

Let us now examine the books of the ancients and their monuments; let us compare what they have said of the ibis, or the figures of it which they have traced, with the bird which we have been describing; and we shall see all our difficulties vanishing, and all the testimonies according with what is best of all for the purpose, the body itself of the bird preserved in the mummy.

“The most common ibises,” says Herodotus, (Euterpe, No. 76.) “have the head and the forepart of the neck bare, the plumage white, excepting on the head, the nape, the ends of the wings and of the rump, which are black.\* Their beak and feet are similar to those of the other ibises.”

How does it happen that the travellers of our times do not make so good descriptions of the birds which they observe as that which Herodotus has made of the ibis? How could this description have been applied to a bird which has only the face bare, and which has that part of a red colour, to a bird which has the rump white, and not covered over at least as ours by the black feathers of the wings?

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\* Ψιλὴ τὴν κεφαλὴν, καὶ τὴν δειρὴν πασαν. Λευκὴ πτεροῖσι, πλην κεφαλῆς, καὶ αὐχένος καὶ ἄκρων τῶν πτερύγων, καὶ πυγαίᾳ ἄκρη. Larcher, in his French translation of Herodotus, has properly understood the difference of the words *αὐχην*, the nape, and *δειρην* or *δείρη* the throat.