

Herodotos 3.80.1 emended

The seven conspirators have just succeeded in assassinating the two *magoi*—the impostor Smerdis, posing as the Achaimenid of the same name, and his brother Patizeithes who put him up to it. Ever since then, says Herodotos, the anniversary of that day of liberation has been celebrated in Persia. He continues (according to all texts):

ἐπείτε δὲ κατέστη ὁ θόρυβος καὶ ἔκτος πέντε ἡμερέων ἐγένετο, ἐβουλευόντο οἱ ἐπανα-
στάντες τοῖσι μάγοις . . . ‘Once the commotion had died down *and five days had*
passed, the men who had mounted the putsch against the magoi met to discuss . . .:

ἐκτός : ἐντός ABCTMP | ἐγένετο : ἐγένοντο DRSV (om. M.)

But ‘and it was outside five days’ is impossible Greek, on two counts. First, in expressions of this kind the verb should have a personal subject, as at 1.50.2: ὡς δὲ ἐκ τῆς θυσίης ἐγένετο ‘when he had finished the sacrifice’; cf. also 2.78, 5.18.2 and 6.129.2 for the expression ἀπὸ δείπνου γένεσθαι ‘to have finished dinner’.¹ It is this construction that the variant ἐγένοντο seeks to restore; but that will not do, for the conspirators have not been mentioned for some while. As a desperate, and wholly improbable, way out, Stein proposed taking ὁ θόρυβος as the subject; to perform this function, he admits, it would have to be thought of as possessing ‘eine dauernde Existenz’ even though it had already ‘settled down’!

Secondly, and more seriously, ἐκτός in a temporal sense is unparalleled not only in Hdt. but in LSJ altogether.

One might perhaps consider ἐκ τῶν πέντε ἡμερέων. Sextus Empiricus *adv. Math.* 33 (Greek cited in Stein) claims ‘the Persian aristocrats have the tradition that, when their king dies, they spend the following five days in a state of ἀνομία—not out of grief, but to remind themselves just how awful anarchy actually is.’ If that were a valid piece of evidence, the putative article in Herodotos would mean ‘the five days you are all familiar with.’ However, it seems most unlikely that such an item of knowledge could be assumed without explanation; and anyway, the passage looks suspiciously like a creative secondary elaboration of the Herodotean text itself, as How & Wells note; and the lack of a subject for the verb remains problematic.

We should resist the temptation to emend to something like ‘when the sixth day succeeded the five . . .’ —ἕκτος, ‘sixth’! True, Hdt. does say ‘on the fifth or sixth day after this . . .’ (1.1.3; 3.42.1), and he does use the structure ‘five years they . . . and in the sixth . . .’ (1.74.2; 3.59.2); but I can’t see any easy way of bending the text here in either of those directions. [Powell translates ‘and the fifth or sixth day came’, showing that he too was thinking along those lines—did he publish a proposal? No note in the ‘critical appendix’ at the end of vol. ii of the tr.]

The solution to the problem is to build on the v. l. ἐντός, restoring the noun πένθος, ‘mourning.’ ‘Once the commotion had died down *and five days’ mourning had taken place*’. Herodotos often describes the mourning rituals operated by various societies for deceased royalty, and πενθ- is his regular word. Compare especially 6.58.3 (Sparta) ἐπεὶ δὲ θάψωσι, ἀγορῆ δέκα ἡμερέων οὐκ ἴσταται σφι . . . ἀλλὰ πενθέουσι ταύτας τὰς ἡμέρας (ten days, not five as here, for of course Spartan kings have double rations of everything).

¹And Paus. 7.5.1 ὡς ἐγένετο ἀπὸ τῆς θήρας . . .

Cf. further

- Kyros himself carrying out, and commanding his subjects to perform, a μέγα πένθος for his wife Kassandane at 2.1.1. It so happens that we know the period during which the Babylonians mourned their dead queen: Addaru 27th – 3rd Nisannu 538, i. e. March 21–26.² Counting inclusively or exclusively? If the latter: five days!
- the oracle delivered to the Spartans at 7.220.4:

ἀφ' Ἡρακλέους δὲ γενέθλης
πενθήσει βασιλῆ φθίμενον Λακεδαιμόνος οὔρου
- and the Skythians who mourn Salmoxis' passing at 4.95.5.

Here it is not (of course) the false Smerdis, the impudent *magos*, who is mourned by the Persian aristocrats, but Kambyses and his brother the genuine Smerdis who, as a result of the usurpation, have not yet received their official state exequies.

Corruption was easy:

KAIHENOCHIENTE ⇒ KAIHENTOCIENTE ⇒ KAIENTOCIENTE, with ἐκτός as a subsequent 'correction'.

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²Dandamaev *PolHist* 56.