. Now that the rivers have been shown to be symmetrical, Herodotus can, on the basis of a complete symmetry, conjecture (συμβάλλομαι) that the rivers have their origin ἐκ τῶν ἴσων μέτρων.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, these examples

8 See 1,57,1-2; 7,16 g 2; 7,234,1. For τεκμαίρεσθαι see also H. Diller, "Οφεις ἀδήλων τὰ φαινόμενα, Hermes 67(1932)16-23.

9 See also the thorough analysis of this text in G.E.R. Lloyd, Polarity and Analogy, Cambridge 1966, 342-345. He does not, however, distinguish between the two words used by Herodotus.

demonstrate the principle of the combination of two facts. In order for the combination to work, the facts have to complement each other. They can be of different kinds as in the case of the temple: the information heard supplies the eponymon of the temple. In the second case the parts are analogous, forming a symmetrical picture. The main purpose and character of the *συμβάλλεσθαι* conclusion is that the combination results in an intelligible whole which has a significance of its own and is more than the total of its parts. The process of combining could be compared to doing a jigsaw puzzle although this would be somewhat misleading, since in a puzzle several pieces have to be joined. On the other hand, we may refer to *σύμβολον*, which in its original and concrete sense is a thing made up of two elements.<sup>10</sup> As *σύμβολον* consists of two complementary parts, so the conclusion with *συμβάλλεσθαι* is also formed on the basis of two existing complementary parts. The parts must exist naturally, since if they do not, they cannot be combined. We may now return to the Nile example. In this case the Ister was known, but the Nile was not completely known, i.e. the other part did not entirely exist (cf. 2,34,1). Because of the aspect of the unknown, Herodotus uses the word *τεκμαίρεσθαι* when he reaches a conclusion on the basis on some known fact; in this case the basis is formed of similarities with the Ister: *τοῦτοι ἐμφάνεσι τὰ μὴ γινωσκόμενα τεκμαιρόμενος*. The Ister and the Nile constitute, as Herodotus sees it, a symmetrical geographical picture on the map and

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10 For archaeological evidence see e.g. Daremberg & Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités III*, Paris 1900, 298 s.v. *hospitium*. Cf. also Hdt 6,86 a,5. For the history of the concept, see J.A. Coulter, *The Literary Microcosm, Theories of Interpretation of the Later Neoplatonists*, Leiden 1976, 60-68.



this symmetry also provides both rivers with similar origins.<sup>11</sup> The Nile and the Ister are identical parts. This aspect of identity produces major distinction in the case of Xeine Aphrodite, where the parts are not identical, but provide supplementary information.

It is not possible to argue whether the idea of two complementary parts was always understood when the word συμβάλλεσθαι was used.<sup>12</sup> Its general sense 'to conclude' is apparent in several cases, but by the same token we should note that the two parts are nevertheless in evidence. An interesting case is Etearchus' conclusion concerning the Nile (2,33,2): τὸν δὲ δὴ ποταμὸν τοῦτον τὸν παραρρέοντα καὶ Ἐτέαρχος συνεβάλλετο εἶναι Νεῖλον, καὶ δὴ καὶ ὁ λόγος οὕτω αἰρέει. Etearchus reaches this conclusion apparently by comparing what he knows of the Nile with what he sees in reality.<sup>13</sup> The idea of two parts occurs also in two negative cases, i.e. when the parts are not recognized as belonging together. Herodotus cannot find a connection between three names and one continent (4,45,2): οὐδ' ἔχω συμβαλέσθαι ἐπ' ὅτευ μὲν ἑούση γῆ οὐνόματα τριφάσια κεῖται, ἐπωνυμίας ἔχοντα γυναικῶν - - οὐδέ τῶν διουρισάντων τὰ οὐνόματα πυθέσθαι, καὶ ὅθεν ἔθεντο τὰς ἐπωνυμί-

11 It is curious that Herodotus himself creates geographical symmetries though he ridicules those who draw maps making Europe and Asia equal in size (4,36, cf. 4,42). Cf. Lloyd, *ibid.* (n.8), who also points to justified symmetrical assumptions in Aristotle, *Met.* 362 b 30ff.

12 Cf. Aristoph. *Vesp.* 50-51 οὔκουν ἐναργές τοῦτο συμβαλεῖν, ὅτι ἀρθεὺς ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἐς κόρακας οἰχθήσεται; Douglas M. MacDowell suggests in his commentary (Oxford 1971, 134) the translation "the obvious thing to conclude" and speaks of logical plainness given by the word ἐναργές. I am not sure whether it is quite correct to speak about logic in this connection. For the general use of συμβάλλω cf. also Aristoph. *Eq.* 426-427.

13 This example shows that the name and the thing together form a σύμβολον. Another aspect occurs in Plato, *Crat.* 412 C Δικαιοσύνη δέ, ὅτι μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ δικαίου συνέσει τοῦτο κεῖται τὸ ὄνομα, ῥᾶδιον συμβαλεῖν, which also includes the two parts to be combined.

ας.<sup>14</sup> This is similar to the case of the message given to the Spartans. They cannot discover its meaning, i.e. they cannot connect it with reality. Similar cases are the interpretations of oracles where συμβάλλεσθαι is used when a correct interpretation is sought or when a statement is made that the oracle has been fulfilled. The problem here, too, is to find out the correspondence between the oracle and the real situation, to recognize similarities so that both parts can be combined.<sup>15</sup>

As we have seen, the συμβάλλεσθαι conclusion is based on the recognition that two existing parts belong together. There are, however, some cases where one part comprises the basis on which the counterpart is formed. In other words, one part is known while the other is not. The problem now is to recognize or to find the counterpart by means of a conclusion. In all these three cases (3,68,2; 7,10g,1; 8,94,2) the construction is different from the examples given above, συμβάλλομαι is used with the dative. Herodotus records Otanes' conclusion about the false Smerdis as follows (3,68,2): οὗτος ὁ Ὀτάνης πρῶτος ὑπόπευσε τὸν μάγον ὡς οὐκ εἴη ὁ Κύρου Σμέρδης ἀλλ' ὅς περ ἦν,

14 A somewhat similar expression is used by Plato in Crat. 384a εἰ οὖν πῆ ἔχεις συμβαλεῖν τὴν Κρατύλου μαντείαν, ἡδέως ἀν ἀκούσαιμι.

15 The oracle is a sign, a σημεῖον. One of Heraclitus' fragments (B 93 D-K) elucidates this idea: ὁ ἄναξ, οὗ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς, οὔτε λέγει, οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει. The same idea also occurs in Herodotus (7,142,2): οἱ μὲν δὴ - - συνεβάλλοντο τοῦτο τὸ ξύλινον τεῦχος εἶναι, οἱ δ' αὖ ἔλεγον τὰς νέας σημαίνειν τὸν θεόν. Cf. also 5,35,3; 7,173,3 and 2,57,2. The interpreter who observes the particulars has to consider the connection between oracle and reality. Aristotle also uses this word in connection with oracles: frg. 532 καὶ συμβαλόντες τὸν χρησμὸν ἐντεῦθεν ἔλαβον τὴν συμμαχίαν, frg. 76 ὅπερ (sc. *oraculum*) οὐ δυναθεῖς συμβαλεῖν Ὀμηρος διὰ τὴν ἀθυμίαν ἐτελεύτησε. The Latin *conicere* is also used in connection of dreams and omens and oracles. The earliest case is in Plautus Cur. 253 and later it is used by Cicero.

τῆδε συμβαλλόμενος, ὅτι τε οὐκ ἔξεφοῦτα ἐκ τῆς ἀκροπόλιος καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἐκάλεε ἐς ὄψιν ἑωυτῷ οὐδένα τῶν λογύμων Περσέων. Otanes forms his conclusion on the basis of the fact that Smerdis does not show himself to anyone and he wonders about the reason for this. Now the appropriate counterpart to this statement of fact is that the Smerdis on the throne is the Magian Smerdis and not the son of Cyrus. Hence the two parts can be joined to form a σύμβολον, the final result being reached when the counterpart has been found. In the case of the origins of the Nile there was a somewhat similar process. In order to obtain complete symmetry Herodotus used the word τεκμαύρεσθαι. This word is given with the dative and the conclusion is inferred on the basis of that fact (this could be construed as a τεκμήριον).<sup>16</sup>

I have argued above that the conclusions characterized by the word συμβάλλεσθαι are based on the combination of two facts. For this kind of combination to be possible, the facts have to complement each other in some way; they can be similar, identical, symmetrical, analogous or supplementary. When a person forms this kind of conclusion he has to recognize the qualities of the parts which together form a whole, a σύμβολον.

When a historian forms his conclusions, he compares the various pieces of evidence and chooses the significant facts.<sup>17</sup> In the συμβάλλεσθαι conclusion the combination is based on the consideration of the particulars. Because of this feature it differs substantially from the εὔκος conclusion, which originates from universalities, from

<sup>16</sup> For τεκμαύρεσθαι see above n.8. The word τεκμήριον occurs in Herodotus seven times: 2,13,1; 2,43,2; 2,58; 2,104,4; 3,38,2; 7,238,2; 9,100,2.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. above n.3. See especially 4,50,1 and 99,5.

what all men know generally happens. We have seen that there is also a main difference in the τεκμαίρεσθαι conclusions, which by means of a piece of evidence arrive at a conclusion regarding something which seems to have happened or which seems to happen but is not known.<sup>18</sup>

The combination of facts is one of the most important aspects of the historian's work, but the word συμβάλλεσθαι does not occur after Herodotus.<sup>19</sup> There is no certain explanation for this; it is possible that συμβάλλεσθαι as an Ionian idiom disappeared from the historiography.

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18 A good example of such a conclusion is Herodotus' suggestion of the language of the Pelasgians in 1,57,1-2: ἦντινα δὲ γλῶσσαν ἔεσαν οἱ Πελασγοῦ, οὐκ ἔχω ἀτρεκέως εἰπεῖν· εἰ δὲ χρεόν ἐστι τεκμαιρόμενον λέγειν τοῖσι νῦν ἔτι ἐοῦσι Πελασγῶν τῶν ὑπὲρ Τυρσηνῶν Κρησιῶνα πόλιν οἰκεόντων, οἳ ὄμουροί ποτε ἦσαν τοῖσι νῦν Δωριεῦσι καλεομένοισι - -, καὶ τῶν Πλακίην τε καὶ Σκυλάκην Πελασγῶν οἰκησάντων ἐν Ἑλλησπόντῳ, οἳ σύνοικοι ἐγένοντο Ἀθηναίοισι, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα Πελασγικὰ ἔόντα πολίσματα τὸ οὖνομα μετέβαλε, εἰ τοῦτοισι τεκμαιρόμενον δεῦ λέγειν, ἦσαν οἱ Πελασγοῦ βάρβαρον γλῶσσαν ἰέντες. Herodotus first produces the evidence and then gives his opinion concerning their original language.

19 It is curious that the Byzantine historiographer Laonikos Chalkondyles (15th century) once again places great emphasis on συμβάλλεσθαι. In the programmatic section it is used in the sense 'to make (logical) conclusions': Ευγγραφὴν δὲ τήνδε ἀποδεικνύμενοι ἐπιμνησόμεθα καὶ περὶ ἄλλων τῶν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην γενομένων, οὐκ ἀμφὶ τόνδε τὸν ἐπ' ἐμοῦ χρόνον, οἷς τε αὐτὸς παρεγενόμενον θεασάμενος, καὶ τᾶλλα ἀπὸ τε τοῦ εἰκότος, μάλιστα δὲ συμβαλλόμενος, καὶ ὡς ἔτι παρὰ τῶν τὰ ἀμείνω φρονούντων ἐδόκουν πυθέσθαι περὶ αὐτῶν, ἀλλ' ἢ ἂν εἰς μάλιστα ἔχου ὡς ἀσφαλέστατα ἐπὶ τὸ ἄμεινον ἀληθείας εἰρησθαι (p. 2,5-11, ed. E. Darko, Budapest 1922). The reason may be due to Herodotus-imitation, which is a significant feature in Laonikos' work. As far as I can see the idea of σύμβολον has now disappeared and a few pages later there is a striking example of συμβάλλεσθαι used in a parallel function to the τεκμαίρεσθαι of Hdt. 1,57,1-2 (cited in n.18). Laonikos writes: οἱ μὲν γὰρ Σκυθῶν ἀπογόνους τοὺς Τούρκους οἶονται εἶναι, ὀρθότερον δὲ συμβαλλόμενοι περὶ αὐτῶν, διὰ τὸ ἐς ἦθη οὐ πολὺ διεστηκότα καθισταμένους γλώττη συνέγυς μάλα διαχρηῆσθαι ἔτι καὶ νῦν τῇ αὐτῇ. - - κάκεῖνη δὲ ἔτι συμβάλλονται, ὡς Ἀσίας τὴν κάτω χώραν ἐνοικοῦντα βάρβαρα ἔθνη Τούρκων, Λυδῶν, Καρῶν, Φρυγῶν τε καὶ Καππαδοκῶν, Σκύθαις τὴν ἀπὸ Ταναίου ἐπὶ Σαρματίαν χώραν ἐπινομομένους ὁμόγλωττά τε ἐστί καὶ ὁμόσχευα.