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 Metaphern  
 Z. 16 *stolarum baptismatis (taetrae) nigredinis turparet inluvie*  
 und dazwischen Antithese  
 Z. 17 *vino carnis suae purificans*  
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 Metaphern mit Alliteration  
 und Homoioteleuton *fecerat dealbatam*  
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 p. 135 n. 2 vgl. S. 00.1. vgl. S. 131.  
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## FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN SPEECH SECTIONS IN THE *HISTORIES* OF HERODOTUS

by P a a v o H o h t i

Discussing the political growth of Athens, Herodotus regards democratic government as the basic factor in the process of the city's rise (5,78)<sup>1</sup>. For democracy he uses the word *isegoria*, a concept based on the equality of the right to speak. This important right of the citizens marks the distinction between democracy and tyranny; under a tyranny the people, being in the position of slaves, have no freedom of speech. But in a democracy this freedom is granted, theoretically at least, and Herodotus does not record any restrictions concerning it in the parts of the *Histories* that deal with democracies. Moreover, this freedom is stressed by the fact that Herodotus knows how easily the assembly can be influenced as is shown by his judgement on Aristagoras' influence at the Athenian assembly.<sup>2</sup>

*Isegoria* also has historiographical implications. Herodotus considers that the various versions of and stories told about an incident each have an equal right to be collected whatever his personal opinion of their truth or accuracy may be.<sup>3</sup> The same impartial attitude to historical material also appears in discussions on the authenticity of religious testimonies.<sup>4</sup> The examples mentioned concern the collection of material, but it is interesting to note that Herodotus defends his personal judgements and opinions on the basis of freedom of speech. To his own opinion of the sympathies of the Peloponnesians, who were friendly towards the Persians, he adds *εἰ δὲ ἐλευθέρως ἔξεστι εἰπεῖν*.<sup>5</sup> On another occasion he writes that he too wants to give his own opinion outspokenly

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<sup>1</sup> On the distinction between democracy and tyranny see Hdt. 5, 92 and 3,80.

<sup>2</sup> 5,97,2 πολλοὺς γὰρ οἶκε εἶναι εὐπετέστερον διαβάλλειν ἢ ἕνα. There is in the *Histories* a story, which in our view is a restriction but Herodotus does not comment on it: 6,21,2 concerning the penalty imposed on Phrynichus because of his tragedy *The capture of Miletus*. The assembly forbade its performance for ever.

<sup>3</sup> 7,152,3 (cf. 2,123,1 and 4,195,2) ἐγὼ δὲ θρεῖλω λέγειν τὰ λεγόμενα, πείθεσθαι γέ μιν οὐ παντάπασιν θρεῖλω, καὶ μοι τοῦτο τὸ ἔπος ἐχέτω ἐς πάντα <τὸν> λόγον.

<sup>4</sup> 8,77,1–2. Cf. also the practice in 9,42,2.

<sup>5</sup> 8,73,3. Cf. 5,93,2.

without regard for the negative attitude of others in a case where he knows he is right.<sup>1</sup> The same idea is expressed in later literature by the word *parresia*, which is stated by Democritus to be a peculiar feature of freedom.<sup>2</sup> Freedom of speech thus plays an important part in the political thought and historiography of Herodotus. Freedom of speech shows the close relation between the *Histories* and the political ideas of the time at which they were written.

There are, however, in the *Histories* some suggestions of restrictions in some speech situations. These are all in the sections concerned with the history of Persia. My task here is to throw some light on the function of these hints in the speech situations. The material may be divided into three parts. The first includes examples where the speaker asks for permission to speak. In the second group people are asked to speak but the question is whether they should speak honestly to their monarch. The third group is formed of two examples where giving of an honest opinion is regarded as impossible.

## I

The first suggestion of restriction of freedom of speech occurs in Croesus' question to Cyrus. Croesus is sitting quietly with Cyrus and asks suddenly: "O King, am I to say to you what is in my mind, or keep silence?"<sup>3</sup> Cyrus bids him speak and Croesus speaks of the plundering of Sardis. The function of the question is on one hand to make Croesus' position clear and to point out that he knows it exactly. On the other hand, it forms a modest starting point to the development of the discussion during which Cyrus recognizes the value of Croesus' counsels. The result of the dialogue is that Cyrus promises to give Croesus whatever he wants (1, 90,2). For our purpose it is important to note that Croesus regards himself as a slave of Cyrus (89,2) and as an indication of this gives him the allocution ὦ δέσποτα (90,2). Croesus attitude to Cyrus, however, is not servile but sincere and the value of his view gives him the right to speak out.<sup>4</sup>

Coes, like Croesus, asks Darius for permission to speak. This time the question is not put clearly in question form, but Herodotus mentions it only in passing: πυνθόμενος πρότερον εἴ οἱ φίλον εἶη γνώμην ἀποδέκεσθαι παρὰ τοῦ

<sup>1</sup> 7,139,1 ἐνθαῦτα ἀναγκαίη ἐξέργομαι γνώμην ἀποδέξασθαι ἐπίφθονον μὲν πρὸς τῶν πλεόνων ἀνθρώπων, ὅμως δέ, τῇ γέ μοι φαίνεται εἶναι ἀληθές, οὐκ ἐπισχῆσω.

<sup>2</sup> Democritus fr. 226 (D-K) οἰκίηιον ἐλευθερίας παρρησίη, κίνδυνος δὲ ἡ τοῦ καφοῦ διάγνωσις. On *Parresia* see e.g. Momigliano, RSI 83 (1971) 518-520.

<sup>3</sup> Hdt. 1,88,2. Transl. by A.D. Godley (Loeb edit.).

<sup>4</sup> 1,89,1 δικαίῳ, εἴ τι ἐνορέω πλέον, σημαίνειν σοι.

*βουλομένου ἀποδείκνυσθαι* (4,97,2). Such a question is perhaps natural and may illustrate authentic customs. It is, however, interesting that the reference to permission to speak is connected with the sincere intention of the speaker. Coes wants to give the best counsel he can.<sup>1</sup>

Summarising the speeches of Croesus and Coes we may state that they both speak on their own initiative and give counsel to their monarch after asking permission to speak. The attitude of the speaker to the monarch is sincere and slave – despot antithesis is evident. After their speeches both speakers are highly esteemed and rewarded.

With these speeches we may compare the two counsels given by Gobryas to Darius (4,132 and 134). Both are interpretations, the first of Scythian gifts, the second of omens. Gobryas gives them at Darius' request (131,2; 134,2). There is, however, in these speeches no suggestion of freedom of speech.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, Darius praises Gobryas (134,2) and Herodotus also remarks that Gobryas was one of the seven who abolished the Magi (132,2). These men, Herodotus has earlier declared (3,118,1), had free access to the king. This right without doubt also included freedom of speech and the absence of restricting remarks is explained by their relation to Darius. There is, however, in Coes' self-defence a clear intention of pointing out Darius' despotism. Coes remarks that he is not trying to justify staying at home but wants to follow Darius (4,97,5–6). This topic gains added force from the fate of Oiobazus' sons recorded a little earlier (4,84–85,1).<sup>3</sup>

## II

In this second group the question of freedom of speech occurs in another way. In all the situations Xerxes asks a single person from among the participants of a council to speak and the problem is whether the counsellor should utter his real opinion of the matter under discussion.

The first instance is the council of the Persians before the Greek expedition (7.8–11). Xerxes calls the leading Persians to the assembly to learn their opinions and afterwards to declare his will before them all.<sup>4</sup> By this Herodotus clearly indicates that Xerxes, at least in theory, leaves the council at least a

<sup>1</sup> 4,79,5 *γνώμην μὲν τὴν εὕρισκον ἀρίστην σοι, βασιλεῦ, ἐς μέσον φέρω.*

<sup>2</sup> For speeches made at the monarch's request see group two. It is naturally not surprising that restriction is not mentioned where ordinary situations are concerned. The relevance of this example may become clear in the light of the group two examples.

<sup>3</sup> On Gobryas' position see also Momigliano RSI (1971) 508.

<sup>4</sup> 7,8,1.

chance of influencing his decision. Xerxes speaks first, outlining his plans for attacking Greece. At the council he states first in his speech, like Herodotus in the preceding remark, that the purpose of the assembly is for him to declare his plans. First he speaks politely *ὑμεῖς δ' ἂν μοι τάδε ποιέοντες χαρίζοισθε* (8,d,1) but after some words the tone changes to the imperative: *ποιητέα μὲν νῦν ταῦτα ἐστὶ οὕτω* (8,d,2). Xerxes lastly leaves the matter under discussion and asks whoever of the participants wants to express his opinion, to do so.<sup>1</sup>

The discussion is opened by Mardonius, who discusses the fighting customs of the Greeks (7,9). He gives the impression that the Greeks will not dare to oppose the Persians. This speech, in which Mardonius praises<sup>2</sup> the ideas of Xerxes, must have made a foolish impression on the Greek audience. The contrast between monarch and servant is characterized in a ridiculous way<sup>3</sup>: Mardonius praises Xerxes as the best of all men who have lived or will live after him. Equally, strange to the Greek sense of justice is the argument for the subjugation of Greece: this is justified as vengeance; the Persians are more or less obliged subjugate Greece because they have also subjugated other peoples who have done them no harm (7,9,2). As a third strange point we may mention the argument of Mardonius experience in fighting against Greeks. In the light of Herodotus' judgement of it in 6,45,2 it would not be possible to speak of Mardonius expedition in such a positive manner.

Mardonius' positive reaction creates a situation in which others hesitate to express their opinions. Only Artabanus has the courage to speak. It is interesting that Herodotus explicitly says *οὐ τολμώντων γνώμην ἀποδείκνυσθαι ἀντίην τῇ προκειμένῃ* (7,10,1). The function of this statement is to stress the slave - despot contrast between the monarch and his first men. This contrast is reinforced by Herodotus with the remark that Artabanus dared to speak only by trusting to his relationship with Xerxes.

Artabanus speech contains much theoretical discussion on the deliberation with religious argument (7,10,a,1; d,1–2; e). Also concerning Mardonius concept of the Greeks Herodotus lets Artabanus speak theoretically on false accusation of the Athenians (10,η). The point of the speech to the monarch is the value of historical examples. The most important of these, the Scythian expedition, is interpreted as showing the fate of the Persian empire depending on one man. In

<sup>1</sup> 8,d,2 *ἵνα δὲ μὴ ἰδιοβουλέειν ὑμῶν δοκέω, τίθημι τὸ πρῆγμα ἐς μέσον, γνώμην κελεύων ὑμέων τὸν βουλόμενον ἀποφαίνεσθαι.*

<sup>2</sup> 10,1 *τοσαῦτα ἐπιλέηνας τὴν Ξέρξεω γνώμην.* Cf. K.H. Waters, *Historia*, Einzelschr. 15, p. 69 and note 62.

<sup>3</sup> Legrand, *Hérodote* VII p. 31, n. 2.

connexion with this Artabanus states that this interpretation is universally accepted. Here Artabanus brings the opinion of many against Mardonius' personal *empeiria*.<sup>1</sup>

Xerxes answers Artabanus in wrath saying that kinship is the only thing that saves Artabanus from receiving the reward for his foolish words (7,11,1). Thus Artabanus' speech is framed with remarks on the difficulty of proposing a dissenting opinion in order to show that people had to fear for thoughts which did not please the king.

In Xerxes' mind Artabanus lacks spirit. For a similar case we may refer to the story of Pythius (7,38–39). Pythius asks for permission for his sons to stay at home. He too has reason for protection in his *kseinia* with Xerxes. The king, however, accuses the family of Pythius of lack of virtue and gives order to kill Pythius' son. This death with the ritual performed shows how grave it was to act against persian *nomos*.<sup>2</sup> In Artabanus' case the use of this topic shows him as a criminal in Xerxes' mind.

The sense of fear among participants and speakers also occurs in other speech situations. It is possibly one factor in the Greek interpretation of Persian *tyrannis*.<sup>3</sup> A consequence of the council is that Artabanus too becomes convinced of the necessity of the campaign through the influence of irrational forces. Herodotus reports this in the dream section following the report on the council.

After the discussion on the Greek campaign Artabanus becomes the most influential of Xerxes' counsellors and the campaign is undertaken because divine help is forthcoming. The second dialogue between Xerxes and Artabanus shows us the final point reached in their relations. The dialogue begins as a result of the weeping of Xerxes (7,45–46,1). Before the opening question posed by Artabanus Herodotus characterizes Artabanus briefly as the man who *freely* counseled Xerxes not to campaign against Greece.<sup>4</sup> This formulation assumes that Artabanus is a man beyond the influence of Xerxes' opinion, a man who can say what he thinks, even if he is conscious of the power of his monarch (so

<sup>1</sup> ἐγὼ δὲ οὐδεμῆ σοφίῃ οἰκηίῃ αὐτὸς ταῦτα συμβάλλομαι. In the light of this, Mardonius' *empeiria* is judged negatively.

<sup>2</sup> On the ritual see How & Wells, Commentary ad loc.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Aesch. Persae 591-594 οὐδ' ἔτι γλῶσσα βροτοῖσι ἐν φυλακαῖς λέλυται γὰρ / λαὸς ἐλευθερά βαῆσει, / ὡς ἐλύθη ζύγον ἀλκᾶς. There is no indication of such an attitude in other than Greek sources, e.g. in the books of Esther and Ezra, which also include discussions at the Persian court.

<sup>4</sup> 7,46,1 ὃς τὸ πρῶτον γνώμην ἀπεδέξατο ἐλευθέρως οὐ συμβουλευὼν Ξέρξη στρατεύεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα.



esp. 51,1). Xerxes makes Artabanus regent of Persian empire during his absence on the campaign (52,2).

The second time the question of freedom of opinion occurs is in the dialogues between Xerxes and Demaratus (7,101–104; 209; 234–237). Demaratus too is asked for his opinion (101,1). Xerxes wants to know if the Greeks will be audacious enough to oppose Persians. Demaratus in his reply takes up the theme of freedom of opinion. He asks if Xerxes wants to know the truth, or whether he should speak according to the king's wishes (101,3).<sup>1</sup> Now Xerxes has to choose between the truth and flattery and he naturally chooses the truth. This is a very different situation from the Persian council at which Mardonius' speech represented flattery and Artabanus did not claim his speech to be truth so much as a possibly better opinion.

Demaratus, having been told to tell the truth, at once begins to do so.<sup>2</sup> Xerxes, however, regards Demaratus' truth as nonsense.<sup>3</sup> In his answer Demaratus repeats his principal antithesis ἀρχῆθεν ἠπιστάμην ὅτι ἀληθείη χρεώμενος οὐ φίλα τοι ἐρέω and discusses it. The natural starting point is Xerxes' command to him to speak the truest words. This is followed by a discussion of his relation to Sparta and to the Persian kings.

The main point of the speech is the comparison of Spartan and Persian virtue implying the slavery – freedom antithesis. At the end Demaratus returns to Xerxes' views and states that if Xerxes regards his words as futile, he will not speak any more and that he has spoken under constraint.

Constraint is a characteristic of *tyrannis*, while in a democracy one is free either to speak or keep quiet. This view is proposed by Theseus in *The Suppliant Women* of Euripides (11. 435–441). He states that everyone can either give his counsel in the assembly or keep quiet. The latter alternative has no negative colour because it is one of the citizens rights.

Demaratus is under the pressure of *tyrannis*. The words he utters are stressed as truth in a peculiar way. At first Xerxes accepts the true words of Demaratus. In the end true – false antithesis is developed into the form to speak – to be quiet. The speech is framed with antithetical constructions so as to point the truth. Demaratus cannot persuade Xerxes. Herodotus says that Xerxes made fun of his words and was *not angry* with Demaratus (105,1). This attitude to the truth shows Xerxes' wrong estimate of the Greek forces; Xerxes

<sup>1</sup> κότερα ἀληθείη χρήσομαι πρὸς σὲ ἢ ἡδονῆ;

<sup>2</sup> 102,1 ἐπειδὴ ἀληθείη διαχρήσασθαι πάντως κελεύεις ταῦτα λέγοντα τὰ μὴ ψευδόμενός τις ὕστερον ὑπὸ σεῦ ἀλώσεται.

<sup>3</sup> 103,5 φλυαρία. Cf. 103,1 γελάσας ἔφη.

thinks only in quantitative terms. Herodotus' remark that the king was not angry is very interesting. Why this is stated? On one hand we could think that wrath is expected a priori as reaction to a speech which does not please the king. More probable, however, seems to me that Herodotus wants to describe Xerxes thinking the speech so futile and nonsense that it is worth of no consideration.

In the second dialogue between Xerxes and Demaratus (7, 209) there is no question of freedom of opinion any more. The theme, however, is the same as earlier: the truth of Demaratus' words as against Xerxes' attitude. On this occasion too the antithesis true false (209,5) is used to stress the truth against Xerxes' distrust. There has, however, been a slight change in Xerxes' mind. He does not make fun as earlier, but Demaratus has made him give thought to the matter<sup>1</sup> and ask once more how the Greeks will fight. Demaratus' answer is only a repeated claim to speak the truth: let Xerxes deal with him as a liar if his words do not prove true.

In the third dialogue we are told of Xerxes change of opinions. Xerxes now praises Demaratus saying that he has told the truth.<sup>2</sup> Demaratus also is polite: he wants to give his sincere counsel in the best interests of the king.<sup>3</sup> Demaratus' counsel, however, is bitterly opposed by Achaemenes who warns Xerxes of envy (236). As a result Xerxes follows Achaemenes' opinion but this conclusion is by no means hostile to Demaratus. In his last Speech Xerxes asserts his confidence in him: He has in his own way intended the best for the king (237,1). Xerxes argues his point in a manner familiar to all Greeks. He says that a *kseinos* always gives the best counsel to his *kseinos* and does not envy him in the way citizens usually envy the luck of their fellow citizens (237,2–3). With this defence Xerxes also shows his high regard for Demaratus.

As a third example, in spite of some differences, we may mention Artemisia's speech at the council of Phaleron (8,67–69). In this case it is not directly a question of freedom of opinion, but the situation, fear of different opinion, calls to mind the atmosphere in the Persian council in 7,11. Like Demaratus Artemisia defends her right to say what she thinks best for the king.<sup>4</sup> The members of the council are especially worried by Artemisia's argument about

<sup>1</sup> κάρτα τε δὴ Ξέρξη ἄπιστα ἐφαίμετο τὰ λεγόμενα εἶναι.

<sup>2</sup> 234,1 Δημάρητε, ἀνὴρ εἷς ἀγαθός. τεκμαίρομαι δὲ τῇ ἀληθείῃ. ὅσα γὰρ εἶπας, ἅπαντα ἀπέβη οὕτω.

<sup>3</sup> 235,1 ὦ βασιλεῦ, εἰ μὲν δὴ συμβουλευεαί μοι προθύμως, δίκαιόν με σοί ἐστι φράζειν τὸ ἄριστον.

<sup>4</sup> 68,a,1 τὴν δὲ εὐδοκίαν γνώμην με δίκαιόν ἐστι ἀποδείκνυσθαι, τὰ τυγχάνω φρονέουσα ἄριστα ἐς πρήγματα τὰ σά.

bad servants of good leaders (68, g).<sup>1</sup> After the speech the audience is divided in two sections, one worried, the other glad because they think this will be the end of Artemisia (69,1). The attitude of the second section reveals their fear of the despot, which prevents them honestly expressing a dissenting opinion. The result of the council is analogous to both the earlier dialogues. Artemisia is praised for her sincere attitude despite the rejection of her opinion.<sup>2</sup>

All the examples in this group concern councils or discussions with Xerxes. The tendency is for the persons asked for an opinion, to be afraid at first of proposing an opinion differing from that of Xerxes. In the case of Mardonius this is not clearly expressed because of the nature of dialogue spoken privately. Xerxes' first reaction to these is wrath, or it is at least expected to be, but during the discussions the attitude of the king changes. In the end he feels a high respect for the speakers who had the courage to speak honestly. Why Xerxes does not follow their counsels is another matter which cannot be discussed here. In the arguments qualities of knowledge occupy a central part. In the speeches of Artabanus a universally accepted interpretation is posed against Mardonius' negatively coloured *empeiria*. Demaratus and Artemisia speak from their own experience, which is based on real knowledge of facts and situations. Similar to the first group is the sincere attitude of the speakers and the high regard they win for their speeches.

### III

There are two more short sections in the later parts of the *Histories* that are concerned with the restriction of freedom of opinion. Both are included in stories reported to Herodotus by named persons. The first (8,65) by Dicaeus, the second (9,16) by Thersandrus. The character of these is quite different from the earlier examples. They are intended to illustrate the function of gods in events.<sup>3</sup> Dicaeus interprets the voice of the God of Eleusis as a bad omen for the Persians. This *πλέον εἰδέναι* will not please Xerxes and Demaratus therefore forbids Dicaeus to tell anybody about it. This sounds rather strange from Demaratus, who gained his esteemed position as a friend of Xerxes by saying what he really thought. Herodotus' purpose is not, however, to show

<sup>1</sup> The same topic is found in the speech of Achaemenes to Xerxes in 236,1.

<sup>2</sup> 8,69,2 *κάρτα τε ἤσθη τῆ γνώμη τῆ Ἀρτεμισίης, καὶ νομίζων ἔτι πρότερον σπουδαίην εἶναι τότε πολλῶ μᾶλλον αἶνεε.*

<sup>3</sup> 8,65,5 *περὶ δὲ στρατιῆς τῆσδε θεοῖσι μελήσει*, 9,16,4 *ὅτι δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀμήχανον ἀποτρέψαι ἀνθρώπων.*

Demaratus as humiliated. The point of the story lies in the emphasis on the warning as a *prolepsis*. Herodotus has pointed out that Demaratus is the man who has the greatest influence on Xerxes.<sup>1</sup> Now the portent and its interpretation are seen as so grave that even Demaratus will not be able to defend for Xerxes' wrath if someone reports it to him. By the prohibition Herodotus points the value of the portent. Even after the speech he states that the Persians would have foreseen the fate of their fleet on the basis of this portent (8,65,6).

The story told by Thersandrus contains the discussion in the house of Attaginus. Here we find some topics known from other speeches in the *Histories*. The Persian's statement about the forthcoming destruction of the Persian army and his weeping by saying this call to mind Xerxes' words at Abydos, where he speaks to Artabanus of the brevity of human life and how no one will be alive after a hundred years. In Attaginus' words the brevity of human life is treated quite differently from Xerxes' meaning: the life extends only into the near future. The question of the Orchomenian about whether the impending destruction of the Persians should be told to Mardonius and other leading Persians, has less force than the corresponding part of the story of Dicaeus. In the answer to it it is stated that the functioning of the gods makes it pointless to tell Mardonius about it. In the light of this statement the fate of the Persians seems predetermined, because the Persian generals do not have any insight into divine influence.

Herodotus uses the question of freedom of speech only in connexion of Persian history. The above interpretation shows, I hope, that it is used only as a characteristic of tyranny, and does not appear as a real problem. The question of freedom of speech develops to question of freedom of opinion and functions for stressing arguments with special value. The literary use is attested also by the fact that the speakers are rewarded after the speeches and became highly esteemed by the monarchs. This happens also in cases when their counsels are not followed.

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<sup>1</sup> 8,65,5 *καί σε ὅτε ἐγὼ δυνήσομαι ῥύσασθαι οὐτ' ἄλλος ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ εἶς.*