Herodotus:
The Father of History
Part I
Professor Elizabeth Vandiver

THE TEACHING COMPANY ®

Elizabeth Vandiver, Ph.D.

Director, Honors Humanities Program, University of Maryland

Elizabeth Vandiver did her undergraduate work at Shimer College, Mt. Carroll, Illinois, where she matriculated in 1972 as a sixteen-year-old early entrant. After receiving her B.A. in 1975, she spent several years working as a librarian before deciding to pursue graduate work in Classics at the University of Texas at Austin. She received her M.A. in 1984 and her Ph.D. in 1990.

At the University of Maryland, Professor Vandiver directs the Honors Humanities Program and teaches for that program and for the Department of Classics. Before coming to Maryland, she held visiting professorships at Northwestern University, where she taught from 1996 to 1999; the University of Georgia; the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome, Italy; Loyola University, New Orleans; and Utah State University.

In 1998, Dr. Vandiver received the American Philological Association's Excellence in Teaching award, the most prestigious teaching award available to American classicists. Other awards include the Northwestern University Department of Classics Excellence in Teaching award for 1998 and the University of Georgia's Outstanding Honors Professor award in 1993 and 1994.

Dr. Vandiver has published a book, *Heroes in Herodotus: The Interaction of Myth and History*, and several articles, and has also delivered numerous papers at national and international conferences. Her translation of Johannes Cochlaeus' 1549 *Commentary on the Works and Writings of Martin Luther* was published in 2002 under the title *Luther's Lives*; this is the first English translation of Cochlaeus' work. She is currently working on a third book, examining the influence of the Classical tradition on the British poets of World War I. Her previous Teaching Company courses include *The Iliad of Homer*, *The Odyssey of Homer*, *Virgil's Aeneid*, *Classical Mythology*, and *Greek Tragedy*.

Dr. Vandiver is married to Franklin J. Hildy, Ph.D., Professor of Theatre History at the University of Maryland.

Table of Contents
Herodotus: The Father of History
Part I

Herodotus: The Father of History

Scope:

This series of twenty-four lectures introduces the student to the work of Herodotus, the first Greek historian. We consider Herodotus' work in its cultural context, as a work of history, and as a literary achievement.

The first lecture sets the stage for the course by considering key issues of definition and terminology, including the definition of *history*; introducing Herodotus himself; and discussing the political organization of ancient Greece. The lecture provides context for the course by discussing important events that occurred during the late fifth and early sixth centuries B.C.E. The lecture closes by discussing the course's format and approach.

Lectures Two through Five provide essential background and contextual information. Lecture Two discusses the kinds of writing about the recent past that existed before Herodotus wrote and possible influences on him. This lecture analyzes Herodotus' opening sentence in close detail to demonstrate his creation of a new genre. Lecture Three considers the importance of myth and oral tradition for Herodotus' work and Lecture Four looks at Homeric epic and its influence on Herodotus' choice of subject matter and organization for the *Histories*. In Lecture Five, we discuss the crucial sixth-century intellectual movement known as the Ionian Enlightenment and its exploration of philosophical and scientific concepts of causation.

In Lectures Six and Seven, we turn to the importance of Athens for Herodotus' thought and achievement. Lecture Six sketches Athenian history through the late sixth century, placing particular emphasis on those events that laid the groundwork for democracy. Lecture Seven turns to the fifth century itself, Athens' "Golden Age," and discusses the political and intellectual developments that occurred between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars. In particular, we discuss the philosophical movement Sophism and the development of tragedy; the lecture considers how each of these genres influenced Herodotus' work.

In Lecture Eight, we consider the parameters of scope, design, and organization of Herodotus' work. The lecture discusses the frequent "digressions" in the *Histories*, with special focus on the ethnographic and geographical digressions. In particular, we look at Herodotus' discussion of the Nile. Finally, the lecture discusses the work's division into nine "books."

Lectures Nine through Eleven focus on Book I of the *Histories* and Herodotus' account of the beginnings of Persian-Greek conflict. Lecture Nine discusses Herodotus' synopsis of mythic accounts of the beginnings of Greek-Asian enmity, in rationalized versions of famous Greek myths about the abductions of women. The lecture surveys some possible interpretations of this passage, then examines Herodotus' statement that he will begin his own account with the first barbarian he knows to have wronged the Greeks, Croesus of Lydia. Lecture Ten continues our examination of Croesus, paying close attention to Herodotus' account of the Athenian sage Solon's visit to Croesus' court. We see how Herodotus uses this encounter to underline his portrayal of the differences between Greeks and Asians. The lecture then discusses Herodotus' account of Croesus' downfall and notes this story's structural and thematic affinities with Greek tragedy. Lecture Eleven covers Herodotus' treatment of the man who conquered Croesus, Cyrus the Great of Persia. The lecture summarizes modern scholarship on ancient Persia and Cyrus, outlines the most important episodes of Cyrus' reign, and discusses the legendary account Herodotus gives of his birth and childhood.

Lecture Twelve highlights Herodotus' longest "digression," his account of Egypt, which occupies the entire second book of the *History*. The lecture discusses Herodotus' treatment of the geography, marvels, customs, and history of Egypt. We pay special attention to Herodotus' treatment of Egyptian religion, because he makes some of his most interesting and important statements about Greek theology and mythology here.

Lectures Thirteen and Fourteen resume the discussion of the beginnings of the Persian Empire. Lecture Thirteen summarizes the career of Cyrus' son Cambyses and the ascension of his successor, Darius, to the Persian throne. We look carefully at the famous "Constitutional Debate" over the best form of government, which Herodotus ascribes to the Persian Magi. The lecture also examines the Bisitun Inscription and compares its account of Darius' ascension to that of Herodotus, before turning to a brief summary of the organization of the Persian Empire, the largest and most powerful empire of its day. Lecture Fourteen treats Darius' expedition against Scythia but focuses on Herodotus' portrayal of the Scythians themselves and their origins, customs, and history. The lecture looks carefully at Herodotus' strange story in which the Scythians' ancestry is attributed to Heracles' mating with a snake-

woman and discusses some of its possible implications. The lecture then summarizes modern historical and archaeological scholarship about the Scythians.

In Lecture Fifteen, we turn to an examination of Athens' great rival for hegemony in Greece, Sparta. The lecture discusses Sparta's cultural and political history and the ways in which all elements of Spartan society were focused on militarism and the production of the best possible soldiers.

Lectures Sixteen through Nineteen discuss the Persian Wars themselves. In Lecture Sixteen, we consider the events leading up to the first invasion of Greece in 490 B.C.E. and the invasion itself. The lecture describes the Ionian Revolt of 499–494 B.C.E., the role that Athens played in helping the rebellious Ionian cities, and Darius' consequent desire for vengeance against Athens. The lecture then turns to a discussion of the Battle of Marathon, in which the Athenians defeated Darius' troops. Lecture Seventeen opens our discussion of the second Persian invasion of Greece in 480–479 B.C.E. The lecture summarizes the aftermath of Marathon and describes the ascension of Darius' son Xerxes and his decision to continue his father's campaign against Greece. The lecture discusses Herodotus' description of the size and composition of Xerxes' army and compares Herodotus' figures to the views of modern historians. The lecture also details some of the narrative methods by which Herodotus focuses attention on the important symbolic or emotional elements of his account.

Lecture Eighteen details Herodotus' accounts of two crucial battles: Thermopylae and Artemisium. These two battles took place simultaneously: Thermopylae, on land under the leadership of King Leonidas and Artemisium, at sea. The lecture concentrates on Herodotus' account of Thermopylae; it includes discussions of Herodotus' portrayal of the Spartan King Leonidas and of the famous epitaph that was written for the Spartan dead. In Lecture Nineteen, we turn to three more crucial battles, Salamis, Plataea, and Mycale, and to the final siege of Sestos in Ionia. The lecture concentrates on Herodotus' account of the events leading up to the Battle of Salamis. The lecture discusses the divergence between Herodotus' account and that of the "Troezen Decree" and the implications for our evaluation of Herodotus' accuracy. The lecture then looks quickly at the last two important battles of the Persian Wars, the Battles of Plataea and Mycale. Finally, the lecture discusses the Athenian siege of Sestos and the final chapters of the *Histories*.

Lectures Twenty through Twenty-Two turn to interpretive issues. Lecture Twenty discusses Herodotus' use of individuals and their actions as explanations for historical events. The lecture examines some of the types of individuals who recur throughout the *Histories*, such as the "wise advisor," and notes how, in Herodotus' presentation, the events of history are driven not by sweeping political or economic factors but by individuals. This lecture also examines Herodotus' treatment of whole peoples and nations and his statements about the importance of *nomos* (custom). Lecture Twenty-One turns from human to divine causation, looking at Herodotus' treatment of gods, oracles, visions, and dreams. The lecture examines Herodotus' discussion of Heracles as an Egyptian god and argues that this shows the seriousness with which Herodotus views theological matters. The lecture then examines Herodotus' treatment of divine retribution in the *Histories*. Lecture Twenty-Two poses the question "history, literature, or both?" about Herodotus' work. The lecture discusses Herodotus' use of elements normally associated with literature, such as careful balancing of motifs and characters, recurrent themes, and the sense of an overall pattern in the work. We examine several of these elements through a discussion of Darius' and Xerxes' violations of physical and symbolic boundaries and the results of these violations. Finally, the lecture provides a careful reading of the final chapters of the *Histories* and addresses the question of whether Herodotus intended the work to end as it does.

Lecture Twenty-Three considers the political context in which Herodotus probably wrote the *Histories*. During the 420s B.C.E., Athens and Sparta were enemies in a conflict called the Peloponnesian War; the lecture summarizes the most important events of the early years of that war. The lecture discusses the question of when Herodotus' work may have been published, then turns to the vexing question of Herodotus' attitude toward Athens. We consider whether Herodotus was pro-Athenian, pro-Spartan, or a nonpartisan who regretted the conflict of these two great cities. The lecture concludes by introducing Herodotus' successor, Thucydides, who wrote a history of the Peloponnesian War.

The final lecture begins by considering some of the major differences between Thucydides' work and Herodotus' and discusses the degree to which the two historians' methodologies differ. We then turn to an examination of later writers' views of Herodotus, including the historian Plutarch's statement that Herodotus was the "father of lies," not the "father of history," an idea that has its adherents even today. The lecture then discusses the partial rehabilitation of Herodotus' reputation in the Renaissance and the lowering of his prestige again in the nineteenth century. Finally,

the lecture discusses the recognition of Herodotus' achievement that took place in the twentieth century and his influence on genres other than history.

Lecture One
Herodotus and History

Scope: This introductory lecture sets the stage for the course in four main ways. The lecture begins by identifying key issues of definition and terminology; the discussion of the definition of *history* that we begin here will continue in the second lecture. Second, the lecture introduces students to Herodotus: who he was, when he lived (the fifth century B.C.E.), and why he is often called the "Father of History." Next, the lecture discusses the political organization of ancient Greece and the fact that there was no unified Greek "state" in Herodotus' day; we also briefly define the various standard periods of Greek history. The lecture then provides context for the course by discussing important events that occurred during the late fifth and early sixth centuries B.C.E. in Ionia (western Turkey) and Athens, including the Persian Wars, the main topic of Herodotus' *Histories*. Finally, the lecture introduces students to the overall plan of the course.

Outline

I. This introductory lecture has five main objects.
   A. The lecture begins by discussing possible definitions of the term *history*.
   B. Next, we discuss Herodotus: who he was, when he lived, and why he is called the "Father of History."
   C. We then look briefly at the concept of the Greek *polis*, or city-state; discuss the ancient concept of "Greekness"; and define the various periods of Greek history to which we will refer throughout the course.
   D. Next, the lecture provides context for Herodotus' writing by sketching crucial events that occurred during the late sixth and early fifth centuries B.C.E.
   E. Finally, the lecture describes the overall approach of the course.

II. What is *history*?
   A. In popular usage, the term *history* has two separate and distinct meanings.
      1. *History* can mean the actual events of the past.
      2. *History* also means the narrative account or description of those events.
   B. This course is concerned primarily with the second of these meanings.
      1. We will discuss Herodotus' motivations for undertaking his work and examine the narrative and historiographical choices he made in the presentation of his material.
      2. We will also discuss the relationship of Herodotus' narrative to the actual events it relates and the issues that modern historians face in evaluating his accuracy.

III. Who was Herodotus and why is he called the "Father of History"?
   A. Herodotus was born in Halicarnassus in Caria (western Turkey). This area was Greek-speaking and culturally Greek.
      1. Ancient tradition says that he was born in 484 B.C.E.
      2. He probably died sometime in the 420s B.C.E.
   B. We know very little about Herodotus' life.
      1. Herodotus himself says that he had traveled widely.
      2. He was probably exiled to the island of Samos for taking part in struggles against the tyrant Lygdamis.
      3. At some point, he lived in Athens.
      4. He moved to the Greek colony of Thurii in southern Italy and probably died there.
   C. Herodotus is called the "Father of History" because he was the first Greek writer to attempt fully to describe events of the recent human past and to explain the causes of those events.
      1. We do not know when Herodotus began writing, but his work was probably published some time in the 420s B.C.E.
      2. His main topic was the Persian Wars of 490 and 480–79 B.C.E.
      3. To set the background for his discussion of the Persian Wars, Herodotus describes various ancient cultures and events many hundreds of years before his own time.

4. Herodotus could be called the "Father of Ethnography," the "Father of Anthropology," or even the "Father of Travelogues," as well as the "Father of History."

IV. The Persian Wars are usually described as a Persian invasion of "Greece." Ancient Greece was not a unified country, however, but a collection of independent city-states with a wide variety of governments.

  A. The basic political unit in ancient Greece was the *polis* (pl. *poleis*), or "city-state."
  1. These communities resembled cities, because they were relatively small.
  2. They resembled states, because they were self-governing and independent.

  B. The citizens of the various *poleis* recognized a cultural link among themselves; they distinguished between Greeks, or Hellenes, and non-Greeks, or barbarians.
  1. The *poleis* shared a common language.
  2. They worshipped the same gods in the same manner, though each *polis* had its own religious festivals that were unique to it.
  3. They shared many customs.
  4. But there was no nation of "Greece" at the time of the Persian Wars and no centralized political leadership.
  5. The Hellenic world was not coterminous with the modern state of Greece; Greek *poleis* existed in Sicily and in western Turkey.

  C. The shared elements of "Greekness" did not preclude strong hostilities and rivalries among *poleis*.

  D. One of the remarkable things about the Persian Wars was the extent to which the various Greek *poleis* united to fight off the common threat.

V. The *polis* system probably developed in the eighth century B.C.E. Scholars call this was a period of Greek history the Archaic Age.

  A. Scholars divide Greek history into several time periods.
  1. The Early Bronze Age lasted from 3000–2100 B.C.E.
  2. The Middle Bronze Age ran from 2100–1600 B.C.E.
  3. The Late Bronze Age (1600–1150 B.C.E.) was the period when the great Mycenaean culture flourished in Greece.
  4. The Dark Ages ran from 1150–776 B.C.E.
  5. The Archaic Period lasted from 776 to 490 B.C.E., the date of the first Persian invasion of Greece.
  6. The Classical Age ran from 490–323 B.C.E.

  B. Obviously, these period distinctions are highly artificial, but they do mark out noticeable cultural changes.

  C. For the purposes of this course, the most important periods are the Archaic and early Classical, the periods about which Herodotus wrote.

VI. Accomplishments such as Herodotus' do not occur in a cultural vacuum. Many factors contributed to Herodotus' invention of the genre "history" in the 420s B.C.E.

  A. Crucial cultural and political developments took place in Ionia, just north of Herodotus' home region of Caria.
  1. In the sixth century B.C.E., Ionia underwent a period of intellectual development that laid the groundwork for most later Greek philosophy and science and influenced the development of historiography.
  2. Several Ionian city-states rebelled against their Persian rulers in 499–494 B.C.E. This rebellion had crucial consequences for the rest of the Hellenic world.

  B. The political and cultural ascendancy of Athens in the mid- and late fifth century B.C.E. was also a significant factor, because Herodotus lived and worked in Athens at some point.

VII. The Persian Wars, Herodotus' main subject, were fought in two episodes, ten years apart.

  A. The first Persian invasion of 490 B.C.E. ended with the Athenians' victory at the Battle of Marathon.

  B. The second Persian attack on Greece took place in 480–479 B.C.E. and, again, ended in Greek victory. The most important battles were Salamis, in which the Athenian fleet was crucial, and Plataea, a land battle under the command of the Spartan Pausanias.

C. Athens played an essential role in both Persian Wars.
   1. Athens' contribution to the victory over the Persians led to her position of hegemony in Greece.
   2. Athens' political power, in turn, influenced her cultural and intellectual development in the middle and late fifth century B.C.E.

D. Thus, the Persian Wars were both the subject of Herodotus' work and a necessary catalyst for its writing.

VIII. In the aftermath of the Persian Wars, Athens gained an unprecedented degree of power over other *poleis*, which led to strife later in the century.

A. Athens' hegemony was based on naval power; Athens headed a league of states, including several islands, called the Delian League.
   1. During the fifth century B.C.E., the Delian League became more and more an Athenian empire.
   2. Resentment over Athens' growing power was instrumental in causing the Peloponnesian War.

B. The Peloponnesian War pitted Athens and her allies against Sparta and her allies.
   1. The war lasted from 431 to 404 B.C.E.
   2. It ended with the defeat of Athens.

C. Bracketed by two wars, the fifth century B.C.E. was a century of both innovation and turmoil, especially in Athens.

IX. This was as true in the cultural and artistic arena as in the political and military. The period between the two great wars of the fifth century B.C.E. saw the greatest artistic, political, and literary flourishing that Athens would ever know.

A. In politics, this was the century in which democracy developed.

B. In literature, the fifth century B.C.E. saw the creation not only of the genre of history but also of the genres of tragedy and comedy.

C. Scientific, medical, and philosophical thinking reached a level of sophistication unlike anything seen before in the Greek world.

D. Under the leader Pericles, many of the most famous buildings of ancient Athens, including the Parthenon, were constructed.

E. Herodotus' work should be seen against this overall intellectual and cultural background.

X. This course will give a multifaceted view of Herodotus' achievement, both in its cultural context and as the fountainhead of later European historiography. The lectures will encompass several approaches and key themes.

A. We will set Herodotus' historiography in context by discussing background, predecessors, and influences on his work.

B. We will also examine Herodotus' narrative style and historiographical methods.

C. We will summarize the historical information that Herodotus gives about the Persian Wars and about different peoples and societies; we will also supplement his information with the work of modern scholars.

D. Throughout the course, the essential readings will be drawn primarily from the *Histories* themselves.

Supplementary Reading:

Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 5, Ch. 2.

Marincola, "Introduction," pp. ix–xiii.

Osborne, *Classical Greece*, Ch. 1.

Questions to Consider:

1. The *poleis* of ancient Greece shared a sense of cultural affinity and of "Greekness" but were also fiercely independent and capable of fighting with one another. Can you think of any modern analogies for this kind of shared identity without a shared political system?

2. The word *history* means both the facts of the past and the genre of writing that recounts those facts. In which sense was it possible to say that the end of the Cold War marked the "end of history"?

Lecture Two
"Inquiry" and the Birth of History

Scope: In this lecture, we discuss the task that Herodotus set himself in writing his account of the past and the reasons he gives for undertaking such a task. We begin by looking at the kinds of writing about the recent past that predated Herodotus, especially the works of the *logographers* and of Hecataeus. The lecture then analyzes the opening sentence of the *Histories*, in which Herodotus sets out his reasons for writing his work, in close detail, defining and discussing several key Greek words. We pay special attention to the Greek word *historiê*—"inquiry" or "research"—from which our word *history* is derived, and consider the implications of the fact that no word for *history* existed before Herodotus wrote his work. Through the close reading of the first sentence, we see how Herodotus invented a whole new genre, as he set out to examine the events leading up to the great Persian Wars, the causes of those events, and their interrelationships with one another.

Outline

I. Herodotus' undertaking was to record the recent human past and to explain why events had happened as they had. Herodotus was not the first to write an account of the recent past, but his work differs in important ways from that of his predecessors.

   A. The most important forerunners and contemporaries of Herodotus were the *logographers*.
   1. *Logos* means (among other things) "account"; it is the term Herodotus uses for individual sections of his *Histories*.
   2. Many of these *logographers* came from Ionia, a region just north of Herodotus' own native Caria.

   B. Because the works of the *logographers* have not survived, their precise nature is hard to determine. They seem to have fallen into several distinct categories:
   1. Ethnographical treatises described the customs of non-Greek peoples.
   2. Geographical works detailed the peoples visited on a journey.
   3. Mythographical works attempted to systematize traditional myths.
   4. Local histories listed events in one particular city, often starting with its foundation.
   5. Chronological treatises attempted to work out consistent time reckonings.

   C. Some of these forms of writing may have developed contemporaneously or even after Herodotus' work.

II. Among the *logographers*, one writer stands out as the most important influence on Herodotus: Hecataeus of Miletus. He wrote two major works, neither of which has survived.

   A. His *Periodos Gês* (*Journey around the World*) described the places and peoples encountered on a voyage around the Mediterranean and Black Sea.
   1. This work was divided into two books, Europe and Asia.
   2. It was an attempt to describe the entire known world.
   3. Hecataeus developed a map to accompany this work.

   B. The *Genealogies* consisted of at least four books. This work focused on families that claimed a divine ancestor.
   1. Hecataeus may have concentrated on the rationalization of myth in *Genealogies*.
   2. Unfortunately, its first sentence is ambiguously worded, leaving unclear precisely what Hecataeus intended to do in the work.

   C. There is no question that Herodotus knew Hecataeus' work. However, Herodotus' main innovation was to attempt not only to list and describe, or to rationalize the fabulous, but to explain the causes of events.

III. The opening sentence of the *Histories* provides insight into Herodotus' motivations and achievement and goes a long way toward explaining how his work differed from anything that had preceded it. Almost every word of this justly famous sentence requires careful consideration and explanation.

   A. Herodotus begins by giving his name and birthplace.
   1. In this, he follows Hecataeus but also differs from him.

2. Hecataeus says "I write…" but Herodotus puts the stress on the work itself by putting his name in the possessive case.

B. The third word of the sentence, *historiês*, is crucial. *Historiê* means "inquiry" or "research"; when Herodotus wrote, there was no word for *history*.
   1. Herodotus says that he is setting out his research, telling his audience what he found out by inquiry.
   2. Because Herodotus' work was a new kind of writing, for which a term was needed, *historiê* came to mean "history" in our sense.

C. The next word, *apodexis*, is the subject of the sentence.
   1. The translation "publication" is anachronistic.
   2. Herodotus' work was almost definitely "shown forth" through oral recitations.

D. *Ta genomena ex anthrôpôn* means "the things that have come about from human beings."
   1. This is an important delineation of Herodotus' subject matter; he is interested in human achievements.
   2. His concern is to keep those "things that have come about" from growing faded through the passage of time.

E. In the next phrase, Herodotus narrows *ta genomena* down by specifying that he is concerned with *erga megala te kai thômasta*, "great and astonishing works or deeds."
   1. *Erga* can mean both "works," such as monuments or feats of engineering, and "deeds."
   2. Herodotus thus allows himself room for recounting noteworthy human achievements, such as the pyramids, and noteworthy human actions, such as the Persian Wars.

F. Herodotus specifies his intention to recount the deeds and actions of both Greeks and foreigners, or barbarians.
   1. The term *barbarian* simply meant "foreigner" in Greek.
   2. When Herodotus says that he wants to record great and astonishing deeds by Greeks and "barbarians," he is not necessarily implying that those non-Greeks were in any way uncivilized or savage.

G. Herodotus' purpose in recording the *erga megala te kai thômasta* is to keep them from becoming *aklea*—"without glory."
   1. This phrase clearly echoes the purpose of epic, to confer *kleos* on its heroes.
   2. Herodotus is thus claiming for himself a commemorative function similar to Homer's.

IV. Thus far, Herodotus has presented two reasons for setting out his inquiry: so that noteworthy events will not be forgotten and so that human achievements will not lose their glory. The last clause of the opening sentence is perhaps the most important of all.

A. Here, Herodotus says that he wants to record everything else and "through what cause [*aitiê*] they warred with one another."
   1. *Aitiê* means "reason," as well as "cause"; it can also mean "complaint," "charge," or "grievance."
   2. All of these meanings seem to be at work here.

B. This is the point at which Herodotus breaks truly new ground: in his stated desire not simply to list events but to explain the reasons for the conflict between Greeks and Persians.

V. Herodotus' work did not spring up in a vacuum; there were several important influences at work on Herodotus in each of the questions that he set himself to answer.

A. He was deeply influenced by the traditional oral accounts of the remote past.

B. His organization of his work and his focus on individuals' actions owe a great deal to the epics of Homer.

C. His desire to find explanations for the causes of events was influenced by the intellectual climate of his own day, both in Ionia and Athens.

Supplementary Reading:

Fowler, "Herodotos and His Contemporaries."

Arieti, *Discourses*, Introduction, pp. 1–7.

Lateiner, *Historical Method*, Introduction.

Oxford Classical Dictionary, "Logographers."

Questions to Consider:

1. Is it possible to have a concept of "history" before there is a word for that concept? In other words, is it anachronistic even to ask if Herodotus wrote as a historian?

2. Herodotus states two main purposes for his writing: to record the past and to explain it. Which of these strikes you as more important for the development of historiography?

Lecture Three
Myth, Legend, and Oral Tradition

Scope: In this lecture, we look at the context of Herodotus' achievement by discussing one of the most important forms of explanation available in Greek culture before Herodotus' time: the vast and complicated body of traditional mythology. The lecture begins with a brief discussion of the definition of *myth* in this context, then moves on to a discussion of the explanatory function of traditional tales in non-literate cultures and the importance of such tales in oral societies. We then consider Herodotus' use of sources, both oral and written. Finally, the lecture discusses the question of whether the distinction between myth and history is one that Herodotus himself made and the significance of the fact that he defines his subject as one dealing with the recent past, not the distant past of "myth."

Outline

I. *Myth* is a difficult term to define precisely.
   A. A basic working definition might be "traditional stories that encode or represent the worldview, beliefs, principles, and often, fears of a given society."
      1. Myths are stories; that is, they are presented in narrative form.
      2. Myths are traditional, handed down in a society from one generation to the next.
   B. Myths are set in the past; they refer to events of long ago.
   C. Myths are ostensibly "true"; they claim to give an accurate representation of "what really happened."
      1. For a culture to recognize its own myths as myths would be rare.
      2. Judged from within a culture, myths are true accounts of the way things really are.
   D. Myths often explain, justify, or instruct.
      1. A myth may tell why and how certain beings, conditions, or circumstances came into existence.
      2. A myth may offer a justification for a certain rite or social institution.
      3. A myth may instruct its hearers on how they ought to behave or warn them about how they ought not to behave.
   E. Myths frequently concern gods and the supernatural.

II. All societies have myths, but myth is especially important in preliterate cultures. Literate cultures can draw on many different forms of explanation, but in a preliterate culture, oral narrative is the only means of explanation available; thus, myth must fill many functions.
   A. The recitation of traditional tales is the primary means of cultural continuity.
      1. These tales transmit the culture's mores.
      2. They also transmit cultural identity.
   B. Myths also explain both natural and human phenomena.
      1. Most obviously, the gods serve as an explanation for the world in general.
      2. This is particularly true in a polytheistic culture, such as ancient Greece, where the gods represent the personification of natural forces.
      3. But myths also explain events among humans.
   C. We can see this phenomenon at work in Greek culture, in the way that the heroes of myth were used to make sense of the variety of cultures the Greeks encountered.
      1. Each culture's origin was traced to an original eponymous hero, after whom the culture was named.
      2. For instance, the Persians were descendants of Perseus.
   D. The Greek use of eponymous heroes to explain other cultures is undoubtedly fanciful, but often myths did contain kernels of remembered "truth."
      1. The best example of this, of course, is the Trojan War.
      2. Most scholars now accept that there is some historical basis to this myth, that a great culture did exist at Troy.

III. Herodotus wrote at a time when literacy was relatively new; oral traditions were his primary source of information.

    A. Herodotus himself tells us that he depended heavily on information he gathered orally.

        1. He refers to *akoê* ("hearing") and *opsis* ("observations") as two of his methods of gathering information.

        2. He often uses such terms as "it is said" or "people say."

    B. However, Herodotus undoubtedly used written sources, as well.

        1. The extent of his reliance on written documents is still unclear.

        2. Some scholars assume that he must have had access to official Persian documents, for instance.

        3. It seems clear that most of Herodotus' sources were oral, not written.

    C. Oral tradition implies myth; the question arises, then, of Herodotus' attitude toward, and use of, myth.

IV. The question of whether or not Herodotus distinguished between "myth" and "history" as categories of explanation is a hotly debated one in Herodotean studies.

    A. It seems clear that he did not make a terminological distinction between these two forms of explanation of the past.

        1. When Herodotus wrote, the Greek language had no word corresponding either to *myth* or *history*.

        2. Later writers, such as Plato, would distinguish between *mythos* (or "fabulous narrative") and *logos* (or "factual narrative"), but this distinction did not yet exist in the fifth century.

    B. Herodotus shows no doubt that the famous characters of Greek tradition really lived.

        1. The characters of the Trojan War, for instance, were "real" to him.

        2. The details of their stories might be disputed but not their actual existence.

    C. On the other side of the divide, Herodotus attaches stories that we would categorize as folktales to figures from the fairly recent historical past.

        1. The most obvious example is Polycrates, tyrant of Samos starting in 535 B.C.E.

        2. Polycrates was *too* lucky. He was advised by a friend (Amasis, King of Egypt) to deflect the inevitable reversal of fortune that the jealousy of the gods would bring by voluntarily throwing away his most valuable possession.

        3. Polycrates threw away his precious gold and emerald ring.

        4. A few days later, the ring was found in the gullet of a fish Polycrates received as a gift.

        1. Amasis dissolved the friendship because such extraordinary good fortune can lead only to extraordinary bad fortune.

        2. Clearly, this is folktale, but it is attached to an historical person who lived only 100 years previously.

V. Herodotus does not make a type distinction between fabulous and factual forms of narrative recording. Most scholars agree, however, that Herodotus does make a chronological distinction between the remote past, or the Heroic Age, and the recent past in terms of verifiability and that his purpose is to focus on the recent past.

    A. The Heroic Age was a crucially important component of the Greek understanding of the past.

        1. This time period was believed to have ended within a generation after the end of the Trojan War, which Herodotus puts between 800 and 900 years before his own day.

        2. The heroes were claimed as ancestors by many Greek families.

    B. Herodotus does not completely exclude the Heroic Age from his account.

        1. He reaches back into the Heroic Age to discuss the beginnings of the enmity between Greeks and Asians.

        2. He also draws on the remote past as necessary to discuss the origins of peoples or their customs.

    C. But he clearly delineates the boundaries of his main subject matter by saying that he will start his narrative proper with the man whom "I myself know" to have been the first foreigner to wrong the Greeks.

        1. Such phrases as "the first whom I/we know" occur several times in the *Histories* and provide an important clue about Herodotus' methods.

        2. These phrases refer to people who lived no more than about three generations before Herodotus' own day.

        3. Herodotus apparently tried to verify his information by talking to eyewitnesses or those who had spoken to eyewitnesses.

  4. This is sometimes referred to as "three-generation reachback"; oral tradition does not extend with accuracy beyond this timeframe.

 D. Thus, though Herodotus does not distinguish between mythic and nonmythic tales as *types* of explanation, he does make a temporal distinction.

  1. He distinguishes between accounts set in verifiable time and those that cannot be checked by the memories of eyewitnesses.

  2. This is not yet the separation of history from myth, but it can be seen as a necessary first step toward that separation.

VI. Oral tradition and its codifying of experience was not the only area in which myth influenced Herodotus' work. Homeric epic, which enshrined some of those traditional tales in written form, was a primary model for the *Histories*.

Supplementary Reading:

Brillante, "History and the Historical Interpretation of Myth."

Evans, *Herodotus: Explorer of the Past*, Essay 3.

Harris, *Ancient Literacy*.

Kirk, "On Defining Myths."

Lateiner, *Historical Method*, Ch. 4.

Vandiver, *Heroes in Herodotus*, pp. 1–15.

Questions to Consider:

1. Defining *myth* is difficult, yet most people have a sense that they "know it when they see it." Do you share this sense? If so, can you form a satisfactory working definition of *myth*?

2. Modern literate societies such as ours tend to make a clear distinction between forms of narrative that are true and those that are false, yet many historical figures accrue legendary stories with the passage of time. Can you think of examples of such figures? What sorts of historical figures tend to have "legends" attached to them and why?

Lecture Four
Homeric Epic and the East-West Conflict

Scope: This lecture discusses the two great Homeric epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and their influence on Herodotus' narrative method and approach to his material. The lecture begins with a brief description of the Homeric epics' place in, and importance to, Greek literature, then gives a synopsis of the events of the Trojan War and the episodes covered by each epic. We then turn to considering specific ways in which Herodotus' work was modeled on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, most obviously in its subject matter but also in the use of characters and speeches. Finally, the lecture turns to examining important differences between Herodotean and Homeric narrative. We discuss the significance of Herodotus' use of prose and the difference between Herodotus as a narrator and the omniscient bard of epic.

Outline

I. The two great epics of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, are the first works of Greek literature.

   A. These epics, the culmination of a centuries-long oral tradition, were probably written down sometime in the eighth century B.C.E.

   1. The epics show unmistakable evidence of oral composition.

   2. They probably developed over several centuries before assuming their final form.

   3. We do not know the date they were written down, but they are almost definitely the first works to be put in writing in Greek culture.

   B. The Homeric epics' influence on later Greek literature and society was incalculable.

   1. The epics served as an almost inexhaustible source of plots and characters.

   2. They also served as sources of quotations and as reference points.

   3. For Herodotus, the Homeric epics suggested both the subject matter and the structure of his work.

II. The subject matter of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is located firmly in the Heroic Age; both epics deal with events that took place during or immediately after the Trojan War.

   A. The Trojan War is the most famous episode of classical myth.

   1. For Herodotus and his contemporaries, the Trojan War marked the end of the "heroic" age and the beginning of purely human history.

   2. The Trojan War was a "liminal" event; it looked back to myth but forward into the human present, through the heroes' position as ancestors of modern families.

   B. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* narrate only part of the story of the Trojan War.

   1. The *Iliad* focuses on events that happened in the last year of the war, culminating in the death of Hector.

   2. The *Odyssey* deals with Odysseus' further adventures after the war.

   3. These two epics were not the only ones to deal with the Trojan War, although they were recognized in antiquity as the greatest epics.

   4. There were other epic poems, no longer extant but undoubtedly known to Herodotus, that told the rest of the story of the Trojan War.

   C. Despite its importance for Greek culture, no major ancient work telling the entire story of the Trojan War survives. However, we can reconstruct the basic story from surviving literature.

III. The Trojan War was motivated by the abduction of a Greek queen by a Trojan prince.

   A. The most beautiful woman in the world, Helen, was the daughter of Zeus and wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta.

   1. Helen was abducted by Paris, a Trojan prince.

   2. Paris was acting with the approval of Aphrodite, goddess of sexual passion.

   B. Under the command of Menelaus' elder brother Agamemnon, the Greeks mustered an army to go to Troy and fight for Helen's return. The Trojan War lasted for ten years.

   1. During most of that time, the fighting was evenly balanced.

   2. Each side had one foremost warrior: Achilles for the Greeks, Hector for the Trojans.

3. Eventually, Achilles killed Hector and Paris killed Achilles.
4. Finally, the Greeks won through trickery. Using the famous ruse of the Trojan Horse, they infiltrated the walled city of Troy and sacked it.

C. The Greeks committed many outrages against the Trojans during the Sack of Troy, and these actions caused the surviving Greeks to suffer many hardships on their way home.
1. Agamemnon was killed by his wife and her lover.
2. Odysseus spent ten years wandering on his way from Troy.
3. Menelaus and Helen were blown off course and spent seven years in Egypt.

IV. The Homeric epics were models for Herodotus' *Histories* in several ways.

A. Most obviously, the subject matter of the epics and the *Histories* is closely related.
1. Like Homer, Herodotus takes a war between Greeks and an Eastern empire as his subject.
2. In the *Histories*, as in the *Iliad*, the Greek army is a collection of troops from independent city-states, each with its own commander, and tensions at times run high between different Greek groups.
3. In Herodotus, as in Homer, the enemy is an Eastern empire headed by a wealthy ruler.
4. Like Homer's Odysseus, Herodotus recounts the customs and accomplishments of foreign peoples in strange lands.

B. Less obviously, Herodotus' narrative is similar to Homer's in organization and style.
1. Herodotus' narrative focuses on the deeds of great men, their individual decisions, actions, errors, and triumphs.
1. Herodotus assumes that great deeds are traceable to individuals' actions, motivations, and desires, not to broad political or economic movements.
2. The presentation of those men's actions includes speeches placed in individuals' mouths.
4. Herodotus reports these speeches without explanation of how he could know what people had said to one another decades in the past and in another language.
5. In this, he resembles the omniscient narrator of Homeric epic.

V. The similarities between Herodotus' undertaking and its epic precedent are obviously important, but we can also point to key differences between epic and Herodotus' narrative. One of the most important of these is Herodotus' choice to write in prose, not verse.

A. Modern readers assume that prose is the "natural" or "primitive" form of composition and that poetry is a refined, elaborated form of composition.
1. In fact, the opposite is true; before the advent of writing, a society's traditions and cultural beliefs are most likely to be cast in verse for ease of memory.
2. Although prose mirrors ordinary conversation, it depends on writing to record it.

B. Herodotus was not the first writer to use prose; its use mirrored Greek society's move away from oral toward written composition.
1. Herodotus could not have composed or organized the vast work he did without writing, and his use of prose is a reflection of this.
2. Although his work was composed in writing, it was almost certainly published through oral performance.

VI. Another important difference between Herodotus' work and Homer's is that Herodotus does not assume the role of omniscient narrator.

A. Herodotus is careful to report variant traditions.
1. Sometimes, he says that he does not know which one is correct.
2. At other times, he gives his own opinion but clearly states that he is doing so.
3. In several instances, he reports something that he himself finds incredible.

B. Perhaps the most important difference in Herodotus' stance as narrator from Homer's is that Herodotus does not and cannot report what the gods say to one another on Olympus.
1. The speeches that Herodotus includes are all spoken by human characters.
2. When a god "speaks," it is through the mouthpiece of an oracle.
3. Herodotus does not take us "behind the scenes" of the universe as Homer does.

VII. Finally, the role that the gods themselves play in Herodotus' narrative is another crucial difference between the *Histories* and Homeric epic.

    A. Herodotus by no means dispenses with the gods; he mentions them frequently and cites them as causes for events.

        1. However, the gods are not characters in his work.

        2. When Herodotus cites a god or "the divine" as a cause of an event, he normally includes a human cause, as well.

    B. Herodotus' focus is on human actions and human responsibility.

VIII. All these differences point to Herodotus' position in intellectual history as heir to the Ionian Enlightenment, the great intellectual movement of the sixth century B.C.E., and to Athens in the fifth century.

Supplementary Reading:

Lang, *Herodotean Narrative and Discourse*, Ch. 3.

Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*.

Waters, *Herodotos the Historian*, Ch. 6.

Questions to Consider:

1. The Trojan War was "the" episode of Greek myth, the one by which all other episodes were measured and evaluated. Do we have any similar semi-legendary events in modern-day popular culture, and if so, how are they transmitted?

2. The Homeric epics and Herodotus' *Histories* both focus on war and its aftermath as their main topics. Is there something about war that lends itself particularly to narrative representation? Put another way, why did the primary stories of Greek culture focus on war rather than on other fields of human endeavor?

Lecture Five
The Ionian Enlightenment

Scope: In this lecture, we continue our examination of influences on Herodotus' work by discussing the Ionian Enlightenment, an intellectual movement that took place in Ionia (western Turkey) during the sixth century B.C.E. The Ionian Enlightenment produced the first Pre-Socratics, thinkers who stood at the very beginnings of Greek science and philosophy. The lecture summarizes the theories of four of the most important Ionian philosophers, Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, and Heraclitus, and discusses the importance of observation and reason in their thinking. Finally, the lecture considers how the work of the Ionian philosopher-scientists influenced and inspired Herodotus' methodology when he decided not just to record events of the recent human past, as the *logographers* did, but also to try to explain them.

Outline

I.   Ionia, the western coast of modern-day Turkey, was an increasingly important part of the Greek world from the late seventh century onward.

   A. According to Greek tradition, Ionia had been colonized by Greeks from the mainland.
      1. Athens claimed to be the source of the Ionians' ancestors.
      2. Herodotus did not believe this, nor do modern historians. But the Athenians' identification with the Ionians would have very important historical repercussions.

   B. Wherever their ancestors came from, the Ionians were culturally Greek.
      1. They spoke a dialect of the Greek language; Herodotus writes in Ionic.
      2. They worshipped Greek gods.
      3. Their customs and civic organization were Greek.

   C. Because of its location, Ionia was in many ways a cultural crossroads.
      1. Ionian citizens would have encountered travelers from various different cultures, coming through Ionia as traders and on political business.
      1. Many Ionians traveled widely themselves.
      2. Therefore, the Ionians had the opportunity to compare different traditions and cultural assumptions.

II. Beginning in the late seventh century B.C.E., Ionia was home to a succession of thinkers who began the tradition of rational explanation of events in Greek thought. These Ionian thinkers are the first Pre-Socratic philosophers.

   A. The term *Pre-Socratics* is purely descriptive; it refers to any Greek philosophers who lived before Socrates.
      1. Even the term *philosopher* is misleading when we look at the earliest such thinkers.
      2. The Ionian Pre-Socratics were more concerned with what we would call science than with philosophy.
      3. The key factor in their work is that they attempted to find rational explanations for events.

   B. The work of the Ionian Pre-Socratics is often called the Ionian Enlightenment.
      1. The Ionian Enlightenment began the Western tradition not just of philosophy but of science.
      2. The Ionian philosophers recognized that the universe follows regular laws and, thus, that natural phenomena are not arbitrary.
      3. This implied that human intelligence could discover these laws through observation and the exercise of reason.

III. The first important Ionian Pre-Socratic was Thales of Miletus, who is often credited with originating Greek philosophy. Thales was an astronomer, mathematician, and engineer, as well as a philosopher.

   A. Thales is still most famous for his astronomical accomplishment, the prediction of a solar eclipse on May 28, 585 B.C.E.
      1. Herodotus refers to this prediction.
      2. Thales had probably studied Babylonian mathematics and astronomy, but many modern scholars doubt that he could have accurately predicted an eclipse.
      3. However, if Thales was even able to suggest that an eclipse was likely at a certain time, this indicates that he recognized eclipses as natural phenomena, not as divinely sent aberrations.

B. Thales' interest in mathematics is attested by several accounts. In one important example, he was credited with calculating the height of a pyramid by measuring its shadow.

C. Thales was also an accomplished engineer; Herodotus says that he diverted the River Halys so that the army of Croesus, king of Lydia, could cross over it.

D. Thales was interested in theoretical speculation about the nature of the cosmos.
  1. The main point of his cosmological theory was, apparently, the primary importance of water.
  2. He is reported to have said both that the earth floats on water and that water is the material out of which all other things are made.
  3. Unfortunately, Thales' own writings are lost.

IV. Miletus was also the home of two other highly influential early philosophers, Anaximander and Anaximenes. Together with Thales, they made up the Milesian School.

A. Anaximander theorized that the basic material of the universe is the *apeiron*, "the unlimited."
  1. The *apeiron* is in constant motion, which causes the opposites (wet and dry, hot and cold) to separate from each other.
  2. Anaximander used the terms *penalty and retribution* to describe the process through which things come into existence and fall into destruction.
  3. He suggested a kind of evolutionary theory about humans and animals.
  4. His treatise *On the Nature of Things*, the first prose work in Greek, is lost.

B. Anaximander was also the first to make a map of the inhabited world.

C. Anaximenes thought that everything comes from one original substance, air.
  1. He explained change in terms of the rarefaction and condensation of air.
  2. His theory was standard in fifth-century Ionian natural philosophy.

V. Another significant Ionian thinker, Heraclitus, came from the Ionian town of Ephesus.

A. The most important concept in his thought was *logos*.
  1. By *logos*, Heraclitus apparently meant "measure," "reckoning," or "proportion."
  2. All things, though apparently discrete, are joined in an ordered arrangement.
  3. Given that human beings are part of this arrangement, they should strive to comprehend it.

B. Fire was the primary substance of the cosmos in Heraclitus' teaching.

C. Heraclitus saw change or flux as a dominant force in the world.
  1. One metaphor he used to express this idea was that of a river.
  2. He also used strife or war as metaphors for expressing this principle.
  3. His statement that strife is "right" is probably meant as a corrective to Anaximander.

VI. The unifying factor in all the Ionian thinkers was their attempt to find, through observation and reason, the laws that governed natural phenomena.

A. The Ionians by no means discarded theology.
  1. Thales said that all things were full of gods.
  2. Heraclitus several times refers to "god" or to named divinities, such as the Furies.

B. However, they seem to have moved away from the traditional anthropomorphic view of the gods.

C. Most important, their theories assumed that causation in the physical universe was not random, even if it was on some level divinely motivated.
  1. Their stress on natural laws discoverable by reason appears in the term *cosmos*, which means "arranged" or "ordered."
  2. This term implies that the universe is ordered according to set laws; those laws may be motivated by gods, but they are not random or irregular.

D. This aspect of the Ionians' thought marks them as the first scientists in the Western tradition.
  1. One important outgrowth of the Ionian Enlightenment was the development of medical science, especially in the fifth century B.C.E.
  2. The separation of medicine from magic depends on the concept of causation articulated by the Ionian thinkers.

VII. Herodotus is clearly the intellectual heir of the Ionian philosophers.
    A. Herodotus applied the desire to inquire into the nature of things and to explain their causes to the events of human life.
        1. His approach differed from the Ionian philosophers', because he did not assume that immutable laws governed human events.
        2. He did assume, however, that inquiry and reason could lead to an understanding of causes.
    B. Herodotus combined the method of the Ionian philosophers with the subject matter of the *logographers*.
        1. The Ionian Enlightenment itself was undoubtedly one impetus for his historiography.
        2. Another impetus was the intellectual climate in Athens.

Supplementary Reading:

Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 3, Pt. 3, pp. 196–221; Vol. 4, pp. 409–413.

Demand, *History of Ancient Greece*, pp. 176–179 ("The Ionian Enlightenment").

Kirk et al., *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Chs. 2–4.

Lloyd, G. E. R., *Early Greek Science*, Chs. 1–4.

Questions to Consider:

1. It is often said that the first requirement for the development of philosophical and scientific thinking in Ionia was that the idea of personification in religious belief had to be discarded; that is, that before the Ionian philosophers could develop their theories, they had first to free themselves from the traditional view that saw the gods as larger-than-life human beings with emotions and passions. Do you agree or disagree with this idea?

2. Science and philosophy are today considered two very different intellectual disciplines, but the Ionian thinkers are often referred to as both scientists and philosophers. If you had to assign one description, scientist or philosopher, to Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, and Heraclitus, which would you pick for each thinker and why?

Lecture Six
Athens in the Archaic Age

Scope: This lecture summarizes the history and development of Athens, focusing especially on the political and cultural developments in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E. We discuss the progression of the Athenian political system before the Persian Wars, beginning with the substitution of archons for the hereditary king. We consider two landmark events of the seventh century B.C.E., Cylon's failed attempt at tyranny and Draco's establishment of a law code. Moving into the sixth century B.C.E., the lecture describes Solon's constitutional reforms and their significance and Peisistratus' subsequent establishment of tyranny at Athens. Finally, the lecture sketches Cleisthenes' political reforms, which paved the way for the development of Athenian democracy in the fifth century B.C.E.

Outline

I. Athens was the most important settlement in the region of Attica from the late Bronze Age onward.

    A. Athens' position as de facto head of Attica was consolidated by the unification, or *synoikism*, of Attica as a political unit.

        1. The date of the *synoikism* may have been as early as the ninth century or as late as c. 700 B.C.E.

        2. Athenian legend attributed the *synoikism* to the great Athenian hero Theseus.

    B. The details of Athens' government during the Dark Ages are obscure, but tradition said that Athens was originally ruled by hereditary kings.

II. In the Archaic Age, several political developments occurred that paved the way for the development of Athenian democracy in the fifth century B.C.E.

    A. By the early seventh century B.C.E., the king (or *basileus*) was replaced by an official called an *archon*. Later, the archonship was subdivided into three offices.

        1. The *archon basileus* had responsibility for cult and religious duties.

        2. The *polemarch* led the army.

        3. The *eponymous archon* gave his name to the year of his office and held most civic and governmental duties.

    B. Probably early in the seventh century B.C.E., six judicial officials were added, for a total governing body of nine archons, all of whom came from noble families.

        1. By c. 683/82 B.C.E., an archon was limited to one year in office.

        2. Each former archon became a lifetime member of the Areopagus Council, which advised the archons.

    C. The archons were probably elected by the *ekklesia* (assembly), which consisted of all adult male citizens.

III. In 632 B.C.E., an aristocrat and Olympic victor named Cylon attempted to set up one-man rule, or tyranny, in Athens.

    A. Herodotus gives the barest sketch of this attempt.

        1. Cylon and his supporters failed in their attempt to seize the Acropolis.

        2. They took refuge as suppliants at the statue of Athena but gave themselves up on the assurance that they would not be harmed.

        3. They were killed, however, at the instigation of a family called the Alcmaeonids.

    B. Other writers, most notably Thucydides, give slightly different accounts of Cylon's conspiracy.

        1. Thucydides says that the conspirators did, in fact, seize the Acropolis.

        2. Cylon escaped death, but his followers were killed.

        3. The archons were responsible for the death of the conspirators.

        4. The Almaeonid family was cursed because the eponymous archon that year was a member of that family.

    C. Herodotus and Thucydides both tell the story of Cylon mainly to explain the hereditary curse on the Alcmaeonid family, whose members were extremely important in later Athenian history.

IV. The second crucially important event of late seventh-century B.C.E. Athenian history was the establishment of a written code of laws in 620 B.C.E. This was probably done in response to Cylon's attempted coup.

    A. The man chosen to draw up the law code was named Draco.

        1. Draco's laws were very harsh; the penalty for most offenses was death.

        2. Draco's law code does not survive in any detail.

    B. Modern scholars tend toward skepticism about Draco's role in formulating Athenian laws; some scholars even doubt that Draco existed at all.

V. From the beginning of the sixth century B.C.E., we move onto firmer ground, with contemporary records supplementing later recordings of oral tradition.

    A. In particular, we have a good sense of the reforms of Solon.

        1. In 594/93 B.C.E., the archons and the Areopagus Council decided to appoint a special legislator with full powers to reform the Athenian system of government.

        2. This action was almost definitely an attempt to circumvent further attempts at tyranny.

    B. Solon was chosen as the special legislator.

        1. He was an aristocrat but not outstandingly wealthy.

        2. Solon's poetry gives us a picture of the problems he had to address.

VI. The major problems Solon faced concerned issues of land ownership and the discrepancy in wealth between the classes.

    A. The class of small farmers called *hektemoroi* ("one-sixth partners") was especially at risk.

        1. They were sharecroppers who owed one-sixth of their crop to the rich landowner.

        2. If they failed to pay, they were enslaved.

    B. Independent small farmers could be enslaved if they went into debt and could not pay their debts.

    C. Over time, more and more small farmers and other poor people were enslaved by the aristocrats.

    D. A fair proportion of land in Attica was encumbered by marker stones called *horoi*.

        1. Solon says that he freed the land from its enslavement to these markers.

        2. The *horoi* may have indicated that the land was worked by *hektemoroi* or that it had been put up as collateral for a loan.

    E. A final problem was that rich landowners were selling their grain abroad to buy luxuries.

VII. Solon's remedy was twofold: first, he addressed the immediate problems through his *seisachtheia*, or "shaking off of burdens"; second, he enacted constitutional reforms.

    A. Solon addressed the most immediate problems in several ways.

        1. He freed the unjustly enslaved.

        2. He freed the land from the *horoi* and wiped out the poor's debts.

        3. He abolished *hektemoroi* status.

        4. However, he did not redistribute land or limit the amounts that aristocrats could own.

    B. Solon's constitutional changes included new classifications of citizens.

        1. The qualification for holding office became wealth, not birth.

        2. The citizenry was divided into four property classes according to the land's yield.

    C. Solon also rewrote Draco's law code, keeping only the homicide laws unmodified.

    D. After enacting his reforms, Solon supposedly went on a journey of ten years.

VIII. The immediate effect of Solon's laws on Athens was something close to anarchy, and after years of factionalism, Athens finally underwent a period of tyranny, under Peisistratus and his son.

    A. Peisistratus was tyrant of Athens from 546–527 B.C.E.

        1. After Peisistratus' death, the tyranny devolved to his son Hippias, who was advised and assisted by his younger brother Hipparchus.

        2. Hipparchus was assassinated in 514 B.C.E., and from that point on, Hippias' rule became much harsher.

    B. From 514 B.C.E. on, Hippias' reign was marked by instability and insurrection

1. The Alcmaeonids spearheaded attempts to overthrow the tyrant and reinstate an earlier form of government, rule by the nobles.
2. They enlisted the help of the Spartans, and in 510 B.C.E., Hippias went into exile.
3. Hippias' exile left a power vacuum, which was filled by Cleisthenes, an Alcmaeonid.

C. In 508/07 B.C.E., Cleisthenes introduced a series of reforms. This created an entirely new political system and structure, called *isonomia*, or "equality before the law," which opened the door to the development of democracy in the fifth century B.C.E.
   1. The citizens of Attica had previously belonged to one of four hereditary "tribes."
   2. Cleisthenes reorganized the citizen body into ten new tribes, based on place of residence, and decided that voting would be done by tribe.
   3. Tribal membership depended on one's *deme* of residence.
   4. To eliminate large blocks of voting power accumulating around any one area or family, Cleisthenes sorted the 139 *demes* into thirty groups, or *trittyes*, arranged by region: city, coast, or inland.
   5. Each region had ten *trittyes*; each of the ten new tribes was constructed of one *trittys* from each region.
   6. This meant that each tribe had residents in all three regions so no one region could dominate any other region.

D. The new tribes became the basis for most government functions.

Supplementary Reading:

Burn, *Persia and the Greeks*, Ch. 9.

Hignett, *Athenian Constitution*, Chs. 1–6.

Sealey, *History of the Greek City-States*, Chs. 5–6.

Solon, selections in Miller, *Greek Lyric*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Ancient Greek culture had a strong tendency to associate important cultural developments with one legendary figure (as in the case of Theseus and Attic *synoikism*). Given this tendency, some scholars think that Draco is a purely legendary figure and that there never was one "lawgiver." How could historians tell if this is so or not? What sort of clues might we find to Draco's existence—or nonexistence?

2. Cleisthenes' reforms laid the groundwork for the later development of Athenian democracy, but he cannot have had any such intention when he enacted them. Can you think of analogous situations in other cultures when the political program enacted by one leader or party has sweeping consequences far beyond the intentions of those who put it into place?

Lecture Seven
Politics and Culture in Fifth-Century Athens

Scope: This lecture begins by continuing our examination of Athenian politics. We outline the development of democracy in Athens, then discuss the aftermath of the Persian Wars and how Athens' growing power and position as leader of a de facto empire in the mid- and late fifth century B.C.E. set the stage for conflict with other Greek city-states. The lecture then examines the intellectual climate of Athens in the fifth century B.C.E. and its importance for our understanding of Herodotus' historiography. We consider the importance that rhetoric had in Athens' system of direct democracy and the influence of the Sophists, whose rhetorical techniques and questioning of traditional ideas were crucially important in the development of philosophy and science. We then turn to a brief description of tragedy, another genre that developed in the fifth century B.C.E. in Athens. Finally, the lecture discusses how some of the techniques and viewpoints of both Sophism and tragedy are reflected in Herodotus' crafting of his work.

Outline

I. Cleisthenes' reforms had opened the way to *demokratia*, or rule by the people (*demos*). Over the next decades, this system developed into a working direct democracy.

  A. All free male citizens over the age of twenty had access to the *ekklesia*.
  1. Full political rights were gained at age thirty.
  2. The free adult male population of Attica was probably between 30,000 and 40,000 by the mid-fifth century B.C.E.
  3. All of these citizens were eligible to vote in the assembly.

  B. Any citizen could propose a motion, which would then be debated and voted on.
  1. Debate on proposals consisted of speeches for and against, by volunteer speakers.
  2. Voting was done by a show of hands.

II. At the time of the Persian wars, Athenian democracy was still in its developmental stages. Even later in the century, it lent itself very much to control by one powerful man.

  A. The administration of the government remained in the hands of magistracies, including the archons.

  B. But changes in the method of selecting the archons threw more important power into the hands of ten *stratêgoi*, or generals.
  1. Starting in 501/00 B.C.E., ten generals had been elected by the *ekklesia* each year.
  2. From 487/86 B.C.E. onward, the archons were appointed by lot.
  3. Capable leaders tended to gravitate to the position of general.
  4. Generals were not limited to one year in office; a general could be reelected and, thus, exercise power for many years.
  5. The great statesman Pericles, for instance, was elected general every year from 443 B.C.E. to his death in 429 B.C.E.

III. As the century moved on, a paradoxical situation developed: Athens became more democratic internally but also began to exert more control over other *poleis*.

  A. Following the Persian Wars, in 478 B.C.E., Athens joined several Ionian and island city-states in an alliance called the Delian League.
  1. The League's treasury was originally on Delos, although the treasurers were Athenians.
  2. Athens was the recognized head of the League from the beginning.
  3. In 454 B.C.E., the treasury was moved to Athens.

  B. By the mid-century, the Delian League had, in effect, become an Athenian Empire.
  1. Athens controlled some 150 other *poleis*, which paid tribute in return for League protection.
  2. States that tried to rebel were compelled to remain in the League.

IV. Athens' wealth, political power, and democratic system of government were undoubtedly among the motivating factors behind the astonishing flowering of Athenian culture in the fifth century B.C.E.

  A. Athenian direct democracy depended on debate of significant issues.
    1. This meant that public assemblies gained a significance they had never had before.
    2. In turn, rhetoric also gained unprecedented significance.

  B. Athens' position of power attracted an influx of intellectuals from other areas, drawn both by democracy's need for qualified speakers and by civic wealth.
    1. Among these intellectuals, teachers of rhetoric were particularly important.
    2. Increased wealth in Athens meant that citizens were able to pay to be taught oratorical skills.

V. The Sophists filled this demand. They were a group of itinerant teachers who specialized in rhetoric and techniques of argumentation.

  A. The Sophists were much more than teachers of forensic techniques, however; like the thinkers of the Ionian Enlightenment, they were interested in questions of philosophy and science, as well as in rhetoric.
    1. They espoused a naturalistic view of morality and religion, and questioned the universal validity of morals.
    2. Their opponents accused them of corrupting morals and weakening religious beliefs.
    3. However, they were extremely popular as teachers of rhetoric, especially among those who aspired to speak in the assembly.

  B. The most famous Sophist was Protagoras, best remembered for his dictum "man is the measure of all things."
    1. Protagoras is reported to have taught that moral beliefs are true for the communities in which they are held.
    2. He espoused a kind of agnosticism, saying that it was impossible to know about the gods.

VI. The Sophists taught argumentation by antithesis.

  A. Students were trained to argue either side of a case.
    1. Protagoras was especially famous for his ability to "make the weaker argument the stronger."
    2. This technique of rhetorical training contributed to the perception of Sophists as amoral.

  B. This tendency to look at points from both sides was reflected in Sophism's concentration on pairs of binary oppositions. The most important such pair was *nomos/physis*.
    1. *Nomos* means "law" or "custom"; *physis* means "nature."
    2. The relationship between these two can be debated for almost any aspect of human experience.
    3. *Nomos* is an important term in Herodotus' work.

VII. The growth of theatre was another cultural development that depended on public performance and the audience's ability to listen carefully. Tragedy and comedy both emerged as fully developed dramatic forms in the fifth century B.C.E.

  A. Plays were performed at annual festivals in honor of the god Dionysus, which included theatrical competitions.

  B. Comedy featured ordinary people in extraordinary situations, but the subject matter of tragedy was drawn almost exclusively from traditional myth.
    1. Infrequently, tragedians drew on recent history.
    2. For the most part, however, tragedy dealt with myth; this meant that the very broad outlines of the story would already be known to most of the audience.
    3. The tragedian's creativity and skill lay not in inventing new stories but in the use he made of traditional material.

  C. Tragedies were "about" much more than their plots.
    1. Tragedies focused on conflict in families and (often) on the consequent destruction of those families
    2. These family conflicts involved, or commented on, wider social themes, such as justice, the tension between public and private duty, and the dangers and difficulties of political power.

  D. Scholars have long noted the resemblance of some of the stories in the *Histories* to tragedy.
    1. Certain passages seem markedly to resemble the standard structure of a tragedy.

2. There are even some verbal echoes of Herodotus in Sophocles.

3. Ancient tradition says that Herodotus and Sophocles were friends.

VIII. Herodotus was not a philosopher, a rhetorician, or a dramatist, but his historiography could not have developed without the Ionian Enlightenment or the intellectual movements of Athens in the fifth century B.C.E.

  A. These forms of intellectual endeavor provided him with the conceptual tools to shape his own inquiry.

  B. All these activities depended on public performance for their publication, another way in which Herodotus was their heir.

Supplementary Reading:

Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 5, Ch. 3, pp. 34–49; Ch. 8, pp. 351–369.

Guthrie, *Sophists*.

Meiggs, *Athenian Empire*.

Meier, "Origins of History."

Osborne, *Classical Greece*, pp. 176–182.

Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, Introduction; Chs. 6–7.

Questions to Consider:

1. The Sophists are often accused of moral relativism. Does this follow inevitably from such statements as "man is the measure of all things"?

2. Rhetoric and tragedy were both public, performance-oriented genres. What are the implications for our understanding of Herodotus' historiography if we think of his work in similar terms? In other words, do the "performative" aspects of the *Histories* make any difference in our assessment of the work as history?

Lecture Eight
Scope, Design, and Organization of the *Histories*

Scope: This lecture considers the parameters of the task that Herodotus set himself and discusses the overall design and organization of his work. The lecture considers the frequent "digressions" in the *Histories*, particularly the ethnographic and geographical digressions. The lecture examines the insights these passages give us into Herodotus' understanding of the physical shape of the earth and what these digressions tell us about Herodotus' methodology. In particular, we focus on Herodotus' discussion of the Nile to determine what forms of evidence he used and how he reached conclusions about that evidence. Finally, the lecture discusses the work's division into nine "books" and the question of whether or not the *Histories* as we have them are complete, or whether the work was unfinished when Herodotus died.

Outline

I. Herodotus' purpose, as delineated in his opening sentence, was to memorialize great deeds and, in particular, to record and explain the events of the Persian War. To do that, he needed to explore the background of that war.

    A. In this exploration, Herodotus' work differs from the Homeric model.
        1. Epic begins *in medias res*: "in the middle of the subject."
        2. Homer does not trace the ultimate causes of the Trojan War; he assumes his audience already knows as much as it needs to know.
        3. But Herodotus' desire to find the *aitiê* for the Persian War means that he must trace events back to their beginnings.

    B. Herodotus provides his readers with information on the backgrounds of the Persian Empire and the different Greek *poleis*.
        1. To give background on the Persian Empire, he finds it necessary to describe many of the cultures the Persians had previously conquered.
        2. He can take more for granted in his presentation of Greek background, but there as well, he gives a great deal of information about the development of Greek *poleis*, especially Athens and Sparta.

II. It is often said that the *Histories* contain a great many "digressions," including the descriptions of Egypt, Scythia, and other nations.

    A. *Digression* is the modern scholar's term, not Herodotus'.
        1. Herodotus referred to the various components of his work as *logoi*, "accounts," and there is no reason to think that he considered some of them less central than others.
        2. He does say at one point that his work has always searched for "additions."

    B. Some readers find the digressions distracting, while others find them charming.
        1. Many scholars see them as deviations from the overall narrative pattern, but Herodotus probably would disagree.
        2. To explain Persia and the nature of its threat to Greece, he needed to look at other major empires.
        3. Examining the customs and governments of other cultures with which the Persians and Greeks had interacted helped to establish the underlying conflict of East and West that is the main focus of Herodotus' work.

    C. We cannot know if Herodotus conceived of the *Histories*' overall design before he began work on it.
        1. Many scholars think that Herodotus started writing as an ethnographer in the Ionian tradition.
        2. Others think that the Persian Wars were the primary focus of Herodotus' work from the beginning.
        3. Whichever view one takes, the ethnographical sections are clearly subordinated to the main theme of the Greco-Persian Wars.

III. The digressions not only show Herodotus as an ethnographer, but they also demonstrate his interest in geography, topography, and natural wonders and give us insight into his methodology.

    A. Herodotus' discussions of geography include his comments on the shape of the known world, which tradition said was divided into three continents: Europe, Asia, and Libya.
        1. Hecataeus and others thought that these continents were equal in size.

2. However, Herodotus argues that Europe is the largest of the three, as long as the other two put together.

3. One proof that Libya is smaller than Europe is that Libya has been circumnavigated.

B. Herodotus' geographical interest is at its keenest in his longest digression, the description of Egypt. This *logos* includes a discussion of Egypt's situation and nature and, most notably, of the unusual characteristics of the Nile.

1. Herodotus observes that most of Egypt has been built up by silt from the Nile.

2. He theorizes that the Nile Delta was originally a gulf and that over many thousands of years, the gulf filled up.

3. As evidence, he cites not only what the priests told him but what he himself saw: the projection of the Delta beyond the coast and the appearance of seashells on the hills and salt in the soil.

IV. The most important part of Herodotus' discussion of the Nile has to do with the reason for its annual flooding. He lists several possible explanations given by "certain Greeks," explains his objections to them, then offers his own.

A. The summer north winds account for the rising of the Nile.

1. But there have been years when those winds did not blow, and the Nile still rose.

2. Other rivers in Syria and Libya are not affected by the same winds.

B. The Nile flows out of the River Ocean. Herodotus is skeptical about the existence of such a river.

C. The Nile's flooding is caused by melting snow.

1. But the Nile flows out of a hotter climate, where there can be no melting snow.

2. The heat of the climate is proven by the hot winds that blow from it.

D. Herodotus' own theory is that the Nile's flooding is caused by the sun.

1. The sun is driven out of its course in the winter by storms in Libya.

2. Most rivers are fed by rain in winter, which counteracts the evaporation caused by the sun.

3. The Nile has no rain to feed it; thus, its waters are higher in summer than in winter, when it is evaporated by the off-course sun.

V. Herodotus' geographical and geological discussions demonstrate important elements of his methodology.

A. He relies on both *akoê* and *opsis*

1. He asks local informants for information.

2. He then attempts to verify the information by his own observation.

3. Matters that cannot be verified by observation, such as the existence of the River Ocean, he treats with skepticism.

B. He reports the information he has been given, even when he finds it unbelievable.

1. The Phoenician sailors who sailed around Libya reported that when they rounded the southern tip of the continent, the sun was on their right.

2. This detail, which Herodotus finds incredible, makes the story seem credible to us.

C. He frequently reasons according to probability or likelihood.

1. For instance, he rejects the idea of melting snow in the south.

2. Because he assumes that the different continents will show symmetry, he finds it plausible that the Nile's length is the same as the Danube's.

3. If there are Hyperboreans, there must also be Hypernotians.

D. Finally, the geographical digressions give us a sense of what might be called Herodotus' psychological worldview, as well as his physical worldview.

1. The continents are natural boundaries.

2. Asians should stay in Asia; when they cross over into Europe or Libya, they are transgressing boundaries, both figuratively and literally.

VI. Despite the vast amount of material contained in the *Histories,* their organization moves clearly toward a culmination in the account of Greece's victory over Persia. The *Histories* consist of nine "books," or papyrus rolls.

A. Book I outlines the beginnings of the East-West conflict.

1. Herodotus traces the conflict's origins to the Trojan War and, in more recent history, to the subjugation of Ionia by Croesus, king of Lydia.
2. He then describes the rise of Cyrus the Great and the Persian Empire.
3. This book is complex, containing several subsidiary stories.

B. Books II and III continue the description of the Persian Empire and its conquests.
1. Book II focuses on Egypt (which was brought into the Persian Empire by Cyrus' son Cambyses).
2. Book III concentrates on the accession and rule of Cambyses' successor, Darius.

C. Book IV examines Darius' campaigns against Scythia and Libya and contains ethnographical material on those two nations.

D. Book V brings the narrative closer to the eventual conflict of Greece and Persia by describing the Ionian Revolt.
1. The Greek-speaking city-states of Ionia revolted against Persian rule in 499–494 B.C.E.
2. Athens lent aid to the Ionian cities. This attracted Darius' attention and enmity to the Athenians.

E. Book VI begins the narrative of the Persian Wars by describing Darius' invasion of Greece in 490 B.C.E. and his troops' defeat at the Battle of Marathon.

F. Books VII through IX, the culmination of the *Histories*, focus on the second Persian invasion of Greece, under the leadership of Darius' son Xerxes.
1. Book VII details Xerxes' preparations and journey to Greece, includes the narrative of the Battle of Thermopylae, and begins the description of the Battle of Artemisium.
2. Book VIII continues the narrative of Artemisium and culminates in the account of the crucial naval Battle of Salamis.
3. Book IX concludes the *Histories* by describing the Battles of Plataea and Mycale and the Persians' eventual retreat.

VII. Thus, the *Histories* move from remote antiquity to the recent past, from a broad sweeping portrait of foreign lands and peoples to specific spots in Greece, and from broad ethnographical and cultural descriptions to fine details of battle.

A. The overall pattern is clear: a narrowing down into a detailed and vivid description of the Persian Wars.

B. One of the great questions in Herodotean studies is whether or not the *Histories* is a finished work.
1. We do not know when Herodotus died or when exactly he began to write.
2. Some scholars have argued that he left the work unfinished when he died.
3. The balance of modern scholarly opinion, however, is that the work is a finished whole and that Herodotus intended for it to end as it does, with an anecdote about the great Persian king Cyrus.

Supplementary Reading:

Fornara, *Herodotus: An Interpretative Essay*, Ch. 1.

Romm, "Herodotus and Mythic Geography" and "Shape of Herodotus' World."

Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, Ch. 3.

Vasunia, *Gift of the Nile*, Ch. 2, pp. 87–103.

Questions to Consider:

1. Some scholars think that Herodotus began writing as an ethnographer and conceived his wider purpose only as he wrote. How could we tell if this is correct or not? What sorts of indications might the text itself give of this kind of progression in Herodotus' thought and method?

2. The "digressions" are one of the most characteristic elements of the *Histories*. To what extent are they artifacts of oral composition and research?

Lecture Nine
The Beginnings of the Conflict

Scope: This lecture covers Herodotus' description of the beginnings of conflict between Europe and Asia. The lecture discusses Herodotus' synopsis of mythic accounts of the beginnings of Greek-Asian enmity in Book I of the *Histories*, in rationalized versions of famous Greek myths about the abductions of women. We compare these "demythologized" variants to the traditional Greek versions of the same stories and discuss the significance of the fact that Herodotus attributes the rationalized accounts to learned Persians. The lecture surveys some possible interpretations of this passage and considers the methodological and thematic implications of the rationalized stories. The lecture then examines Herodotus' statement that he will begin his own account with the first barbarian he knows to have wronged the Greeks, Croesus of Lydia, and considers the chronological and thematic importance of Herodotus' use of Croesus as the "first" verifiable transgressor against Greece.

Outline

I. The first *logos* of Book I is an account of the earliest known instances of enmity between Greeks and Asians. The *logos* consists of "demythologized" versions of famous Greek myths, each focusing on a kidnapping of a woman.

   A. This opening *logos* establishes that the enmity between Europe and Asia dates from time immemorial.
      1. Herodotus' audience would have recognized the stories that he outlines as among the most important episodes in the legendary past.
      2. However, the version he presents is so rationalized as to be almost unrecognizable.

   B. Herodotus attributes this *logos*, which follows immediately after the opening sentence of the *Histories*, to Persian *logioi*, or "learned men."

II. According to this rationalized version of myth, the enmity between Europe and Asia began and was exacerbated by a series of kidnappings and counter-kidnappings.

   A. The enmity began when Phoenician traders kidnapped Io from Argos and headed to Egypt.
      1. In myth, Io was one of Zeus' lovers, whom he turned into a cow to hide her from the jealous Hera.
      2. Hera sent a gadfly that drove Io endlessly. In her wanderings, she came to Egypt.
      3. She was eventually restored to human form and gave birth to a son, Epaphus.
      4. In her cow-form, Io was often associated with the Egyptian goddess Isis.

   B. Next, "Some Greeks" landed in Tyre and kidnapped Europa.
      1. Again, in the standard myth, Europa's lover was Zeus, disguised as a bull.
      2. He took Europa to Crete, where she became the mother of three sons, including Minos, the famous king of Crete.
      3. Herodotus says that the Greeks who kidnapped Europa "were presumably Cretans."

   C. The next episode in the rationalized account was also a Greek offense against Asians; Greeks sailed in Colchis and took Medea.
      1. This refers to the expedition of Jason and the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece.
      2. Medea's father, the king, sent to Greece to demand her return and reparations.
      3. The Greeks justified their refusal by saying that "you" have never paid compensation for Io.

   D. A generation later, Alexander (Paris) heard about this and took Helen.
      1. This runs completely counter to the mythic explanation of his motivation.
      2. The Trojans refused to pay compensation, citing Greeks' abduction of Medea.

III. This ends the story of reciprocal kidnappings, but at this point, the Persian *logioi* said that the Greeks became truly culpable because they raised an army and attacked Troy.

   A. In the Persian view, sensible people would make no great fuss about such matters, because the women would not have been abducted if they had not been willing to go.

B. The Persians, therefore, saw the Greeks as the aggressors in the Trojan War and dated their enmity with the Greeks from that war.
    1. The Persians consider all of Asia to be rightfully theirs.
    2. Therefore, Greek aggression against Troy was aggression against Persia.

C. Herodotus adds one more detail; the Phoenicians deny that they took Io to Egypt by force.
    1. In the Phoenician version, Io went to bed with the Phoenician captain.
    2. Because she was afraid to tell her parents of her pregnancy, she left voluntarily.

IV. Several points about these "demythologized" versions are immediately noticeable, each of which would have been quite startling to Herodotus' audience.

A. They completely omit any reference to the gods.
    1. Instead of Zeus, Io's lover is a captain of a merchant ship.
    2. Paris thinks that he would like to steal a wife from Greece.

B. Despite referring to some of the most important legends of heroic myth, these stories omit the heroes; the only male character mentioned by name is Paris.

C. They completely omit any sense that events of the remote past are in any way different from events of the recent past; there are no marvels or wonders.
    1. They also collapse long stretches of mythic time into a few generations.
    2. In standard mythic genealogies, Io was Europa's great-great-grandmother.
    3. It is possible that Herodotus intended a satire of rationalizing accounts by Hecataeus and other *logographers*.

V. Scholars hotly debate what we are to make of these rationalized opening *logos*.

A. Many scholars see these cynical versions as indications that Herodotus wants to strip the fabulous elements from these traditional accounts.
    1. In this view, Herodotus is making a clear distinction between fabulous explanation and the tone that he himself will adopt throughout his *Histories*.
    2. This view assumes that Herodotus endorses the rationalized view of traditional tales reflected in the opening *logos*.
    3. However, Herodotus does not systematically exclude divine or fabulous elements from the rest of his work.

B. Other scholars think see significance in the fact that Herodotus ascribes these versions to *Persian* wise men.
    1. In this view, Herodotus places these mocking parodies of Greek traditions at the beginning of the *Histories* to indicate how different the Persian worldview is from the Greek.
    2. The Persians are intent on robbing Greek tradition of any *kleos* and reducing the most important elements of the Greek traditional view to their most sordid components.

C. Could Persian *logioi* have known these Greek stories at all?
    1. There is no way to know if they did, but it is not implausible that they could have.
    2. Particularly in Ionia, Greeks and Persians would have had opportunities to learn each other's stories.
    3. Hecataeus and other *logographers* indicated that Phoenicians and Persians were familiar with Greek myth.
    4. Therefore, we cannot assume that Herodotus intended the attribution of these stories to Persians and Phoenicians to be implausible.

VI. Whichever interpretation is correct, the *logos* of woman stealing introduces important themes that will recur throughout the *Histories*.

A. Most obviously, the *logos* establishes the theme of East-West conflict, existing since time immemorial.
    1. Europe and Asia are presented as fundamentally at odds with each other.
    2. The war between Greece and Persia is, thus, just the latest episode in an ancient conflict.

B. Political events are attributed to personal causes, as they will be throughout the *Histories*.

C. The *logos* also introduces the idea that individual events depend on complex chains of causes and counter-causes.

VII. Finally, Herodotus uses this *logos* about events of the remote past to introduce an important methodological statement and a crucial theme.

    A. Herodotus says that he will not pass judgment on how these events of so long ago actually took place.

        1. Instead, he will focus on events that are verifiable.

        2. He will begin with a discussion of Croesus of Lydia, the first barbarian he knows to have wronged the Greeks.

    B. Herodotus also says that he will tell the stories of small cities, as well as great ones, because human fortune is mutable.

VIII. Herodotus' choice of Croesus has several important implications, both chronological and methodological.

    A. Croesus ruled from c. 560–546 B.C.E., approximately 120 years before Herodotus wrote.

        1. Herodotus' identification of Croesus as someone about whom he can "know" is an excellent example of the "three-generation reachback" of oral history.

        2. Stories about Croesus are "verifiable" in a way that stories about more remote figures are not.

    B. The use of Croesus reiterates Herodotus' debt to the narrative patterns of traditional myths and to Homer.

        1. A modern historian would give a chronologically coherent account of the growth of the Persian Empire and its first encounters with the Greeks.

        2. Herodotus begins with one particular Eastern king, Croesus, and uses him as a means to introduce Cyrus the Great, king of Persia.

        3. The events of history are cast in terms of personal encounters between memorable figures, not in terms of great political or economic movements.

    C. Herodotus uses Croesus as an exemplar of the mutability of individual fortune, paralleling the mutability of the fortune of cities.

        1. Croesus' story shows that excessive good luck is dangerous for humans.

        2. The idea that human happiness can elicit divine *phthonos*, or "envy," will recur several times.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, Book I.1–5.

Supplementary Reading:

Flory, *Archaic Smile*, Ch. 1.

Lateiner, *Historical Method*, pp. 35–43.

Nagy, "Herodotus the *Logios*."

Vandiver, *Heroes in Herodotus*, pp. 114–124.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do you think Herodotus meant his audience to take his account of the rationalized myths, which he attributes to the Persians? Are we supposed to think that Herodotus accepts these rationalized accounts or not?

2. Can you think of any modern applications of "three-generation reachback"? Do we still think that accounts become less verifiable once past that timeframe?

Lecture Ten
Croesus, Solon, and Human Happiness

Scope: In this lecture, we continue our examination of the story of Croesus, king of Lydia. The lecture summarizes Herodotus' narration of Croesus' history, beginning with the misdeeds of his ancestor Gyges and moving through the events of Croesus' own life. The lecture pays close attention to Herodotus' account of the Athenian sage Solon's visit to Croesus' court and discusses how Herodotus uses this encounter of Greek and Asian to underline his portrayal of the differences between the two peoples, their worldviews, and their characters, as well as to articulate one of the foremost themes of the *Histories*, the changeability of human fortune. The lecture then discusses Herodotus' account of Croesus' downfall, brought about by his own errors in judgment and encompassing the loss of his son and his kingdom to Cyrus, king of the Persians. The lecture ends by noting this *logos*' structural and thematic affinities with Greek tragedy and by recapitulating some of the foremost themes that Herodotus brings out.

Outline

I. Herodotus' account of Croesus' reign and downfall begins with the misdeeds of Croesus' ancestor Gyges.

    A. Gyges was a bodyguard in the palace of King Candaules, a descendant of Heracles. Candaules was so enamored of his own wife that he wanted to prove to Gyges that she was the most beautiful of women.

        1. Candaules suggested that Gyges should hide in the royal bedroom at night and watch the queen undress.

        2. When Gyges could not dissuade the king, he agreed to this plan.

        3. The queen saw Gyges as he left the room.

        4. Angry at her disgrace, she presented Gyges with a choice: to kill Candaules and marry her himself or to die.

        5. Gyges killed Candaules and took over both his queen and his throne.

    B. Thus, Croesus' family came to rule over Lydia through treachery.

        1. This is one reason why Croesus was fated to lose his kingdom.

        2. The oracle at Delphi confirmed Gyges' right to rule but said that the Heraclid family would have its vengeance in the fifth generation.

    C. Croesus' own character, as well as his fate, contributed to his downfall.

II. Croesus came to the throne in 560 B.C.E. and almost immediately conquered the Greek cities of Ionia. When he was at the height of his powers, Croesus received a visit from Solon, who had left Athens for ten years after enacting his laws.

    A. Solon's visit to Croesus is chronologically impossible, because the two men fail to overlap by at least two decades.

        1. One of the limitations of oral tradition is chronological precision.

        2. As a story, this meeting is perfect. Eastern magnificence and Attic wisdom *should* have met in the persons of Croesus and Solon, even if they didn't.

    B. In the Croesus *logos*, Solon figures not as a lawgiver but as one of the "Seven Sages" of Greece.

        1. Herodotus says almost nothing about Solon's constitutional reforms.

        2. Instead, he uses him as a mouthpiece for traditional wisdom about human happiness, divine jealousy, and the necessity for caution in human affairs.

        3. Herodotus' presentation of Solon indicates that he knew Solon's poetry.

III. When Solon visited Croesus, Croesus asked his Athenian visitor who was the happiest man he had seen in all his travels.

    A. The Greek word Herodotus uses is *olbios*, which means "happy"; it can also be translated as "blessed" or "fortunate."

        1. The underlying sense is someone who is doing well in all regards.

        2. Croesus clearly thinks that he himself qualifies as the most *olbios* of all humans and that Solon will flatter him by saying so.

B. Solon gives two answers that Croesus is not expecting and that annoy the king greatly.

IV. Solon tells Croesus that the "happiest" man he has ever seen was Tellus the Athenian; the second happiest were the brothers Cleobis and Biton.

    A. Tellus possessed many of the best things life has to offer.

        1. He was a citizen of a good city.

        2. He was moderately wealthy.

        3. He had living children and grandchildren.

        4. After he died defending his city, he was buried at public expense.

    B. Cleobis and Biton were two young men who showed exemplary devotion to their mother and to the gods, then died at the height of their splendor.

        1. These two brothers pulled their mother nearly six miles in an oxcart so that she could take part in the festival of Hera.

        2. Their mother prayed to the goddess to reward them with the greatest blessing possible.

        3. The youths died in their sleep.

        4. Solon says that this clearly shows that it is better for humans to be dead than to be alive.

V. Croesus becomes angry at the apparent slight to his own good fortune, and Solon points out the moral of the story for him.

    A. First, Solon says that divinity is entirely jealous and troublesome.

        1. Each person's life will contain many misfortunes.

        2. No one can count on good fortune continuing.

    B. Solon says that it is possible to call someone *olbios* only after he is dead.

        1. It is important to understand that this is not a statement about the happiness of the afterlife.

        2. Rather, it is a statement about *this* life; it is only safe to say that someone was *olbios* when the totality of his life can be seen.

        3. While someone is still living, Solon says, he cannot be called *olbios*; the best that can be said of him is that he is *eutuchea*—lucky.

        4. Finally, Solon says, it is necessary to "look to the end" in all things.

    C. Unable to understand Solon's meaning, Croesus sends him away. But Herodotus says that Croesus was soon seized by divine retribution for considering himself the most *olbios* of men.

        1. Herodotus uses the term *ek theou nemesis megalê*.

        2. This is the only instance of the term *nemesis*, "divine retribution," in the *Histories*.

        3. Croesus has violated two of the most important maxims of Greek life: Nothing in excess and know yourself.

VI. Croesus' downfall has two components: the loss of his son and the loss of his kingdom. The divine retribution manifests itself first through Croesus' loss of his son Atys.

    A. Croesus dreams that his son will be killed by the iron point of a spear.

        1. His first reaction is to forbid his son to take part in any activities that might expose him to danger.

        2. However, Atys begs Croesus to allow him to go on a boar hunt, and Croesus agrees, on the supposition that a boar cannot throw a spear.

        3. Croesus sends a trusted friend, Adrastus, to protect his son.

        4. Adrastus throws a spear at the boar, misses, and kills Atys.

        5. In horror over what he has done, Adrastus kills himself, and Croesus mourns for two years.

    B. Croesus makes two fatal assumptions: that he can understand the dream's meaning and that he can control the outcome of events.

        1. Both these assumptions reflect his arrogance.

        2. The inevitability of the outcome is indicated by the names of both Atys ("blindness") and Adrastus ("he who cannot escape").

VII. Croesus' loss of his kingdom, too, is brought about by his own assumptions. He sends to the oracle of Delphi to ask about invading the territory of Cyrus, king of Persia.

    A. The oracle answers that if Croesus attacked the Persians, he would destroy a great empire.

1. Only utter arrogance could make Croesus blind to the ambiguity of this response.
2. He attacks Persia and is defeated.

 B. After Croesus' defeat, Cyrus orders him to be burned alive.
1. As he stands on the pyre, Croesus calls out Solon's name three times.
2. Cyrus asks who he is calling, and when Croesus tells him the story of Solon's wise advice, Cyrus orders the fire to be put out.
3. However, the fire is only quenched when Croesus prays to Apollo, who sends rain.

 C. Afterwards, Croesus sends a message to Delphi, reminding the oracle that he had given lavish gifts to Apollo and asking why the god had lied to him.
1. Apollo answers that Croesus should have asked which empire he would destroy.
2. Furthermore, Apollo says that Croesus had been fated to lose his kingdom three years previously, but Apollo had won him that extra time.
3. Finally, Apollo reminds Croesus that he is paying for the transgression of his ancestor Gyges.

VIII. The story of Croesus' downfall shows many similarities to the structure and subject matter of Greek tragedy.

 A. Like the protagonist of a Greek tragedy, Croesus falls from a position of great eminence to one of wretchedness.

 B. His downfall is caused not through intentional wrongdoing on his part, but through what Aristotle called *hamartia*—an error in judgment.
1. Croesus makes the mistake of thinking that his good fortune is immutable; he forgets that he is human and, therefore, subject to change.
2. He thinks that he is able to circumvent fate.

 C. As in a tragedy, Croesus' own *hamartia* interacts with the dictates of fate to ensure his downfall.

IX. Clearly, Croesus' importance for Herodotus' narrative is as much symbolic as chronological. As the richest of Eastern kings, he makes a perfect representative of Eastern opulence and its contrast with the much poorer Greek culture.

 A. He also reminds the reader that wealth is no guarantee of being *olbios* for any city or person.

 B. Croesus' wealth makes him the paradigm of human excess and the dangers into which excess can lead us.

 C. Croesus' story is the perfect opportunity for Herodotus to articulate themes that will resonate throughout his work, about human susceptibility to chance, divine jealousy, and the uncertainty of happiness.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, Book I.6–92.

Supplementary Reading:

Chiasson, "The Herodotean Solon."

Immerwahr, *Form and Thought*, pp. 154–161.

Shapiro, "Herodotus and Solon" and "Learning through Suffering."

Questions to Consider:

1. Can you extrapolate a picture of what it means to be *olbios* from Solon's stories of Tellus the Athenian and Cleobis and Biton?
2. Why did Solon, but not Draco, become a sage in Greek popular imagination, about whose wisdom stories such as this one were told?

Lecture Eleven
Cyrus and the Foundation of the Persian Empire

Scope: In this lecture, we turn from Herodotus' account of Croesus of Lydia to his treatment of Cyrus, king of Persia. The lecture begins by summarizing modern scholarship on the Medes and Persians, their relationship to one another, and the importance of Cyrus as the first powerful Persian king. The lecture outlines the most important episodes of Cyrus' reign, his conquests of Media, Lydia, and Babylon, noting where Herodotus is our only source of information and where he is supported by other sources. The lecture then examines Herodotus' account of Cyrus. We consider the legendary elements in Herodotus' story of Cyrus' birth and childhood and some of the implications of this treatment of the great Persian king. Finally, the lecture discusses Cyrus as an example of the dual nature of Herodotus' narrative when it treats events several generations before his own day: The story of Cyrus inextricably mixes legend and fact. The lecture ends by quickly sketching the accession of Cyrus' son Cambyses.

Outline

I. Cyrus was the first Persian ruler to conquer other nations and form the beginnings of an empire. As Herodotus' account makes clear, before Cyrus' day, the Persians were a subordinate group to the Medes.

    A. The Medes and Persians were ethnically related Iranian peoples, first attested in Assyrian cuneiform tablets in the ninth century B.C.E.
        1. By the late seventh century B.C.E., the Medes were becoming dominant in an area that came to be called Media.
        2. The Medes gained power rapidly, ruling from their capital, Ecbatana.
        3. The Persians were among the groups ruled by the Medes. They inhabited an area called Parsa; Anshan was their main city.

    B. Cyrus became king of Anshan in 559 B.C.E.
        1. In 550 B.C.E., he conquered Ecbatana, deposed the Median king Astyages, and became ruler of the Medes, as well as the Persians.
        2. Both Herodotus and Babylonian sources say that Astyages marched against Cyrus, not the other way around.
        3. The Medes were subject to the Persians after this.

    C. Cyrus' defeat of Astyages was the beginning of a series of conquests. Cyrus' other campaigns included the subjection of Lydia and, most important, Babylon.
        1. Cyrus' defeat of Croesus and conquest of Lydia occurred in 547–546 B.C.E.
        2. His campaign against Babylon was some years later, in 539 B.C.E.

II. Cyrus apparently conquered several lands, but his campaigns against Media and Babylon are the only ones for which we have solid verification outside of Herodotus.

    A. Babylonian records confirm the overall outlines of Herodotus' account but differ in some details.
        1. Herodotus describes a siege of the city of Babylon in which Cyrus has to divert the course of the Euphrates to breach the wall.
        2. Cyrus' troops did face a wall, but it was a defensive one north of the city, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.
        3. The only fierce fighting apparently occurred around Opis, not in Babylon itself.

    B. One result of Cyrus' conquest of Babylon seemed minor at the time but had far-reaching consequences.
        1. In 538 B.C.E., Cyrus issued a proclamation allowing the Jews in Babylon to return home to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple.
        2. Herodotus does not mention this at all.

    C. In 546–539 B.C.E., Cyrus was probably engaged in campaigns in eastern Iran, central Asia, and Afghanistan.

III. We have little evidence of Cyrus' origins or background. He is the first clearly documented Achaemenid king of Persia.

    A. The Achaemenid dynasty traced its descent from a legendary founder, Achaemenes.

        1. After Cyrus, the name had great cachet.

        2. Darius, who would take the kingdom after the death of Cyrus' son Cambyses, claimed to be an Achaemenid, but his line of descent is unclear.

    B. We know nothing certain about Cyrus' parentage.

        1. Herodotus says that he was the child of Mandane, Astyages' daughter, and a Persian.

        2. However, Herodotus also says that he knows three other stories about Cyrus' descent, which he will not tell.

        3. Other Greek accounts said that Cyrus was not of noble birth at all.

IV. Herodotus' narrative of Cyrus' childhood and birth is the fullest such story he tells in the *Histories*. This account has many elements in common with the stories of well-known Greek heroes, such as Oedipus or Jason; Cyrus is marked out as exceptional by his conception, birth, escape from early death, and final restoration to his rightful position.

    A. Astyages tries to prevent Cyrus' conception and birth, then tries to kill him once he had been born.

        1. Astyages has a disturbing dream about his daughter Mandane, which seems to indicate that her child would overthrow him.

        2. He tries to prevent this by giving her in marriage to a Persian.

        3. When she is pregnant, he has another dream; therefore, he decides to kill her child.

    B. When Cyrus is born, Astyages gives him to a trusted kinsman, Harpagus, and tells him to kill the baby.

        1. Harpagus gives the baby to a herdsman, with instructions to kill the child and show him its body.

        2. When the herdsman arrives home with the infant, he finds that his wife has given birth to a stillborn child.

        3. She suggests that they rear the living infant and show the dead body of their own child to Harpagus.

        4. In this way, Cyrus survives.

    C. When Cyrus is ten years old, he comes to Astyages' attention; the king recognizes the boy as his own grandson.

        1. Cyrus is chosen by his age-mates to play the role of their king.

        2. Astyages decides that this fulfills the meaning of his dreams and, therefore, is not afraid to let the boy live.

        3. Cyrus is reunited with his birth parents.

    D. Though Astyages is delighted that his grandson is alive, he takes a terrible vengeance against Harpagus for disobeying his orders.

        1. He kills Harpagus' son, cooks him, and feeds the boy's flesh to Harpagus.

        2. He then shows Harpagus the child's head, hands, and feet.

V. Two separate strands of mythic elements are clearly visible in this story: its adherence to a standard form of hero tale and its reworking of one of the grislier aspects of the story of Agamemnon's family.

    A. Cyrus' birth and childhood story fits a narrative pattern that also covers the stories of Greek heroes, such as Oedipus, Jason, Heracles, and many others.

        1. There are difficulties surrounding the hero's conception and birth, often including an elder male relative's attempt to prevent the hero's birth or to kill him once he is born.

        2. The child is rescued and brought up by foster parents or, sometimes, by animals; thus, he grows up ignorant of his true identity.

        3. The hero is recognized through exceptional deeds, tokens of identity, or both.

    B. The story of Astyages' hideous revenge against Harpagus is directly parallel to the story of Agamemnon's father, Atreus, who fed his brother Thyestes the flesh of Thyestes' own sons.

    C. As the first Persian king to appear in the *Histories*, Cyrus is paradigmatic of Persia; it is appropriate, therefore, that his importance should be underlined with these larger-than-life motifs.

        1. Cyrus' story also underlines, as does Croesus', the idea that individuals are the motivating force behind great events.

2. One example of this is Harpagus' reaction to Astyages' revenge; he says nothing but bides his time and encourages Cyrus to rebel against Astyages when the time is ripe.

VI. Cyrus is a perfect example of the dual nature of Herodotus' narrative when it treats events several generations before Herodotus' own day.

A. Cyrus is a legendary figure, with a childhood narrative worthy of a mythic hero; but he is also an important historical figure, some of whose deeds and conquests can be verified independently of Herodotus' account.

1. The discomfort that many modern readers feel with these two sides of Cyrus probably would not have troubled Herodotus' original audience.

2. The mythic elements of Cyrus' story are hallmarks of oral tradition.

3. Herodotus practices rationalizing *historiê* here as well, however; he accounts for the variant that Cyrus was suckled by a bitch by saying that the name of the herdsman's wife meant "Bitch."

B. When Cyrus died in 530 B.C.E., his son Cambyses ascended the throne, which he held until 522 B.C.E. Herodotus is our main source for the reign of Cambyses.

1. He paints a portrait of a madman who committed various outrages.

2. The few other sources we have, however, do not support the idea that Cambyses was mad.

3. He ruled Babylonia efficiently both before and after Cyrus' death.

4. In 526 B.C.E., Cambyses invaded Egypt. In 525 B.C.E., Cambyses was crowned pharaoh and remained in Egypt for the next three years to consolidate his rule.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, Book I.93–211.

Supplementary Reading:

Burn, *Persia and the Greeks*, Chs. 2–3.

Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 4, pp. 6–52; 120–129.

Cook, *Persian Empire*, Chs. 3–4.

Immerwahr, *Form and Thought*, pp. 161–167.

Vandiver, *Heroes in Herodotus*, Appendix C.

Questions to Consider:

1. Herodotus knows other versions of Cyrus' birth story but chooses not to tell them. What are the implications of his choice to tell one that is so obviously parallel to the stories of many famous Greek heroes?

2. Some of the details of Herodotus' account of Cyrus' reign are independently verified by Babylonian records; others are not. Does the verification of some details justify our accepting Herodotus' word for the others? In other words, is he accurate enough in those details that we can check to justify trusting him for those we cannot check?

Lecture Twelve
Herodotus' Account of Egypt

Scope: This lecture examines Herodotus' account of Egypt, which occupies the entire second book of the *History*. We discuss the different areas of inquiry on which Herodotus focuses in this *logos*: the geography, marvels, customs, and history of Egypt. We see how for Herodotus, Egyptian customs are either "topsy-turvy," mirroring but reversing Greek customs, or the sources of Greek customs (especially religious ones). The lecture pays special attention to Herodotus' treatment of Egyptian religion, because he makes some of his most interesting and important statements about Greek theology and mythology in the context of his discussion of Egypt. We examine these statements in detail, paying special attention to Herodotus' understanding of chronology as based on the reports of Egyptian priests. Finally, the lecture discusses Herodotus' account of Helen and the version of her story told him by the Egyptian priests.

Outline

I. Herodotus interrupts his account of Cambyses' reign with the longest ethnographic digression in the *Histories*; the Egyptian *logos* takes up most of Book II.

    A. Herodotus says that he will write at length about Egypt because Egypt contains more wonders (*thômasia*) than any other country and works (*erga*) that are greater than their reports.
        1. This clearly picks up the terminology of the opening sentence.
        2. Herodotus' own programmatic statement thus justifies his attention to Egypt.

    B. Herodotus' stress on Egypt also reflects Egypt's importance in the Greek worldview.
        1. Egypt served as a paradigm of age and wisdom.
        2. At the same time, Egypt was a "topsy-turvy" culture in which many customs, beliefs, and practices were "backwards."

    C. Herodotus' account of Egypt covers its geography, marvels, customs, and history.

II. The "marvels" include both natural and manmade ones.

    A. Herodotus describes unusual Egyptian animals. Some we know are real animals, while others are mythical.
        1. The information Herodotus gives about actual animals, such as the crocodile and the hippopotamus, is an odd mixture of accurate and wildly inaccurate.
        2. He also includes accounts of purely legendary beasts, such as the phoenix and flying snakes.

    B. Among the manmade marvels Herodotus describes, the most important are the pyramids.
        1. Herodotus' estimates of the pyramids' sizes are fairly close to accurate.
        2. However, he underestimates their age by close to 2,000 years, though he gives the names of the builders correctly.
        3. The interpretations of the hieroglyphics given to Herodotus by his informants were ludicrously inaccurate.

III. Herodotus focuses on two types of Egyptian customs: those that are "backwards" in the Greek point of view and those that the Greeks borrowed from the Egyptians.

    A. The "topsy-turvy" customs remind us of Egypt's distance and difference from Greece.
        1. Elsewhere, women stay home and men take care of business; in Egypt, women do the business and men stay home and weave.
        2. Egyptian women urinate standing up; men, sitting down.
        3. Instead of cutting their hair when mourning, Egyptians shave their heads at other times but grow their hair to mourn a death.
        4. In all these instances, Herodotus assumes that Greek customs are "normal" and Egyptian ones, "backward."

    B. But Herodotus also gives several examples of important customs and items of knowledge that he thinks the Greeks derived from the Egyptians, who had invented or discovered them.

1. The Egyptians say that they discovered the year and division into twelve months, altars, images, temples, and sculpture. Most intriguingly, they say that they discovered the significant names (*epônumias*) of the twelve gods.
2. Some of these discoveries are of natural, preexisting things; others are inventions, not discoveries.
3. Most have to do with gods and worship.

IV. What does Herodotus mean by saying that the Egyptians discovered the "significant names" of the gods?

   A. He does not mean that the Greek names were identical to the Egyptian ones; they were not, as he himself states on several occasions.
1. The noun used here means "significant name," "title," or "surname."
2. Herodotus may mean that the Egyptians discovered the gods' essential attributes, that is, distinguished them from one another.

   B. Herodotus assumes that there must be direct correspondences between the major gods of the Egyptians and the Greeks. This assumption is built into polytheism.
1. From outside Herodotus' religious system, it is clear that the Egyptian and Greek polytheistic systems developed independently.
2. But from the inside, it was necessary to assume that the gods were the same.

   C. Herodotus' assumption that the Greeks "learned" about the gods from Egypt is predicated on his assumptions about Egyptian antiquity and its implications.

V. Egypt's antiquity was proven by the fact that Egyptian memory stretched back much farther than did the Greeks'. In Herodotus' view, the fact that Egyptians have longer memories than other cultures proves that Egyptian culture is older.

   A. Herodotus' presentation also implies that a culture's memories and records are coterminous with its age.
1. He assumes that the length of Egyptian records proves that the Egyptians had existed longer than the Greeks.
2. He does not consider that Greek culture could have existed longer than its traditions record.

   B. Herodotus thinks that because Egyptian culture is older, it must have "taught" younger cultures, such as Greece.
1. He does not allow for the possibility of various cultures developing similar phenomena independently or influencing one another simultaneously.
2. This reflects a deep-seated pattern of thought: that there must be one source, or inventor, for any phenomenon.
3. He does not allow for the possibility that Greece could have invented certain practices and exported them to Egypt.
4. Therefore, because Egypt was the older culture in Herodotus' view, then the Egyptians must have "discovered" the gods before the Greeks did.

VI. Herodotus' assumption that the Egyptians know more than the Greeks about history and that Greek traditions must be reconciled with Egyptian information is exemplified in his discussion of the Egyptian version of Helen's story.

   A. The Egyptian priests say that Helen was never in Troy at all; she and Paris were blown off course on their way to Troy, and the Egyptian king Proteus kept Helen safe for Menelaus.
1. The Trojans told the Greeks all along that Helen was not in Troy.
2. When Troy was sacked, the Greeks sent Menelaus to Proteus.

   B. Menelaus regained Helen from Proteus but repaid Egyptian kindness with outrage.
1. Delayed by bad weather, Menelaus sacrificed two Egyptian children and fled.
2. There is an obvious parallel here to the story that Agamemnon sacrificed his own daughter for a fair wind to Troy.

   C. The priests told Herodotus that they had learned some of this story by inquiry (*historiê*), and the rest, which took place in their own country, they knew through tradition.

VII. Herodotus accepts the Egyptian version of Helen's story. His reasons for doing so are an excellent illustration of his methodology; he applies reasoning by likelihood and literary criticism to this version of the story.

    A. This version seems likely, because it would make no sense for Priam not to surrender Helen to the Greeks.

        1. The cost to Troy was far too high for it to be worth keeping Helen.

        2. Paris was not even the heir to the throne, so his desire to continue his liaison could not have carried much weight.

    B. Herodotus also believes in the validity of the Egyptian story because he sees traces of it in Homer.

        1. The *Iliad* contains a reference to the wanderings of Paris and Helen on the way to Troy.

        2. The *Odyssey* refers to the time Helen and Menelaus spent in Egypt after the war and to Helen's interaction with Proteus.

        3. Herodotus assumes that Homer must be reflecting an Egyptian story, *not* the other way around.

    C. Herodotus comments that in his opinion, Troy fell, even though Helen was never there, in order to show that the gods inflict great punishments on great wrongdoings.

VIII. Egypt's antiquity has crucial implications for Herodotus' understanding of chronology.

    A. The Egyptian priests can trace their ancestry back 341 generations.

        1. Herodotus says that Hecataeus had told the priests that his own ancestry could be reckoned back sixteen generations, to a god.

        2. But the Egyptian priests denied that the gods have ever mingled with men in all 341 generations.

    B. Because Herodotus assumes that the gods of Egypt and the gods of Greece are the same entities, this raises questions about Greece's whole Heroic Age.

        1. Greek tradition commemorates interactions of gods and humans as recently as the Trojan War.

        2. Herodotus seems comfortable assuming that the gods are much older than Greek tradition would imply, but he never says how he reconciles the problem of the Heroic Age.

IX. Herodotus establishes the antiquity of Egypt by listing the number of its kings. He discusses the kings of Egypt in two separate sections of Book II.

    A. In the first section, Herodotus covers the period from approximately 3000–700 B.C.E.

        1. He says that Egyptian priests read him a list of 330 Egyptian kings, including eighteen Ethiopians and one Egyptian woman.

        2. Herodotus passes over most of these kings without comment.

        3. Herodotus discusses the building of the pyramids, though he puts them nearly 2,000 years too late.

        4. This section is virtually worthless for modern students of Egyptian history.

    B. Herodotus' second section covers the Saite (twenty-sixth) dynasty, 663–525 B.C.E.

        1. This is the period when Greeks and Egyptians interacted, and Herodotus' information is far more accurate.

        2. He gets the names and relative chronology of the five Saite pharaohs correct.

        3. Herodotus remains a crucially important source for this period of Egyptian history.

        4. He ends his account of the kings of Egypt with Cambyses' expedition.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, Book II.

Supplementary Reading:

Benardete, *Herodotean Inquiries*, Ch. 2.

Drews, *Greek Accounts*, Ch. 3, pp. 47–69.

Lloyd, A. *Herodotus*.

Vandiver, *Heroes in Herodotus*, pp. 124–130, 133–144.

Vasunia, *Gift of the Nile*, Ch. 3.

Questions to Consider:

1. The Helen story gives us a good illustration of Herodotus' methodology in action. What are the most important elements in that story as Herodotus presents it? What tips the balance, in his estimation, to make him accept the Egyptian account over Homer's?

2. The idea that if X precedes Y, then X must be the *cause* of Y is a logical fallacy (the *post hoc ergo proper hoc* fallacy), but obviously, it was powerfully attractive to Herodotus' mind. Can you think of other examples of this fallacy in the *Histories*?

Glossary

Note on transliteration: There is no easy answer to the question of how to transliterate Greek names into the Roman alphabet. The old-style Latinized system (in which Greek *kappa* becomes **c**, the ending **-os** becomes **-us**, *iota* on the end of diphthongs becomes **e**, plurals in **-ai** are Anglicized to **-s,** and so on) is the most familiar, but it is inaccurate in many ways. However, the more accurate system is jarring to English readers' eyes and often renders familiar names unrecognizable (for example, Athens becomes Athenai, Cyrus becomes Kuros, Thucydides becomes Thoukydides). In these outlines, I have followed a modified Latinized system; I give familiar names in their familiar form but tend toward the more accurate system for unfamiliar terms. This strategy is similar to that adopted by the translations of Herodotus that I recommend.

Aegina: Island in the Saronic Gulf, very near Athens. Athens and Aegina were often in conflict with each other.

agôgê: The Spartan system of education and child-rearing for boys.

Anshan: A town, or perhaps a region, ruled by the early Persian kings. Cyrus became king of Anshan in 559 B.C.E.

Archidamian War (431–421 B.C.E.): The first ten years of the great Peloponnesian War. The Archidamian War ended with the Peace of Nicias, but the peace never held and full-scale hostilities broke out again in 415 B.C.E.

archon: The chief magistrates of Athens, who held office for one year. There were three main archons: The *archon basileus* had mainly ritual and religious duties; the *archon eponymous* was, in effect, the head of state, and the year was referred to by his name (e.g., "in the archonship of Themistocles"); the *polemarch* was in charge of the army.

Areopagus Council: The advisory council of the archons in Athens; its membership consisted of former archons. The extent of its original powers is unclear; in 462 B.C.E., it was restricted to trying cases of homicide, arson, and malicious wounding.

Artemisium, Battle of (480 B.C.E.): Naval battle, fought simultaneously with the land battle of Thermopylae. Technically, Artemisium was a Greek victory, but the Greek forces withdrew when news of the Spartan defeat at Thermopylae reached them.

Attica: The peninsula on which Athens is located; in the fifth century B.C.E., it was unified under Athenian government.

Bisitun Inscription: A trilingual inscription set up by Darius and discovered in 1836. It narrates the events of Cambyses' death, the revolt of the Magi, and Darius' accession to the Persian throne.

Corcyra. Modern Corfu.

Delian League: An alliance formed between Athens and various other Greek *poleis*, including many Aegean islands, in 478/77 B.C.E. Originally a defensive alliance to guard against a third Persian invasion, as the century progressed, it became more and more a de facto Athenian empire. The name reflects the fact that the league's meetings were held on the island of Delos, where its treasury was also kept (though the funds were moved to Athens in 454 B.C.E.).

Delphi: Site of Apollo's most important oracle and the temple complex associated with it. Oracles at Delphi were spoken by the Pythia, a priestess supposedly inspired with prophetic powers by the god.

demes: Local districts or villages in Greece. Cleisthenes' reforms of 508 B.C.E. gave the *demes* of Attica a new importance when the tribes were reorganized to reflect *deme* membership, not family descent.

demokratia: Literally, "rule by the people." Athenian democracy in the fifth century B.C.E. was direct, not representative, but was limited to free, adult, citizen males.

ekklesia: The Athenian citizen assembly.

ephorate/ephors: The annually elected board of five officials that served as a check on the powers of the Spartan kings.

Gerousia: The Spartan Senate, of twenty-eight members plus the two kings. Membership was restricted to nobles over the age of sixty, who were elected by the Assembly.

Great Rhetra: The Spartan constitutional document. It probably originated as a Delphic oracle.

Halicarnassus: Herodotus' birthplace, modern-day Bodrum. Its region was Caria.

hektêmoroi: "One-sixth-parters." Attic sharecroppers who owed one-sixth of their crop to their landlords. This status was abolished by Solon's reforms.

Hellenic League. The Greek *poleis*' defensive alliance against the Persian invasion. It was formed in 481 B.C.E. under Spartan leadership.

helots: The servile population of Sparta. Unlike chattel slaves, they were the property of the Spartan state, not of individuals, and could not be sold away. Their status was considered to be somewhere "between slave and free."

historiê: "Research; inquiry; investigation." Herodotus uses this word at the beginning of his work; his use of it is the reason for the development of the sense "history."

hoplites: Greek heavy-infantry soldiers. They wore body armor and carried a round shield (*hoplon*) from which they got their name. Hoplites fought in formation, in the famous hoplite phalanx.

horoi: The marker stones that Solon removed from Attic land.

Ionia: The central section of western Asia Minor (in modern-day Turkey).

Ionian Enlightenment: An intellectual movement (or movements) that took place in Ionia in the sixth century B.C.E..

Ionian Revolt: The rebellion of several Ionian *poleis* against Persian rule in 499–494 B.C.E. Athens sent ships to help the Ionians.

isêgoria: Literally, "equality of speech." Herodotus uses this term to refer to democracy.

isonomia: Literally, "equality under law." This term is often used to describe Cleisthenes' political reforms in Athens.

Isthmus of Corinth. The narrow neck of land connecting the Peloponnese with eastern and northern Greece.

kleos: "Glory or fame"; that which others say about one, particularly after one's death. One function of epic poetry is to confer *kleos* on its characters.

krypteia: A Spartan institution; bands of young men who had completed the earlier parts of the *agôgê* roamed the countryside at night and killed helots. The *krypteia* may have developed from an initiation rite.

Lacedaemon/Laconia: The region around Sparta.

Lade, Battle of: The decisive final sea battle of the Ionian Revolt, in which the revolt was crushed. The Persians followed their victory at Lade by sacking Miletus.

logographers: Prose writers who preceded Herodotus (or were his contemporaries). Many came from Ionia. Their works have not survived.

logos: A complex word; it can mean account, narrative, speech, word, and various other things. Herodotus uses it to refer to different segments of his work (e.g., the Egyptian *logos*).

Magus/pl. Magi: Herodotus calls the Magi a Median tribe, but other authors indicate that they were a priestly class.

Marathon, Battle of (490 B.C.E.): The decisive battle of the first Persian invasion, in which the Athenians defeated the invaders.

medize: To collaborate voluntarily with the Persians.

Miletus: City in southern Ionia. In the sixth century B.C.E., Miletus was the home of some of the most important figures of the Ionian Enlightenment, including Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, and Hecataeus. It instigated the Ionian Revolt in 499 B.C.E. and was sacked by the Persians in 494 B.C.E.

Mycale, Battle of (479 B.C.E.): With Plataea, one of the last two important battles of the Persian Wars. The Greek fleet crossed the Aegean and attacked the Persians in their camp on Cape Mycale, across from the island of Samos. Supposedly, the battles of Plataea and Mycale took place on the same day.

nomos/physis: *Nomos* means "law" or "custom"; *physis* means "nature." The Sophists debated the relative importance of these two concepts in explaining human (and other) behavior. *Nomos* is an important term, and concept, in Herodotus.

Oceanus. The river that flows around the edges of the world. Herodotus is skeptical about the existence of such a river.

Peloponnesian War: War between Athens and Sparta and the allies of each *polis*; it began in 431 B.C.E. and continued (with brief interruptions) until 404 B.C.E., when Athens was defeated.

perioikoi: Literally, "those who live around." The term refers to inhabitants of Laconia who were not reduced to helot status but did not have full Spartan citizenship rights either. They were allowed to govern their own towns but had to pay taxes to Sparta and serve in the Spartan military.

Persian Wars: The great conflict between the vast Persian Empire and Greece. The wars occurred in two stages, ten years apart; Persia's first invasion of Greece took place in 490 B.C.E. and ended with Athens' victory at Marathon. The second invasion began in 480 B.C.E., the year of the Spartan defeat at Thermopylae and the Athenians' victory at the naval Battle of Salamis, and ended in 479 B.C.E. with the Greeks' victory at Plataea.

phthonos: "Jealousy, begrudgingness, ill will."

Piraeus: The harbor of Athens.

Plataea, Battle of (479 B.C.E.): With Mycale, one of the last two important battles in the Persian Wars. The Persian ground forces, under the leadership of Mardonius, were defeated by the Greeks under the Spartan king and commander Pausanias. Mardonius was killed.

polis: The basic political unit of Greece in the fifth century B.C.E. (and, in fact, the origin of our word *political*). Often translated "city-state" to indicate the lack of any precise English equivalent; a *polis* was small enough to qualify as a city by modern standards but was also self-governing.

Pre-Socratics: A descriptive term designating Greek thinkers, especially about philosophical matters, who lived before Socrates (469–399 B.C.E.). Members of the Ionian Enlightenment, such as Thales, were important Pre-Socratics**.**

Salamis, Battle of: The great naval victory of 480 B.C.E., in which the Greek fleet routed the Persians. The battle was fought in the channel between Athens and the island of Salamis.

Saronic Gulf: The body of water separating Attica from the Peloponnesus. The islands of Aegina and Salamis are both in the Saronic Gulf.

satrap/satrapy (Old Persian, *xshaçapava*): A satrap was a Persian provincial governor; the Persian term means "protector of power" and is first attested on the Bisitun Inscription. The area a satrap ruled was his satrapy.

seisachtheia: The "shaking off of burdens"; term applied to Solon's constitutional reforms.

Sophism/Sophists: An intellectual movement of the fifth century B.C.E.. The Sophists were first and foremost itinerant teachers of rhetoric. They also espoused a naturalistic view of morality and religion and questioned the universal validity of morals. The most famous Sophist was Protagoras, best remembered for his dictum "man is the measure of all things." Their opponents accused them of corrupting morals and weakening religious beliefs.

stratêgos/*pl. *stratêgoi: "Generals." At Athens, ten *stratêgoi* (one from each tribe) were elected annually; their terms were renewable. The office of *stratêgos* gained importance for politically ambitious men after the archonship began to be decided by lot.

synoikism: "Living together"; the joining of several smaller communities into one larger one. Athenian tradition attributed the *synoikism* of Attica to the hero Theseus; modern scholars think it probably occurred in the eighth century B.C.E.

Thermopylae, Battle of (480 B.C.E.): The crucial first land battle of Xerxes' invasion of Greece. Leonidas and his band of about 2,300 defenders, including 300 Spartans, held the pass against the Persians until they were betrayed by Ephialtes and surrounded. The defenders died to the last man. Thermopylae was fought simultaneously with the naval battle of Artemisium.

transliteration: The system of representing the sounds of one language (e.g., Greek) in the alphabet of another (e.g., English).

trireme: The standard classical Greek warship, brought to the height of its development by the Athenians in the fifth century B.C.E. It was a long rowing ship with three banks of oarsman. The total manpower of a fifth-century Athenian *trireme* was about 200. It had a bronze ram on its prow.

Troezen Decree (sometimes called the "Themistocles Decree"): An inscription found at Troezen, across the Saronic Gulf from Athens, in 1959. It represents a decree of the Athenians ordering the evacuation of Attica before the Battle of Artemisium, not (as Herodotus reports) before Salamis.

Biographical Notes

Achaemenids. Dynasty of Persian kings that traced its ancestry to the legendary Achaemenes (Old Persian, Hakhamanish). Cyrus the Great is the first Achaemenid king who can be clearly documented, so the genealogies are uncertain. Darius claimed Achaemenid ancestry, but his line of descent is unclear.

Achilles. Greatest Greek warrior in the Trojan War, main character of the *Iliad*. Son of the goddess Thetis and a human father, Peleus.

Aeschylus (?525–456 B.C.E.). The first and oldest of the three great Athenian tragedians. He wrote more than ninety tragedies, of which seven are extant. One of these, *The Persians,* describes the Battle of Salamis.

Agamemnon. Commander-in-chief of the Greek forces at Troy. Brother of Menelaus; husband of Clytemnestra. He sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia to receive a fair wind for Troy. On his return, Clytemnestra kills him; she is later killed by their son Orestes to avenge Agamemnon's death. These events form the plot of Aeschylus' trilogy *The Oresteia*.

Alcmaeonids. A noble Athenian family whose members were very important in sixth-century politics. They spearheaded the overthrow of Hippias and hoped to reinstate an oligarchy. Cleisthenes was an Alcmaeonid, as was Pericles on his mother's side. The Alcmaeonids were accused of medizing during the Persian Wars. Most scholars think that Herodotus' information about Athenian history comes largely from Alcmaeonid sources. The family suffered under a hereditary curse, because the slaughter of the Cylonian conspirators was ordered by an Alcmaeonid archon.

Alexander. See Paris.

Amazons. A race of warrior-women who lived somewhere at the edges of the world; the most common location for their homeland was somewhere near the Black Sea. The theme of fighting an Amazon recurs in the stories of various heroes, including Heracles, Theseus, and Achilles.

Anaximander (c. 610–c. 540 B.C.E.). One of the Ionian scientist-philosophers, from Miletus; he may have been an associate or pupil of Thales. He was the first Greek to write a prose treatise, *On the Nature of Things*, and the first to make a map of the inhabited world. He argued that the physical cosmos was governed by regular laws, discoverable through reason.

Anaximenes (fl. 546–525 B.C.E.). Like Anaximander, an Ionian scientist-philosopher from Miletus He argued that everything comes from one original substance, air; change was the result of the rarefaction and condensation of air. His theory became standard in fifth-century Ionian natural philosophy.

Aphrodite. Goddess of sexual passion. Wife of Hephaestus; mother of Eros; lover of Ares.

Apis. The sacred bull at Memphis. Greek tradition identified him with Io's son Epaphus. Herodotus attributes Cambyses' death to his wounding of the Apis-calf.

Apollo. Son of Zeus and Leto, twin brother of Artemis. Associated with prophecy, reason, healing, and music. The oracle at Delphi was his main prophetic shrine. His identification with the sun is post-classical. He is also called Phoebus.

Argonauts. Jason's companions on the Argo, who sailed to Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece. The Argonauts included all the greatest heroes of their day.

Aristagoras. Tyrant of Miletus in Histiaeus' absence (c. 505–496 B.C.E.). He instigated the Ionian Revolt, according to Herodotus, with Histiaeus' support and encouragement.

Artabanus. Darius' brother, Xerxes' uncle. He advised Xerxes against invading Greece, but recognized that the expedition was divinely ordered after the same dream that visited Xerxes visits him as well.

Artaphernes. Brother of Darius and satrap of Sardis. He was responsible for putting down the Ionian Revolt.

Artaÿctes. Governor of Sestos; crucified by the Athenians under Xanthippus' command after the siege of Sestos.

Artemisia. Woman ruler of Halicarnassus, who accompanied Xerxes' expedition against Greece. She took part in the Battle of Salamis (where she had advised Xerxes not to fight) and escaped by sinking a friendly ship. She later advised Xerxes to leave Mardonius in charge of his troops and make his own escape back to Persia, which Xerxes did.

Astyages (Median, Ishtuwigu; ruled c. 585–550 B.C.E.). Median king; overthrown by Cyrus the Great. According to Herodotus, Astyages was Cyrus' maternal grandfather.

Athena. Daughter of Zeus, who sprang from his brow fully grown and wearing armor. Athena is the goddess of warfare and the patron of Athens. A virgin goddess, she is associated with wisdom, cleverness, and weaving.

Atys. Croesus' son, about whose death Croesus had a prophetic dream. He was killed by Adrastus.

Cambyses (Old Persian, Kabujiya; d. 522 B.C.E.). Son of Cyrus the Great; acceded to the Persian throne on his father's death. Conquered Egypt; died on his way back to Persia to quell a revolt by an imposter (?) claiming to be his brother Smerdis.

Candaules. King of Lydia, murdered c. 680 B.C.E. by his henchman Gyges, who then married Candaules' widow.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius (106–43 B.C.E.). Roman orator, politician, and writer. He calls Herodotus the "father of history" (*pater historiae*) in his work *De legibus*.

Cleisthenes (late sixth century B.C.E.). Responsible for the reorganization of Athenian tribes on the basis of *deme* membership rather than family descent (508 B.C.E.). This reorganization had profound political effects and left the way open for the development of democracy in the fifth century B.C.E.

Cleobis and Biton. Solon tells the story of these two young men as second-place exemplars of "happiness" after Tellus the Athenian. They performed an act of great bodily strength and filial piety in pulling their mother's oxcart to a temple; as a reward, they died in their sleep immediately afterward.

Croesus (ruled c. 560–546 B.C.E.). Last king of Lydia; famous for his wealth. Herodotus tells the story of his visit by Solon, which is chronologically impossible. Croesus was defeated by Cyrus the Great, and Lydia became part of the Persian Empire.

Cylon. Athenian nobleman who tried to establish a tyranny in Athens, probably in 632 B.C.E. His attempt failed, but the slaughter of his supporters under the authority of the Alcmaeonid archon began the curse on the Alcmaeonid family.

Cyrus "the Great" (Old Persian, Kurush; d. 530 B.C.E.). The conqueror of Media, Lydia, and Babylonia, he was the first Persian king to form an empire. He first appears in the *Histories* as the conqueror of Croesus.

Darius (Old Persian, Darayavaush; d. 486 B.C.E.). King of Persia; ordered the first invasion of Greece, which ended with the Athenians' victory at the Battle of Marathon (490 B.C.E.).

Demaratus. King of Sparta, c. 515–491 B.C.E. His disagreements with his co-king, Cleomenes, led to the rule that only one Spartan king could lead troops into battle. He was deposed on a charge of illegitimacy manufactured by Cleomenes with the help of Delphi and medized. He accompanied Xerxes' expedition in 480–479 B.C.E.

Draco. The legendary "lawgiver" of the Athenians. His law code was promulgated around 620 B.C.E.

Echidna. One of the many female monsters of Greek mythology, whose body is partly snake-formed.

Epaphus. The son of Io and Zeus, supposedly conceived when Zeus touched Io to transform her back from a cow into a woman. Greek tradition identified him with the Egyptian Apis.

Ephialtes. The traitor who showed Xerxes the path through the mountains at Thermopylae.

Europa. Phoenician princess, kidnapped by Zeus in the form of a bull. He took her to Crete, where she bore him three sons, including the legendary King Minos. Europa supposedly gave her name to the continent of Europe.

Eurybiades. The Spartan commander of the Greek forces at Salamis.

Gelon. Tyrant of Syracuse who refused aid to the Hellenic League in 480 B.C.E. Defeated the Carthaginians at the Battle of Himera, supposedly on the same day as Salamis.

Gyges. King of Lydia c. 680–645 B.C.E. Gyges took the throne by murdering Candaules, according to Herodotus, at the instigation of Candaules' wife, whom Gyges then married. He founded the Mermnad dynasty, whose last representative was Croesus.

Harpagus. Astyages' kinsman, to whom he entrusted the killing of the baby Cyrus. When Astyages discovered ten years later that Harpagus had failed in this mission, he took a terrible vengeance, killing Harpagus' own son and feeding him the child's body. Harpagus later urged Cyrus to overthrow Astyages.

Hecataeus (fl. c. 500 B.C.E.). From Miletus; the most important of the Ionian *logographers*. He wrote two main works, the *Periodos Gês* ("*Journey around the World*") and the *Genealogies*. The second of these may have concentrated on the rationalization of myth. Neither work has survived; the extent of Hecataeus' influence on Herodotus is still hotly debated by scholars.

Hector. Crown prince of Troy, son of Priam and Hecabe, husband of Andromache, father of Astyanax. He was killed by Achilles.

Helen. Daughter of Zeus and Leda, sister of Clytemnestra, wife of Menelaus; the most beautiful woman in the world. Her seduction (or kidnapping?) by Paris was the cause of the Trojan War.

Hera. Wife of Zeus; patron goddess of marriage and married women.

Heracles. Greatest Greek hero, son of Zeus and the mortal woman Alcmene. He lived (probably) two generations before the Trojan War.

Heraclitus (fl. c. 500 B.C.E.). From the Ionian town of Ephesus; one of the most significant Pre-Socratics. The most important concept in his thought was *logos*, by which he apparently meant "measure," "reckoning," or "proportion." Heraclitus saw change or flux as a dominant force in the world; he used the metaphors of a river and strife to express this principle.

Hippias (late sixth–early fifth c. B.C.E.). Tyrant of Athens, son of Peisistratus. He was forced into exile in 510 B.C.E., which left the way open for Cleisthenes' reforms. He fled to Persia and helped the Persians in the invasion of 490 B.C.E.

Histiaeus (ruled c. 515–493 B.C.E.). Tyrant of Miletus. He left Aristagoras as his deputy in Miletus when Darius summoned him to Susa; according to Herodotus, he encouraged Aristagoras in the Ionian Revolt, but some modern scholars doubt this. He was executed by the Persians in 493 B.C.E.

Homer (c. 750 B.C.E.?). The name traditionally given to the bard of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but there is little to no agreement about when or where such a person lived or even if it is reasonable to refer to one bard for the epics at all.

Io. A young woman whom Zeus seduced. He turned her into a cow to try to hide the affair from the jealous Hera. Hera sent a gadfly to torment Io, and it drove her from country to country trying to escape its torments; she finally reached Egypt, where she was turned back into a woman and gave birth to Epaphus.

Jason. Leader of the Argonauts, who sailed to Colchis on the Black Sea in search of the Golden Fleece. He married the Colchian princess Medea, whose magic helped him get the Fleece. Years later, when he wanted to divorce her to marry a Greek princess, Medea retaliated by killing their sons.

Leonidas (d. 480 B.C.E.). King of Sparta who led the forces at Thermopylae.

Lycurgus. The Spartan law-giver who, according to legend, gave the Spartans their constitution.

Mandane. Median princess, daughter of Astyages, who gave her to a Persian in marriage because of alarming dreams about her offspring. She became the mother of Cyrus, who overthrew Astyages.

Mardonius. Darius' son-in-law; the commander of the ill-fated expedition against Greece in 492 B.C.E. that was wrecked off Mount Athos. Xerxes left him in charge of the Persian army after Salamis; he was killed at Plataea.

Medea. Princess of Colchis, who fell in love with Jason and helped him obtain the Golden Fleece.

Megabyzes. One of the seven Persian conspirators who put down the revolt of the Magi. In the "Constitutional Debate," he spoke on behalf of oligarchy.

meixoparthenos. The "Snake-woman" of Scythia, with whom Heracles mated to beget Scythes. She probably reflects a goddess who appears on Scythian ornaments.

Menelaus. Brother of Agamemnon, husband of Helen.

Miltiades (d. 489 B.C.E.). Athenian aristocrat; archon in 524/23 B.C.E. Sent to the Chersonese by Hippias, he settled there and submitted to Persian rule. He accompanied Darius on the Scythian campaign but apparently took part in the Ionian Revolt. After the revolt he fled back to Athens and was elected *stratêgos* in 490 B.C.E. Tradition says that he was the decisive force behind the Battle of Marathon, both by persuading the *polemarch* Callimachus to vote for battle and by choosing the time to engage the Persians.

Odysseus. Hero of the *Odyssey*; the cleverest Greek. He invented the ruse of the Trojan Horse.

Otanes. Persian noble who exposed the false Smerdis. One of the seven conspirators who put down the revolt of the Magi. In the "Constitutional Debate," he spoke on behalf of democracy.

Paris. Son of Priam and Hecabe, brother of Hector; prince of Troy. His abduction or, perhaps, seduction of Helen from her husband, Menelaus, motivated the Trojan War.

Pausanias (d. c. 470 B.C.E.). Spartan king and commander at Plataea, nephew of Leonidas. His later career is marked by charges of treachery, specifically negotiation with the Persians; he was executed by starvation on a charge of complicity with a helot uprising.

Peisistratus (d. 527 B.C.E.). Tyrant of Athens, father of Hippias.

Pericles (495–429 B.C.E.). The greatest Athenian statesman of Athens' "Golden Age." It is often said that under him, Athens returned, in effect, to one-man rule under the guise of democracy.

Perseus. Greek mythic hero, son of Zeus and Danaë. He married Andromeda; in Greek tradition, their son Perses was the eponymous ancestor of the Persians.

Phaidime. Otanes' daughter; one of the wives of the false Smerdis, who discovered his identity.

Pheidippides. The runner who took Athens' request for help to Sparta before the Battle of Marathon. Supposedly, he had a vision of the god Pan in the mountains as he ran.

Phoebus. See Apollo.

Plutarch (c. 50–120 C.E.). Philosopher, historian, and biographer. His treatise *On the Malice of Herodotus* argued that Herodotus was untrustworthy and should be called the "father of lies," not the "father of history."

Prexaspes. Cambyses' counselor who killed Smerdis.

Priam. King of Troy. During the Sack of Troy, he was slain by Neoptolemus at his own household altar.

Protagoras (c. 490–c. 420 B.C.E.). The most famous of the Sophists; best known for his saying "Man is the measure of all things."

Protesilaos. The first Greek hero to die at Troy. Herodotus says that his tomb was plundered and violated by Artaÿctes.

Proteus. According to Herodotus, an Egyptian king who hosted Helen on Menelaus' behalf; according to Homer, a minor god (the "Old Man of the Sea").

Pythia. The title of Apollo's priestess at Delphi, who spoke the god's oracles. She was a woman over fifty and unmarried.

Pythius. A rich Lydian who first gained Xerxes' favor by giving him lavish gifts, but then incurred the king's anger by asking for his eldest son to be excused from serving in Xerxes' army. Xerxes retaliated by killing the boy.

Scythes. The youngest son of Heracles and the Scythian *meixoparthenos*. He was the eponymous ancestor of the Scythian kings.

Smerdis (Old Persian, Bardiya). The son of Cyrus, brother of Cambyses. According to Herodotus, Cambyses killed Smerdis, and an imposter then rebelled against him, but modern scholars think that the usurper may well have been Smerdis himself.

Solon (d. c. 558 B.C.E.). Poet, politician, and reformer of the Athenian constitution. He was archon in 594/93 B.C.E. and probably instituted his reforms in that year. His main role in Herodotus is as a sage and wise advisor, who warns Croesus of the instability of human happiness. (See also *hektemoroi*; *horoi*; *seisachtheia* in the Glossary.)

Sophocles (496–406 B.C.). Second of the great Athenian tragedians. He wrote perhaps as many as 120 plays, of which only seven survive, including *Antigone* and *Oedipus the King*. There is a tradition that he and Herodotus were friends.

Targitaus. The Scythians' ancestor, according to their own account of their origins. He was the son of Zeus and a daughter of the River Borysthenes (the Dnieper).

Tellus the Athenian. Solon's first example of the *olbios* man. In his conversation with Croesus, Solon cites Tellus' city, family, death in battle, and burial at public expense as proof of his happy state.

Thales (c. 625–c. 545 B.C.E.). The first of the important Ionian scientist-philosophers, from Miletus. He was said to have predicted a solar eclipse in 585 B.C.E.

Themistocles (c. 524–459 B.C.E.). Athenian politician, archon 493/92 B.C.E. He was responsible for the development of Athens as a naval power by persuading the people to use the profits of the silver mines at Laurion to build a fleet. As archon, he also began the development of Piraeus, Athens' harbor. As *stratêgos*, he commanded the Athenian forces at Artemisium and Salamis. He was ostracized in the late 470s B.C.E. and eventually took refuge in Persia with Xerxes' son Artaxerxes. Herodotus' portrayal of Themistocles seems to reflect later biases against him, because Herodotus suggests that Themistocles was already thinking of currying favor with the Persians immediately after Salamis. Thucydides gives a much more favorable picture of Themistocles' character.

Theseus. Athenian hero and legendary king of Athens. His most famous exploit was fighting and killing the Cretan Minotaur. In Athenian myth, he was credited with the *synoikism* of Attica.

Thucydides (c. 460–c. 400). The great historian of the Peloponnesian War. His work was left incomplete when he died; it breaks off in mid-sentence. He built on Herodotus' work but differed from Herodotus, most notably in taking the present and recent past as his subject. He said that he determined to write an account of the Peloponnesian War almost as soon as it broke out.

Tomyris. Queen of the Massagetae. According to Herodotus, after Cyrus was killed in battle with her people, Tomyris plunged Cyrus' severed head into a skin of blood and told him to drink his fill, in vengeance for her dead son.

Valla, Lorenzo (1407–1457 C.E.). Great Italian scholar; he translated Herodotus and Thucydides into Latin.

Xanthippus. Father of Pericles. At the end of the *Histories*, he is responsible for crucifying Artaÿctes after the siege of Sestos.

Xerxes (Old Persian, Khshayarsha; d. 465 B.C.E.). Son of Darius; king of Persia 486–465 B.C.E. He led the Persian army in the second Persian invasion of Greece (480–479 B.C.E.), which ended with the Persians' defeat.

Zeus. The ruler of the Olympian gods. Brother and husband of Hera; father of many offspring by many mates, including Heracles by a mortal woman, Alcmene. The patron of justice, suppliants, and the guest-host relationship.

Herodotus:
The Father of History
Part II
Professor Elizabeth Vandiver

THE TEACHING COMPANY ®

Elizabeth Vandiver, Ph.D.

Director, Honors Humanities Program, University of Maryland

Elizabeth Vandiver did her undergraduate work at Shimer College, Mt. Carroll, Illinois, where she matriculated in 1972 as a sixteen-year-old early entrant. After receiving her B.A. in 1975, she spent several years working as a librarian before deciding to pursue graduate work in Classics at the University of Texas at Austin. She received her M.A. in 1984 and her Ph.D. in 1990.

At the University of Maryland, Professor Vandiver directs the Honors Humanities Program and teaches for that program and for the Department of Classics. Before coming to Maryland, she held visiting professorships at Northwestern University, where she taught from 1996 to 1999; the University of Georgia; the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome, Italy; Loyola University, New Orleans; and Utah State University.

In 1998, Dr. Vandiver received the American Philological Association's Excellence in Teaching award, the most prestigious teaching award available to American classicists. Other awards include the Northwestern University Department of Classics Excellence in Teaching award for 1998 and the University of Georgia's Outstanding Honors Professor award in 1993 and 1994.

Dr. Vandiver has published a book, *Heroes in Herodotus: The Interaction of Myth and History*, and several articles, and has also delivered numerous papers at national and international conferences. Her translation of Johannes Cochlaeus' 1549 *Commentary on the Works and Writings of Martin Luther* was published in 2002 under the title *Luther's Lives*; this is the first English translation of Cochlaeus' work. She is currently working on a third book, examining the influence of the Classical tradition on the British poets of World War I. Her previous Teaching Company courses include *The Iliad of Homer*, *The Odyssey of Homer*, *Virgil's Aeneid*, *Classical Mythology*, and *Greek Tragedy*.

Dr. Vandiver is married to Franklin J. Hildy, Ph.D., Professor of Theatre History at the University of Maryland.

Table of Contents

Herodotus: The Father of History
Part II

Herodotus: The Father of History

Scope:

This series of twenty-four lectures introduces the student to the work of Herodotus, the first Greek historian. We consider Herodotus' work in its cultural context, as a work of history, and as a literary achievement.

The first lecture sets the stage for the course by considering key issues of definition and terminology, including the definition of *history*; introducing Herodotus himself; and discussing the political organization of ancient Greece. The lecture provides context for the course by discussing important events that occurred during the late fifth and early sixth centuries B.C.E. The lecture closes by discussing the course's format and approach.

Lectures Two through Five provide essential background and contextual information. Lecture Two discusses the kinds of writing about the recent past that existed before Herodotus wrote and possible influences on him. This lecture analyzes Herodotus' opening sentence in close detail to demonstrate his creation of a new genre. Lecture Three considers the importance of myth and oral tradition for Herodotus' work and Lecture Four looks at Homeric epic and its influence on Herodotus' choice of subject matter and organization for the *Histories*. In Lecture Five, we discuss the crucial sixth-century intellectual movement known as the Ionian Enlightenment and its exploration of philosophical and scientific concepts of causation.

In Lectures Six and Seven, we turn to the importance of Athens for Herodotus' thought and achievement. Lecture Six sketches Athenian history through the late sixth century, placing particular emphasis on those events that laid the groundwork for democracy. Lecture Seven turns to the fifth century itself, Athens' "Golden Age," and discusses the political and intellectual developments that occurred between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars. In particular, we discuss the philosophical movement Sophism and the development of tragedy; the lecture considers how each of these genres influenced Herodotus' work.

In Lecture Eight, we consider the parameters of scope, design, and organization of Herodotus' work. The lecture discusses the frequent "digressions" in the *Histories*, with special focus on the ethnographic and geographical digressions. In particular, we look at Herodotus' discussion of the Nile. Finally, the lecture discusses the work's division into nine "books."

Lectures Nine through Eleven focus on Book I of the *Histories* and Herodotus' account of the beginnings of Persian-Greek conflict. Lecture Nine discusses Herodotus' synopsis of mythic accounts of the beginnings of Greek-Asian enmity, in rationalized versions of famous Greek myths about the abductions of women. The lecture surveys some possible interpretations of this passage, then examines Herodotus' statement that he will begin his own account with the first barbarian he knows to have wronged the Greeks, Croesus of Lydia. Lecture Ten continues our examination of Croesus, paying close attention to Herodotus' account of the Athenian sage Solon's visit to Croesus' court. We see how Herodotus uses this encounter to underline his portrayal of the differences between Greeks and Asians. The lecture then discusses Herodotus' account of Croesus' downfall and notes this story's structural and thematic affinities with Greek tragedy. Lecture Eleven covers Herodotus' treatment of the man who conquered Croesus, Cyrus the Great of Persia. The lecture summarizes modern scholarship on ancient Persia and Cyrus, outlines the most important episodes of Cyrus' reign, and discusses the legendary account Herodotus gives of his birth and childhood.

Lecture Twelve highlights Herodotus' longest "digression," his account of Egypt, which occupies the entire second book of the *History*. The lecture discusses Herodotus' treatment of the geography, marvels, customs, and history of Egypt. We pay special attention to Herodotus' treatment of Egyptian religion, because he makes some of his most interesting and important statements about Greek theology and mythology here.

Lectures Thirteen and Fourteen resume the discussion of the beginnings of the Persian Empire. Lecture Thirteen summarizes the career of Cyrus' son Cambyses and the ascension of his successor, Darius, to the Persian throne. We look carefully at the famous "Constitutional Debate" over the best form of government, which Herodotus ascribes to the Persian Magi. The lecture also examines the Bisitun Inscription and compares its account of Darius' ascension to that of Herodotus, before turning to a brief summary of the organization of the Persian Empire, the largest and most powerful empire of its day. Lecture Fourteen treats Darius' expedition against Scythia but focuses on Herodotus' portrayal of the Scythians themselves and their origins, customs, and history. The lecture looks carefully at Herodotus' strange story in which the Scythians' ancestry is attributed to Heracles' mating with a snake-

woman and discusses some of its possible implications. The lecture then summarizes modern historical and archaeological scholarship about the Scythians.

In Lecture Fifteen, we turn to an examination of Athens' great rival for hegemony in Greece, Sparta. The lecture discusses Sparta's cultural and political history and the ways in which all elements of Spartan society were focused on militarism and the production of the best possible soldiers.

Lectures Sixteen through Nineteen discuss the Persian Wars themselves. In Lecture Sixteen, we consider the events leading up to the first invasion of Greece in 490 B.C.E. and the invasion itself. The lecture describes the Ionian Revolt of 499–494 B.C.E., the role that Athens played in helping the rebellious Ionian cities, and Darius' consequent desire for vengeance against Athens. The lecture then turns to a discussion of the Battle of Marathon, in which the Athenians defeated Darius' troops. Lecture Seventeen opens our discussion of the second Persian invasion of Greece in 480–479 B.C.E. The lecture summarizes the aftermath of Marathon and describes the ascension of Darius' son Xerxes and his decision to continue his father's campaign against Greece. The lecture discusses Herodotus' description of the size and composition of Xerxes' army and compares Herodotus' figures to the views of modern historians. The lecture also details some of the narrative methods by which Herodotus focuses attention on the important symbolic or emotional elements of his account.

Lecture Eighteen details Herodotus' accounts of two crucial battles: Thermopylae and Artemisium. These two battles took place simultaneously: Thermopylae, on land under the leadership of King Leonidas and Artemisium, at sea. The lecture concentrates on Herodotus' account of Thermopylae; it includes discussions of Herodotus' portrayal of the Spartan King Leonidas and of the famous epitaph that was written for the Spartan dead. In Lecture Nineteen, we turn to three more crucial battles, Salamis, Plataea, and Mycale, and to the final siege of Sestos in Ionia. The lecture concentrates on Herodotus' account of the events leading up to the Battle of Salamis. The lecture discusses the divergence between Herodotus' account and that of the "Troezen Decree" and the implications for our evaluation of Herodotus' accuracy. The lecture then looks quickly at the last two important battles of the Persian Wars, the Battles of Plataea and Mycale. Finally, the lecture discusses the Athenian siege of Sestos and the final chapters of the *Histories*.

Lectures Twenty through Twenty-Two turn to interpretative issues. Lecture Twenty discusses Herodotus' use of individuals and their actions as explanations for historical events. The lecture examines some of the types of individuals who recur throughout the *Histories*, such as the "wise advisor," and notes how, in Herodotus' presentation, the events of history are driven not by sweeping political or economic factors but by individuals. This lecture also examines Herodotus' treatment of whole peoples and nations and his statements about the importance of *nomos* (custom). Lecture Twenty-One turns from human to divine causation, looking at Herodotus' treatment of gods, oracles, visions, and dreams. The lecture examines Herodotus' discussion of Heracles as an Egyptian god and argues that this shows the seriousness with which Herodotus views theological matters. The lecture then examines Herodotus' treatment of divine retribution in the *Histories*. Lecture Twenty-Two poses the question "history, literature, or both?" about Herodotus' work. The lecture discusses Herodotus' use of elements normally associated with literature, such as careful balancing of motifs and characters, recurrent themes, and the sense of an overall pattern in the work. We examine several of these elements through a discussion of Darius' and Xerxes' violations of physical and symbolic boundaries and the results of these violations. Finally, the lecture provides a careful reading of the final chapters of the *Histories* and addresses the question of whether Herodotus intended the work to end as it does.

Lecture Twenty-Three considers the political context in which Herodotus probably wrote the *Histories*. During the 420s B.C.E., Athens and Sparta were enemies in a conflict called the Peloponnesian War; the lecture summarizes the most important events of the early years of that war. The lecture discusses the question of when Herodotus' work may have been published, then turns to the vexing question of Herodotus' attitude toward Athens. We consider whether Herodotus was pro-Athenian, pro-Spartan, or a nonpartisan who regretted the conflict of these two great cities. The lecture concludes by introducing Herodotus' successor, Thucydides, who wrote a history of the Peloponnesian War.

The final lecture begins by considering some of the major differences between Thucydides' work and Herodotus' and discusses the degree to which the two historians' methodologies differ. We then turn to an examination of later writers' views of Herodotus, including the historian Plutarch's statement that Herodotus was the "father of lies," not the "father of history," an idea that has its adherents even today. The lecture then discusses the partial rehabilitation of Herodotus' reputation in the Renaissance and the lowering of his prestige again in the nineteenth century. Finally,

the lecture discusses the recognition of Herodotus' achievement that took place in the twentieth century and his influence on genres other than history.

Lecture Thirteen
The Ascension of Darius

Scope: This lecture continues our examination of Herodotus' account of the beginnings of the Persian Empire. The lecture begins by summarizing Herodotus' description of Cambyses' expedition against the Ethiopians, then turns to Cambyses' madness, the revolt of the Magi against him, and his death. We then consider Herodotus' account of Darius' ascent to the Persian throne. We look carefully at the famous "Constitutional Debate" over the best form of government, democracy, oligarchy, or monarchy, that Herodotus ascribes to the Persian Magi and consider modern scholars' views of the unlikeliness of such a debate taking place among the Persian conspirators. Next, we discuss the Bisitun Inscription and compare its account of Darius' ascension to Herodotus'. The lecture then summarizes Darius' consolidation of the Persian Empire after his ascension to the throne. Here, we draw both on Herodotus' account and on modern historians' findings. Finally, the lecture gives a brief summary of the organization of the Persian Empire, the largest and most powerful empire of its day.

Outline

I. After his excursus into the Egyptian *logos*, Herodotus resumes his account of Cambyses' reign by describing Cambyses' expedition against Ethiopia.
   A. Cambyses advanced into Ethiopia almost immediately.
      1. According to Herodotus, the expedition was a total disaster.
      2. Cambyses recklessly failed to give his troops adequate provisions.
      3. The troops were reduced to eating grass, then to cannibalism, and the expedition was called off.
   B. However, modern historians think the expedition may have been considerably more successful than Herodotus' Egyptian sources indicated.

II. Herodotus' portrayal of Cambyses overall is highly negative; he attributes Cambyses' death to the king's sacrilegious disregard of Egyptian religious mores.
   A. Herodotus reports that after the Ethiopian campaign, Cambyses killed the sacred Apis calf.
      1. The Egyptians were holding a festival in honor of Apis, but Cambyses thought they were celebrating his defeat in Ethiopia.
      2. He questioned the priests and demanded that Apis be brought before him.
      3. When the priests complied, Cambyses wounded the calf in the thigh; it later died of the wound.
   B. Herodotus reports that after this outrage against the Apis calf, Cambyses went mad. His madness took the form of various violations of norms and morals.
      1. After dreaming that his brother Smerdis would take his throne, Cambyses sent a trusted counselor, Prexaspes, to kill Smerdis.
      2. He married his own sister, then killed her, either executing her or kicking her to death in a fit of rage.
      3. He committed various acts of irrational cruelty against the Persians.
      4. When Croesus advised moderation, Cambyses tried to kill him.
   C. Herodotus also links Cambyses' death in 522 B.C.E. with the death of the Apis calf.
      1. Cambyses was on his way back to Persia to quell an uprising by two Magi, one of whom claimed to be Cambyses' brother Smerdis.
      2. In Ecbatana, in Syria, he was wounded in the thigh by his own sword as he mounted his horse.
      3. The wound corresponded precisely to the spot where Cambyses had wounded the Apis calf.
      4. Cambyses remembered a prophecy that he would die in Ecbatana and realized that the wound would be mortal.

III. After Cambyses' death, the false Smerdis reigned for several months. A Persian noble named Otanes became suspicious that Smerdis was not really the son of Cyrus.
   A. There was a Magus named Smerdis, who resembled Cyrus' son, but whose ears had been cut off years earlier. Otanes suspected that the new king might be this Smerdis.
      1. Otanes' daughter Phaidime was one of Smerdis' wives.

2. Otanes told her to check and see if her husband had ears.
3. She found that he did not.

B. As soon as Otanes knew that the king was an imposter, he persuaded six Persian nobles to join him in an attempt to overthrow the false Smerdis. Among them was Darius.
1. The conspirators determined to attack the two Magi at once.
2. As they were on their way to the palace, Prexaspes announced publicly that Smerdis was not the son of Cyrus but an imposter.
3. The seven conspirators then killed the two Magi and showed their heads to the citizens.

IV. Five days later, the conspirators met to discuss the situation. Herodotus tells us that they engaged in a debate on the best form of government.

A. Three speakers argued for the form of government they considered superior. First, Otanes recommended the establishment of popular government.
1. Otanes started by discussing some of the problems with monarchy.
2. He says that monarchy is conducive to both *phthonos* and *hubris*.
3. "Rule by the many" has the fairest of names (*isonomia*).
4. Magistrates are appointed by lot and are held responsible for their actions, and policies are publicly debated.

B. Megabyzes spoke in support of oligarchy.
1. He agreed about the drawbacks of monarchy.
2. However, democracy is just as bad, because the mob is stupid and aggressive.
3. Democracy may be fine for Persia's enemies, but Persia should entrust power to the chosen few.

C. Darius supported monarchy, and his argument won.
1. He agreed with Megabyzes about the evils of democracy but saw similar evils in oligarchy.
2. Monarchy has the virtues of secrecy and tight control.
3. Oligarchy leads to personal feuds, and democracy, to factionalism; both of these lead to civil wars and the restoration of monarchy.
4. The Persians should stick to ancestral custom and choose a king.

D. This "Constitutional Debate" is one of the most fascinating passages in the *Histories*.
1. Herodotus specifically insists that the debate took place.
2. However, modern scholars consider this very unlikely; it is thoroughly Greek in conception and expression.
3. In particular, the presentation of democracy is unlikely to have occurred to a Persian speaker.

V. Once monarchy was agreed on, the Persian conspirators had to decide which of them should be king.

A. They agreed that they would mount their horses at dawn the next day. The throne would go to whichever man's horse neighed first.

B. With the help of his groom, Darius ensured that his horse would neigh first.
1. One story is that the groom allowed Darius' stallion to mate with a mare the night before the conspirators met; the next morning, on the same spot, the stallion neighed.
2. There was also a flash of lightning and clap of thunder from a clear sky.
3. The other version is that the groom rubbed the mare's secretions on his hand and put it to the stallion's nostrils.

VI. The death of Cambyses and the subsequent accession of Darius can be checked against Persian sources. The Bisitun Inscription narrates the same events.

A. This trilingual inscription, set up by Darius, was discovered in 1836.
1. There were copies elsewhere in the Persian Empire.
2. It is possible that Herodotus knew and used one such copy.

B. Therefore, it is uncertain whether the Bisitun Inscription is Herodotus' source or independent verification of his story.
1. Either way, it argues well for Herodotus' accuracy.
2. Out of the seven conspirators' names, Herodotus gets only one wrong.

C. The Bisitun Inscription agrees in its broad outlines with Herodotus' narrative, but there are differences. Most important, the inscription says Cambyses died of "own-death."

D. The Bisitun Inscription and Herodotus agree that Smerdis was an imposter and that Cambyses had killed his real brother.
   1. However, most modern scholars find this unlikely.
   2. It is quite possible that the rebellion against Cambyses was led by his own brother.
   3. In that case, the Bisitun Inscription is Darius' attempt at "spin control."

VII. Herodotus implies that Darius met with no resistance to his ascension. The Persian records tell a different story.

A. Various subject kingdoms revolted, among them Elam, Babylon, Media, and others.
   1. These rebellions were not easy to quell; the Bisitun Inscription boasts that Darius fought nineteen battles and took nine kings prisoner in a single year.
   2. By the end of 521 B.C.E., Darius was firmly in power.

B. Some scholars see his consolidation of power as the real creation of the Persian Empire.

VIII. The organization of Darius' empire was complex and sophisticated, administered from the royal cities of Susa, Ecbatana, Pasargadae, and Persepolis. The king was all powerful, but his huge empire required delegation for its rule.

A. Darius organized his expanded empire into provincial governorships, or *satrapies*.
   1. Each *satrapy* was governed by a *satrap*, who ruled over a provincial court modeled on the king's court.
   2. A satrap was often the king's relative; he was appointed or removed at the king's pleasure.
   3. The satraps were monitored by officials called the "king's scribes," the "king's ears," and the "king's eyes."

B. Herodotus says that Darius set up twenty such satrapies and fixed the annual tribute due from each.
   1. Herodotus' list is the fullest surviving account of Darius' satrapies.
   2. Unfortunately, we are uncertain what Herodotus' source may have been.

C. The Persian Empire depended for its administration on the famous system of royal roads, which among other things, allowed for an extremely efficient system of couriers.

D. With his empire organized, Darius could turn to further expansion.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, Book III.

Supplementary Reading:

Benardete, *Herodotean Inquiries*, Ch. 3.

Burn, *Persia and the Greeks*, Ch. 5.

Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 4, pp. 53–71, 79–111.

Cook, *Persian Empire*, Ch. 5.

Immerwahr, *Form and Thought*, pp. 169–176.

Lateiner, *Historical Method*, Ch. 8.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why did Herodotus choose to stress the flaws in each of the three forms of government in the Constitutional Debate, rather than stressing what is beneficial about each one?

2. Why do you think Herodotus chose to put a debate about these forms of government into the mouths of Persian characters, not Greek ones?

Lecture Fourteen
Darius and the Scythians

Scope: In this lecture, we consider Herodotus' treatment of Scythia and the Scythians, who receive more attention in the *Histories* than any other non-Hellenic people except the Egyptians. The lecture begins by discussing Darius' ill-fated expedition against the Scythians and the reasons that Herodotus gives for the Persians' defeat at the Scythians' hands. We then turn to an examination of Herodotus' account of Scythian origins, customs, and history, paying particular attention to the strange story Herodotus recounts in which the Scythians' ancestry is attributed to Heracles' mating with a snake-woman. The lecture then summarizes modern historical and archaeological scholarship about the Scythians and notes how some of Herodotus' most seemingly outlandish details correspond to the findings of modern archaeology. Finally, the lecture closes by discussing the importance that Herodotus' narrative imparts to the Scythians' defeat of a Persian invasion; their defeat of the Persians foreshadows Greece's later defeat of Darius and Xerxes.

Outline

I. Darius' extension of the Persian Empire had reached as far east as India perhaps as early as 518 B.C.E. In 513 B.C.E., he marched against Thrace and Scythia in the north and Libya in the south. Herodotus describes the Scythian and Libyan expeditions in Book IV; he is our primary source for Darius' Scythian expedition.

    A. Darius' invasion of Scythia was an attempt to extend Persian domination to the northwest. The Aegean islands were under Persian rule by this time, and Darius raised a naval fleet from them and from the Ionian *poleis*.

        1. He built a pontoon bridge of 200 ships supporting a roadway across the Bosporus.

        2. The army crossed the Bosporus and moved north through Thrace toward the Danube.

        3. The fleet sailed up the Black Sea to the mouth of the Danube, where Darius ordered them to build a bridge across the Danube and wait for the army.

    B. Herodotus' account clearly depends heavily on Scythian sources and may make Darius' defeat seem more complete than it was.

        1. The Scythians asked neighboring nations for help, but most refused.

        2. The Scythians' defensive strategy depended on their status as nomads.

        3. They adopted a plan of continually drawing the Persians deeper into Scythian territory, then retreating in front of them.

        4. Because the Scythians had no cities to risk and no dependence on agriculture, they could not be forced to stand and fight.

        5. They continued this policy, supported by the skill of their mounted archers, until the Persians risked running out of supplies.

        6. Darius eventually retreated to the Danube bridge and withdrew.

    C. Darius had left Ionians to guard the Danube bridge but had given orders for the bridge to be destroyed if he had not returned in sixty days.

        1. The Scythians reached the bridge before the retreating Darius and urged the Ionians to destroy it and free themselves from Persian rule.

        2. Miltiades, an Athenian who was tyrant of the Thracian Chersonese, argued that they should seize this opportunity to break away from Persia.

        3. Histiaeus, the tyrant of Miletus, countered that they were themselves tyrants because of the Persians and that they should keep the bridge for Darius.

        4. The Ionians destroyed part of the bridge and awaited further developments.

        5. When Darius arrived, they repaired the bridge, the Persians retreated, and the Scythian expedition ended.

    D. The Scythians are far more important in the *Histories* than this summary of the expedition might indicate. In Herodotus' worldview, the Scythians were Europeans; Darius' expedition against them marked the first time an Asian monarch invaded Europe.

II. The length and detail of the Scythian *logos* recalls the description of Egypt in its attention to topography, history, and customs. In many ways, the Scythians are the antithesis of the Egyptians; in others, they parallel the Egyptians. These two nations seem to represent both the oddity of the world at its edges and the most important expeditions of conquest faced by Cambyses and Darius.

    A. The Scythian antithesis to Egypt is notable in various ways.

        1. The Egyptians are among the oldest of peoples; the Scythians say they are the youngest.

        2. The Egyptians invented religious rites and the use of altars, images, and so on; the Scythians have no altars or images.

        3. The Egyptians maintain gender divisions, although they reverse Greek norms; the Scythians largely dispense with gender divisions.

    B. The parallels are also notable.

        1. Both Egyptians and Scythians refuse to accept foreign customs.

        2. Both are on the boundaries between two major continents: Egypt, between Asia and Libya; Scythia, between Asia and Europe.

        3. Accordingly, each one causes significant trouble for a Persian king trying to make his way through that country toward the continent on its far side. Cambyses meets his death because of his misdeeds in Egypt; Darius is turned back from the conquest of Europe by his failure in Scythia.

III. The Scythians' importance as the first Europeans to defeat an invading Asian monarch is underlined by their connection with Greece and the Greeks. Herodotus tells three different stories of the Scythians' origins; the second says that the Scythians are descended from the great Greek hero Heracles.

    A. The first, which Herodotus says the Scythians themselves believe, is that they descended from Targitaus, a son of Zeus and of the River Borysthenes' daughter.

        1. Targitaus had three sons, who first reigned jointly.

        2. When four golden objects fell from the sky, the two elder brothers could not pick them up, but the youngest could.

        3. The elder brothers took this as an omen and handed the rule of the country over to the youngest brother, Colaxais.

        4. Herodotus says that he does not believe this story.

    B. The third version of the Scythians' origin is the one that Herodotus says he does believe.

        1. This version is entirely prosaic.

        2. The Scythians came into the country they now inhabit from Asia and drove out the original population.

    C. Herodotus attributes the second story, that the Scythians are descended from Heracles through his mating with a "snake-woman," to "the Greeks of Pontus."

        1. This is one of the strangest anecdotes in the *Histories*.

        2. Yet Herodotus makes no comment on its believability.

        3. The connection with Heracles is an important one; Heracles is cited as an individual's ancestor only four times in the *Histories*.

        4. As the great pan-Hellenic hero, Heracles functioned to spread Greek culture; his connection with the Scythians, then, connects them with Greece and Greekness.

        5. At the same time, the story that gives the Scythians Heracles for their father stresses their strangeness through their utterly outlandish mother.

IV. Heracles mated with a Scythian snake-woman and begot three sons with her. The youngest of these sons, Scythes, became the eponymous ancestor of the Scythian kings.

    A. Heracles fell asleep in Scythia and awoke to find that his mares were missing.

        1. When he went looking for them, he found the snake-woman in a cave.

        2. Herodotus describes her as a *meixoparthenos*, a "mixed-maiden," who is a woman above the buttocks but a snake below them.

    B. This snake-woman says that she has Heracles' mares and promises to return them if Heracles will sleep with her.

        1. After Heracles begets three sons with the snake-woman, she agrees to let him go but asks him which of the sons should rule after her.

        2. Heracles gives her two tokens, a bow and a belt with a golden cup on its clasp.

3. He tells her that the son who can bend the bow and fasten the belt should be king.

4. Scythes, the youngest son, accomplishes these tasks and becomes the Scythians' eponymous ancestor.

V. The story of the Scythian snake-woman is extraordinary in several respects.

   A. Greek myth features several half-human, half-monstrous females, but normally, these creatures are destructive toward human males and toward human children.

   1. Herodotus uses the term *echidna* for the snake-woman; the *echidna* of Greek myth ate children.

   2. Other "snaky" female monsters, such as Scylla or Medusa, destroyed men.

   3. Yet Herodotus' *echidna* does no harm to Heracles and gives birth to children.

   B. Athenian origin myths included benign half-snake ancestors, but they were males.

   1. The Scythian *meixoparthenos* is an inversion of expectations.

   2. She is female and snake-formed but beneficent.

   C. These reversals reiterate the overall pattern of the Scythians in Herodotus' treatment of them.

   1. They are both the opposites of the Greeks and parallels to them.

   2. They have a Greek origin but a strange and inverted one; their "otherness" is maintained at the same time that their "sameness" is stressed.

   D. Finally, the gender roles of this story point to the Scythians' supposed connection with the Amazons and its interaction with Greek roles about masculine dominance.

   1. The Amazons were a race of warrior women who lived near the Black Sea.

   2. The Amazons mated with the Scythians to produce the Sauromatae, one of the three nations to help the Scythians resist Darius.

   3. Amazonian gender reversal is apparent in the *meixoparthenos*; she is the sole ruler of Scythia and sets the terms of her encounter with Heracles.

   4. Yet she asks Heracles which son should rule and obeys his instructions.

   5. This reestablishes the norms of patriarchy in the Scythian context.

VI. Archaeology has confirmed many details of Herodotus' description of Scythia, including some that were long assumed to be impossible.

   A. Herodotus describes Scythian royal burial customs.

   1. He mentions the burial of horses and attendants with the king.

   2. The discovery of Scythian royal burials in the twentieth century proved that Herodotus' account is accurate.

   B. Herodotus also mentions that after a burial, the Scythians purify themselves with a steam bath.

   1. He notes that they throw hempseeds on the hot stones of the bath and enjoy the vapor.

   2. Archaeologists have found the remains of these saunas.

   C. More surprisingly, archaeologists have found the snake-woman. There are several images of a female figure whose legs are snakes or a series of snakes.

   1. The usual assumption is that she represents a Scythian goddess.

   2. The story of her mating with Heracles may represent a genuine Scythian origin legend.

   3. In any case, she can no longer be dismissed as a mere fabrication of either Herodotus or his Pontic informers.

   D. Even the Amazon myth may reflect some aspects of Scythian society, because archaeologists have found burials of warrior-women.

   E. Details that used to be seen as proof of Herodotus' over-credulity or mendacity now offer the best proof of his accuracy.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, Book IV.

Supplementary Reading:

Bernardete, *Herodotean Inquiries*, Ch. 4.

Burn, *Persia and the Greeks*, Ch. 7.

Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 3, Pt. 2, pp. 560–590.

Hartog, *Mirror of Herodotus.*

Redfield, "Herodotus the Tourist."

Rolle, *World of the Scythians.*

Vandiver, *Heroes in Herodotus*, pp. 169–181.

Questions to Consider:

1. Archaeology has turned up images that seem to correspond fairly well with Herodotus' story of the Scythian snake-woman. Are we justified in concluding, then, that other fantastic stories in his work might conceal some element of (mis)remembered truth, as well?

2. Why do you think the Greeks who lived around the Black Sea wanted to attribute the ancestry of the Scythians to Heracles? Why was it important to give these strange nomadic people a specifically Greek ancestry?

Lecture Fifteen
Sparta and the Spartan Way of Life

Scope: In this lecture, we turn to an examination of Athens' great rival for hegemony in Greece, Sparta. The lecture begins by noting the difficulties that historians face in assessing Spartan culture, because most of our source materials were written by non-Spartans. The lecture then considers Sparta's physical location, the development of the *helot* system, and the Spartan method of rearing and educating boys, the *agôgê.* Next, the lecture summarizes the education of Spartan girls and Spartan marriage customs, all of which contributed to Sparta's strong emphasis on militarism. The lecture briefly describes the foremost type of soldier, the hoplite, then turns to describing Sparta's political system, with its two kings, assembly, and Gerousia (or council of elders), and considers how this system too contributed to Spartan militarism. Finally, the lecture discusses the Great Rhetra, the foundation of Sparta's constitution.

Outline

I. Sparta was the second most important Greek *polis*, next to Athens. Its system of government, customs, and way of life were very unlike the Athenians'.

    A. Athens and Sparta came into frequent conflict with each other, sometimes to the point of open hostilities, particularly as the fifth century progressed.

    B. One difficulty we face in trying to assess Spartan culture is that most of our written sources are non-Spartan.

        1. Sparta produced great poets in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E., but literature waned thereafter, and there were no Spartan historians.

        2. Some non-Spartan authors admired Spartan society, but even an admiring outsider can get details wrong.

        3. Modern historians use the phrase "Spartan mirage" to refer to the idealized view outsiders have given us of Sparta.

    C. Spartan society was most famous, in antiquity and afterward, for its extreme focus on militarism. Every aspect of its political and cultural life was geared toward this.

II. Sparta's physical location and its relationship to its neighbors both contributed to Sparta's focus on militarism.

    A. Sparta lies in a valley separated by mountains from its neighbors on either side.

        1. This position is easily defended from approach by land.

        2. It is well inland and, thus, not vulnerable to attack by sea.

    B. The region in which Sparta is located is called Laconia or Lacedaemonia.

        1. Laconia was ruled from the *polis* of Sparta.

        2. The origins of Sparta and the Spartans are unclear; the archaeological record seems to indicate settlement in the tenth century B.C.E.

    C. The Spartan system depended on the work of second-class citizens, called *helots*, to support the first-class citizens, or Spartiates.

        1. The helots were not the same as chattel slaves, because they belonged to the community in general, not to individuals.

        2. Helots worked as farmers and household slaves for Spartiates, who were thus freed from the necessity of doing any manual labor at all.

        3. The origins of helotism are uncertain, but probably, the Spartans conquered the people who lived around them in Laconia and reduced them to helot status.

    D. A second group of helots lived in nearby Messenia, a fertile region to the west of Sparta.

        1. Sparta probably reduced the Messenians to helot status in the eighth century B.C.E. in the First Messenian War.

        2. Control of Messenia allowed Sparta to become a leading *polis* in Greece.

    E. The Messenians revolted in the Second Messenian War (650–620 B.C.E.), in which Sparta was almost defeated.

1. This led to a tightening of Sparta's control over the helots.
2. It may be at this point that the *krypteia* was instituted; this was a group of young men who went out at night and killed helots.
3. Sparta also declared war on the helots on an annual basis; this meant that a Spartan could kill a helot without fear of any punishment.

F. One other group of citizens deserves mention; some citizens of Laconia were not reduced to helotism but were allowed to live in self-governing towns.
1. These people were called *perioikoi*.
2. They did not have citizen rights, but they were required to pay taxes and to serve in the Spartan army.

III. The helot system probably had a strong influence on Sparta's development of its unique culture with its extreme stress on militarism, because the Spartans were constantly under threat of rebellion by the helots. By the sixth century B.C.E., almost all aspects of Spartan life were geared toward forming and maintaining the military. This extended to education, marriage, and family life.

A. The education of a Spartan boy had the primary purpose of turning him into a good soldier. This system was called the *agôgê*.
1. At the age of seven, boys were removed from their homes to live in barracks with other boys. They lived in these barracks until they were thirty.
2. From age seven to twelve, the boys studied reading, writing, music, and dancing, along with physical exercise.
3. Boys ate in communal meals but were intentionally underfed, with the idea that they would develop cunning by having to steal food.
4. They were subjected to strict discipline, had to go barefoot at all times, and wore only a single garment.
5. At age twelve, the regimen became even stricter, and the physical training intensified.
6. The *agôgê* ended at age eighteen; finally, at age twenty, young men were elected to a common mess, in which they would eat for the rest of their lives. Full citizenship depended on election to a mess.

B. We know much less about Spartan girls' upbringing; remarkably, they apparently had some form of public education.
1. Girls lived at home until marriage.
2. Their education stressed physical exercise, with the purpose of producing healthy babies.
3. There is some evidence that they were taught at least basic literacy, as well.

C. Like its educational system, Sparta's marriage customs were geared toward producing citizen-soldiers.
1. All citizen males were required by law to marry.
2. Men probably married around age twenty-five or so; women, perhaps as late as age eighteen.
3. If the groom was under thirty, the couple did not cohabitate; he was supposed to sneak away from his communal living quarters at night to visit his wife secretly.
4. Even when the husband was over age thirty, he still ate with his common mess and spent little time at home.
5. The Spartan man's primary loyalty was clearly to his mess, not to his family.

IV. The system of *agôgê*, communal mess, and loyalty to the group rather than to the family was well calculated to produce not just soldiers, but one kind of soldier, the *hoplite*.

A. Hoplites were the standard heavy-infantrymen of all Greek *poleis*.
1. Their name comes from their round shield, or *hoplon*.
2. The hoplites' success depended on the *phalanx*.

B. The phalanx was a rectangular battle formation with overlapped shields.
1. The phalanx was a formidable force when it maintained proper discipline.
2. Clearly, the Spartan system of rigid discipline and stress on group loyalty was calculated to produce exceptional hoplites.

V. Sparta's political system was an oligarchy headed by two hereditary kings. Its most important body was the Gerousia, or council of elders.

A. The kings were drawn from two families, the Agiads and the Eurypontids.

1. They held important priesthoods.
2. They were military commanders with absolute power of life and death in the field and a bodyguard of 100 men.
3. However, after the early fifth century B.C.E., only *one* led any given military expedition.

B. The kings' governing powers were limited by an annually elected group of five *ephors*.
1. The *ephors* seem to have existed to limit the power of the kings.
2. The kings and *ephors* exchanged oaths each year; the *ephors* swore to support the kings so long as the kings kept their oaths, and the kings swore to uphold the Spartan law.

C. The most important institution in Spartan government was the Gerousia. It was composed of the two kings and twenty-eight other members.
1. The members had to be at least sixty years old.
2. They were elected by acclamation in the Assembly and held office for life.
3. Membership was limited to men from noble families.
4. The Gerousia's power was far-reaching. For instance, it decided whether an infant should be reared or not, a decision that an infant's father made in other Greek *poleis*.

D. Finally, the Assembly was made up of male citizens over the age of thirty, that is, all those who had completed the *agôgê* and had been elected to a mess.
1. The Assembly elected the Gerousia and the *ephors*, as well as other important magistrates.
2. There was no debate; the Assembly could only assent or dissent to motions proposed by the Gerousia, which had the power to overturn the Assembly's decisions.
3. Thus, the Gerousia remained the most powerful body in Sparta.

E. The Spartans traced their form of government to two sources: a lawgiver named Lycurgus and a document called the Great Rhetra.
1. Modern historians disagree over whether Lycurgus ever lived or not, but he held a position in the Spartan imagination similar to Draco's in the Athenian.
2. The Great Rhetra is a mysterious document. It is probably an oracle, but even that is uncertain.
3. It is partially preserved in two sources: in the work of the seventh-century B.C.E. Spartan poet Tyrtaeus and the first/second century C.E. biographer Plutarch.
4. The Great Rhetra's exact wording is enigmatic, but it seems to establish the thirty-member Gerousia, affirm the dual kingship, and allow for an assembly of the *demos*.

F. Sparta's system of government was admired by various other *poleis* in the fifth century B.C.E.; its balance of elements was called *eunomia*, or good government.

Supplementary Reading:

Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*.

Demand, *History of Ancient Greece*, Ch. 6.

Oxford Classical Dictionary, "Sparta"; "helots."

Questions to Consider:

1. Spartan society subordinated everything else to the production of the best possible soldiers for Sparta. Can you think of any modern societies that are analogous to this?

2. Most of our non-Spartan sources write admiringly about Sparta. Given the harshness of the *agôgê*, does this surprise you?

Lecture Sixteen
The Ionian Revolt and the Battle of Marathon

Scope: In this lecture, we return to Herodotus' account of Persia, the events leading up to the first invasion of Greece in 490 B.C.E., and the invasion itself. The lecture begins by discussing the Ionian Revolt of 499–494 B.C.E., in which Greek-speaking *poleis* of Ionia rebelled against Persian rule. The lecture summarizes the course of events in the Ionian Revolt, examines the role that Athens played in helping the rebellious Ionian cities, and pays special attention to Herodotus' digression on Athenian democracy, which he incorporates into his description of the Ionian Revolt. The lecture discusses Darius' desire for vengeance against Athens, which culminated in Darius' invasion of Greece in 490 B.C.E and the defeat of his troops by the Athenians in the Battle of Marathon. We examine Herodotus' account of the battle, noting various points where his description seems incomplete or confusing. Finally, the lecture discusses the importance of the veterans of Marathon in the Athenian popular imagination of the later fifth century B.C.E.

Outline

I. In 500–499 B.C.E., several Ionian city-states rebelled against Persian rule. The outlines of the revolt, as Herodotus describes it, are as follows.

   A. A group of rich men who had been expelled from Naxos asked Miletus to help them regain their position in Naxos.
      1. Aristagoras was acting-tyrant of Miletus, holding that position in Histiaeus' place.
      2. Aristagoras requested a fleet from the satrap of Sardis, Artaphernes; he offered to pay expenses himself.
      3. Artaphernes granted the fleet, which attacked Naxos.
      4. Naxos was forewarned by Aristagoras' co-commander, and the expedition was a complete failure.

   B. Worried that he might lose his position in Miletus, Aristagoras decided to rebel against Persia. He received encouragement from Histiaeus to do so.
      1. Hecataeus advised against revolt but was overruled.
      2. The revolt spread quickly, and Aristagoras even abdicated his own tyranny in favor of democracy.

   C. Aristagoras asked both Sparta and Athens for help against Persia, and Athens responded favorably.
      1. The Athenians sent a fleet of twenty ships to aid the Ionians; Eretria sent five.
      2. The fleet landed at Ephesus and marched to Sardis, which was burned.
      3. The Athenians took no further part in the Ionian Revolt after this.
      4. Aristagoras fled to Thrace and died there.
      5. The revolt ended with the decisive defeat of the rebels at the Battle of Lade in 494 B.C.E.
      6. The Persians sacked Miletus.

   D. The burning of Sardis enraged Darius, who vowed vengeance upon the Athenians.

   E. The Persians may have considered Athens their vassal after 507 B.C.E.
      1. Herodotus mentions that Athenian envoys had gone to Sardis in 507 B.C.E. to seek an alliance with Darius.
      2. Acting on their own initiative, the envoys accepted Darius' terms by offering him earth and water, for which they were censured on their return to Athens.
      3. In the Persians' view, this may well have constituted Athens' acceptance of vassalage in the Persian Empire.
      4. In that case, Athens was in open rebellion against Persia when it took part in the Ionian Revolt.

II. Herodotus is our primary source for the events of the Ionian Revolt, but his account of it is one of the most problematic sections of the *Histories*.

   A. Herodotus doesn't adequately explain the reasons for the revolt.
      1. As always, Herodotus attributes the causes of events to individuals.
      2. The Ionian Revolt is attributed to Aristagoras' and Histiaeus' personal ambitions.

3. Modern historians are more likely to attribute the revolt to growing political discontent with Persian rule, particularly discontent with oppressive taxation.

B. Many scholars perceive an anti-Ionian bias in Herodotus' account of the revolt.
1. He makes several scornful comments about the Ionians' softness and cowardice.
2. He sees the Ionian Revolt as the cause of Greece's later troubles.

C. The Ionian Revolt epitomizes the two ways we can look at the *Histories*.
1. We can consider it as a source of factual information about the political situation in Ionia in 499 B.C.E.
2. We can consider it in its narrative function within the *Histories*.

III. Herodotus' account of the Ionian Revolt incorporates two long digressions, in which he discusses Spartan and Athenian history.

A. The digression on Athens describes Athens' progress from tyranny to democracy.
1. Herodotus' account of the conspiracy of Cylon, the curse of the Almaeonidae, the expulsion of Hippias, and Cleisthenes' establishment of *isonomia* occurs here.
2. Herodotus' account stresses the importance of Athenian *isonomia* and *isêgoria.*
3. At the same time, he sounds a cautionary note: Aristagoras found it easier to impose upon a group than upon a single person.

B. The expulsion of the tyrants both strengthened Athens and left it vulnerable.
1. As free men, the Athenians excelled as fighters.
2. But Athens was vulnerable to the machinations of the exiled tyrant Hippias, who had fled to Persia and would help Darius attack Athens.

IV. Darius' desire for vengeance against the Athenians would culminate in the first Persian invasion of Greece, in 490 B.C.E.

A. Darius first sent an expedition against Greece in 492 B.C.E., under the command of his son-in-law Mardonius.
1. This expedition focused on Macedonia and the island of Thasos.
2. A storm off Mount Athos destroyed most of the fleet, and the expedition ended in failure.

B. Two years later, Darius sent an expedition against Athens.
1. Darius did not go with the fleet himself.
2. The commanders were Datis and Artaphernes.

C. The expedition was far from a full-scale invasion.
1. The Persian force numbered no more than 20,000.
2. This may well mean that the Persians assumed that they would meet with little resistance.

D. This was not an unreasonable assumption.
1. Before the invasion, Darius had sent heralds to the Greek city-states, demanding that they give earth and water; many did, including the island of Aegina.
2. In addition to the *poleis* that surrendered, there were also individual "Medizers" in 490 B.C.E.
3. Darius could reasonably expect to install Hippias and other friendly tyrants.
4. It is clear from Herodotus' account that there was, in fact, a pro-Persian (or pro-Hippias) party in Athens.

V. As Herodotus tells the story of the Battle of Marathon, it is an example of extraordinary valor and success against great odds.

A. When the Athenians heard that the Persian fleet was approaching, they sent a runner, Pheidippides, to Sparta to ask for assistance.
1. The Spartans could not leave until the full moon, six days away.
2. The only allies the Athenians had at Marathon were the Plataeans; their combined forces probably numbered about 10,000.

B. The ten generals disagreed about whether to attack the Persians.
1. Miltiades argued for attack and persuaded the *polemarch* Callimachus to vote with him.
2. The Athenians chose the day and time of the battle and charged the Persians on the run.

C. The Athenians' success was due in large part to the hoplite phalanx and to discipline.

  1. Moving at a run gave the Persian archers less time to shoot.
  2. Arrows are of limited use against a phalanx in any case.
 D. The Athenian line broke in the center, but both flanks closed in on the Persians and routed them.
  1. The Persians ran for their ships, with the Athenians in hot pursuit.
  2. The Athenians secured seven ships.
  3. The Persians who made it alive onto the other ships sailed away, perhaps in response to a shield-signal flashed to them from Athens, and sailed around Cape Sounion to Athens.
  4. The Athenians rushed back to Athens by road and got there before the Persians, who gave up and sailed away.
  5. The total casualties at Marathon were 6,400 Persian dead to only 192 Athenian.
 E. Herodotus' account of the Battle of Marathon is tantalizingly brief and obscure in several details; it raises almost as many questions as it answers. One of the most vexing of these is the question of the Persian cavalry.
  1. Herodotus says that Darius built special cavalry transport ships.
  2. But in his description of Marathon, he makes no mention of Persian cavalry.
  3. If the cavalry were there, it is hard to see how the Athenians' attack could have succeeded so brilliantly.
  4. A much later tradition holds that the Athenians chose to attack when the Persian cavalry was away, but why does Herodotus not mention this?

VI. The defeat of 490 B.C.E. may not have seemed terribly significant to Darius, but the significance of Marathon for Athens is impossible to overstate.
 A. The *Marathônomachai*, or "Marathon Fighters," quickly assumed an almost legendary status.
  1. The veterans of Marathon would be invoked later in the fifth century B.C.E. as exemplars of "old-fashioned values."
  2. It would be a matter of pride to have a Marathon veteran in one's family.
 B. Marathon also contributed to Athens' view of itself as in some sense the "savior of Greece."

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, Books V–VI.

Supplementary Reading:

Burn, *Persia and the Greeks*, Ch. 10.

Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 4, pp. 480–490, 497–517.

Cook, *Persian Empire*, Ch. 9.

Orlin, "Athens and Persia."

Sealey, *History of the Greek City-States*, Ch. 7, pp. 175–178, 187–192.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can you think of any reason why Herodotus would not have mentioned the Persian cavalry if it were present at Marathon?

2. Are there any obvious analogues to the "Marathon Fighters" in modern American culture?

Lecture Seventeen
Xerxes and the Threat to Greece

Scope: This lecture opens our discussion of the second Persian invasion of Greece in 480–479 B.C.E., when Darius' son Xerxes moved by land and by sea against Greece. The lecture begins by summarizing the aftermath of Marathon up to Darius' death, then describes the beginnings of Xerxes' reign and his decision to continue his father's campaign against Greece. Next, the lecture summarizes Herodotus' description of the Persian king's preparations for the invasion of Greece, discusses Herodotus' account of the size and composition of Xerxes' army, and compares Herodotus' figures to the views of modern historians. The lecture also details some of the narrative methods by which Herodotus focuses attention on the important symbolic or emotional elements of his account, including his use of Homeric themes and echoes. Finally, the lecture outlines the preparations of the Greeks, especially the Spartans and the Athenians, to meet the Persian threat and describes the formation of the Hellenic League.

Outline

I. After Marathon, Darius began to plan another expedition against Greece. Preparations were still underway at the time of his death in 486 B.C.E.

    A. Darius was succeeded by his son Xerxes.
        1. Xerxes' first order of business was to quell a rebellion in Egypt.
        2. Rebellions also took place in Babylon, probably in 484 and 482 B.C.E.

    B. These rebellions contributed to the delay in Xerxes' expedition against Greece; in addition, Herodotus portrays a young king who is uncertain about undertaking such an invasion.
        1. Xerxes is advised by Mardonius to attack Greece; by Artabanus, not to.
        2. At first, he decides that he will; then overnight, he changes his mind; he then changes it again under the influence of a dream.

    C. However, once he decided to set out against Greece, Xerxes' expedition was different from Darius'. He marshaled a double force, to attack Greece by land and by sea.
        1. While the fleet sailed for Greece, the land forces would come around on foot.
        2. Thus, the Greeks had to be prepared to fight two types of battles at once.

II. Herodotus gives numbers for Xerxes' army that modern historians find flatly incredible; he says that the land force numbered 2,641,610 troops.

    A. The Persian army was organized in command units of 1,000 and of 10,000. One theory to account for the numbers Herodotus gives is that he confused the Persian terms for the commanders of these units.
        1. This would automatically multiple his figures by ten.
        2. A land force of 264,000 is credible.

    B. Xerxes' fleet probably consisted of between 600 and 800 ships.

III. Herodotus' stress on both the size and the composition of Xerxes' army clearly reiterates his view that Xerxes' invasion of Greece is, in some sense, the culmination of all previous conflicts between East and West.

    A. He says that this army is larger than any other ever raised in any war; it drinks rivers dry.
        1. It is larger than the force Darius took to Scythia or the host of Scythians that had invaded Media.
        2. It is larger than the force Agamemnon led against Troy or the army of Trojans that had crossed into Europe before the Trojan War.
        3. Xerxes' army is larger than all of these added together.
        4. These comparisons move back through time and back and forth between Asian aggression against Europe and European aggression against Asia.

    B. Xerxes' forces included troops from all parts of the Persian Empire, as well as the 10,000 Immortals, the king's guard.
        1. Herodotus describes Xerxes' troops in a passage that clearly recalls the Homeric catalog of ships in the *Iliad*.
        2. This passage is almost undoubtedly based on actual Persian records.

3. However, Herodotus' wording is reminiscent of the Homeric catalog.
4. He also names Greek heroes as ancestors for several groups, most notably, Perseus as the ancestor of the Persians.

IV. Herodotus further stresses the enormity of the threat to Greece by stressing the dangerous aspects of Xerxes' character. Like other Eastern monarchs before him, Xerxes is given to hubris and the transgression of important boundaries, both physical and metaphorical.

A. In 484 B.C.E., he began digging a canal through Mount Athos.
1. Herodotus says that this was impractical.
2. Xerxes wanted to show his power and leave a memorial behind.

B. Xerxes violated the boundary between Asia and Europe by bridging the Hellespont.
1. The first bridges were destroyed by a storm.
2. In fury, Xerxes had the Hellespont whipped and threw a pair of fetters into it.
3. The second bridge was constructed of ships lashed together.
4. This bridge held, and the troops crossed over by it.
5. As the troops set out from Sardis, there was a solar eclipse.

C. Xerxes' character is also marked by overly cruel treatment of his subordinates.
1. He had the engineers who constructed the first bridge decapitated.
2. When Pythius, a very rich Lydian who had previously pleased Xerxes by giving him money, asked for his eldest son to be excused from the army, Xerxes had the young man killed.

V. Herodotus uses both the size of Xerxes' army and the extravagance of the king's character to build the tension in his narrative. By the time the Persians approach Greece, it is clear that the danger is grave indeed.

A. Athens and Sparta both seemed to be in particularly dire danger. Xerxes had sent envoys to other Greek *poleis* in 481 B.C.E., demanding submission, but he sent no such envoys to Athens and Sparta.
1. The clear implication was that Athens and Sparta would meet with no mercy.
2. This meant that these two *poleis* had nothing to lose through desperate, last-ditch resistance.
3. They also had a great deal to gain by persuading other *poleis* to resist.
4. In fact, many other Greek cities had medized.

B. Herodotus reiterates the danger for Athens by quoting two Delphic oracles. Like many cities, Athens had asked the oracle how to respond to the Persian threat.
1. The oracle seemed to predict disaster for Athens.
2. The Athenians demanded another response, however, and received a second oracle that was marginally more encouraging.
3. The question of what this second oracle meant by the "wooden wall" was of the utmost importance.
4. Some argued that the Pythia meant that the Athenians should take refuge on the Acropolis; others thought that the "wooden wall" meant the fleet.
5. However, they thought the oracle was predicting a naval defeat for Athens at Salamis.

C. The interpretation of these oracles allows Herodotus to introduce a crucially important character, Themistocles.
1. Themistocles interpreted the oracle to mean the fleet.
2. He also said that it was predicting an Athenian victory at Salamis, not a defeat.
3. Herodotus tells us that this was not the first time Themistocles had benefited the Athenians with his advice.
4. In 484/83 B.C.E., Athens found an exceptionally deep vein of silver in the mines at Laurion.
5. Themistocles successfully argued that this windfall should be used to build a fleet of *triremes* for Athens instead of being distributed among the citizens.

VI. In the face of the Persian approach and the piecemeal medizing, or resistance of individual city-states, late in 481 B.C.E., Sparta initiated the formation of a defensive alliance, the Hellenic League.

A. Sparta invited representatives of other *poleis* to discuss how best to meet the Persian threat.
1. The allied states agreed to end all wars among themselves.
2. They declared war on Persia and took an oath of allegiance.

B. The next step was to agree on a command structure for the Hellenic League.

1. Sparta was the obvious choice to command the land forces.
2. Athens wanted command of the naval forces, but this was voted to Sparta as well.
3. Each state elected one representative to sit on a council.
4. Each *polis* retained command of its own troops.

C. The formation of the Hellenic League changed the entire prospect for Xerxes.
1. Several medizing states recanted.
2. The Greeks were, if not truly united, at least determined to set differences aside.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, Book VII.1–174.

Supplementary Reading:

Burn, *Persia and the Greeks*, Ch. 16.

Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 4, pp. 518–545.

Cook, *Persian Empire*, Ch. 11.

Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars*, Part II.

Hignett, *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece*, Appendix I.

Sealey, *History of the Greek City-States*, Ch. 8, pp. 195–208.

Questions to Consider:

1. What effect does Herodotus achieve by the Homeric echoes he puts into his account of the size and composition of Xerxes' army?
2. Imagine that you are a citizen of a small Greek *polis* in 481 B.C.E. to which Xerxes has sent envoys demanding your submission and tokens of earth and water. Given the size and strength of the Persian Empire, would you vote to medize?

Lecture Eighteen
The Battles of Thermopylae and Artemisium

Scope: In this lecture, we discuss Herodotus' accounts of two crucial battles in Xerxes' campaign against Greece: Thermopylae and Artemisium. These two battles took place simultaneously: Thermopylae, on land under the leadership of the Spartan king Leonidas, and Artemisium, at sea. The lecture concentrates on Herodotus' narrative of Thermopylae; we summarize his account of the progress of this battle, which culminated in the death to the last man of the Spartan defenders under the leadership of King Leonidas. The lecture considers the famous epitaph that was written for the Spartan dead at Thermopylae and its role in memorializing the battle. We also discuss the ways in which Herodotus' narrative focuses attention on Leonidas, giving him an almost Homeric stature. The lecture ends by briefly summarizing the events of Artemisium.

Outline

I. The second Persian War began with two crucial battles, which took place on the same day. The sites were near to each other, picked so that communication between them would be easy.

   A. At first the Greeks planned to face Xerxes in Thessaly, in the Tempe pass, but decided instead on a more defensible position further south.

   B. The position decided on was Thermopylae.
   1. Land troops led by the Spartans under King Leonidas would hold the pass.
   2. The fleet, led by the Athenians, would take its position at nearby Artemisium.

II. If the Greeks were to meet Xerxes' vast land army anywhere, Thermopylae seemed a logical choice.

   A. The "Gates" were a narrow path, flanked on one side by mountains and on the other by a sheer drop to the sea.
   1. At its narrowest, the path was only wide enough for a single cart, and the Greeks fortified it with a wall.
   2. This meant that a small army had a chance of holding the pass against a much larger one.
   3. Herodotus gives an estimate of the total size of Xerxes' army, including noncombatants, at this point: 5,283,220.
   4. He then lists the numbers of troops at Thermopylae; the total is between 6,000 and 7,000.
   5. At the head of this group were 300 Spartan hoplites.

   B. The army of defenders apparently suffered a crisis of confidence as Xerxes approached; they held a conference about whether to retreat.
   1. The Peloponnesians voted to retreat back to the Isthmus of Corinth.
   2. The Phocians and Locrians vehemently objected to this idea.
   3. Leonidas voted to stay but to send a request for reinforcements.

   C. The defenders of Thermopylae did not know that there was a path leading through the mountains.
   1. When this path was disclosed to the Persians, they were able to encircle the Greek defenders.
   2. Thus, Thermopylae turned into a defeat for the Greeks, in which the defenders died to the last man.

III. Xerxes knew beforehand that a small defensive band was waiting for him at Thermopylae.

   A. As soon as he arrived, he sent a mounted scout to see what they were doing.
   1. The scout saw the Spartans exercising and combing their hair.
   2. Xerxes was puzzled by this and sent for the renegade Spartan king Demaratus.
   3. Demaratus explained that this meant the Spartans were preparing to kill and be killed.

   B. Xerxes waited for four days, expecting the Greeks to retreat, then attacked on the fifth day.
   1. For the first two days of battle, the Persians could make no headway against the Greek defenders.
   2. The Greeks inflicted such heavy losses on the Persians that Xerxes leapt up from his seat three times in terror.
   3. On the third day, the traitor Ephialtes told Xerxes about the path through the mountains.

IV. Once the Persians knew of this path, the Greeks' situation became hopeless.

    A. The Greeks soon learned that they had been betrayed.

        1. Their first indications of their coming death were the omens read by the seer Megistias.

        2. Next, deserters brought word that the Persians were coming around by the path.

        3. Finally, lookouts who had been posted on the mountains announced that the Persians were coming.

    B. Leonidas dismissed most of the army, to save their lives.

        1. The 300 Spartans remained, as did 900 helots.

        2. Seven hundred Thespians also stayed.

        3. The 400 Thebans deserted as soon as they could and surrendered to the Persians.

        4. The total number of defenders, thus, was 1,900 at most.

V. Herodotus describes the final battle in some of his most moving prose.

    A. Xerxes' forces attacked at about 9 A.M.

        1. Leonidas led his men further out of the pass than they had gone before.

        2. Leonidas and many of the other 300 Spartans died in this first part of the battle.

        3. Two of Xerxes' brothers also died.

    B. When the troops led by Ephialtes arrived, the Greeks withdrew behind the wall.

        1. They defended themselves with swords, hands, and teeth.

        2. Finally, they were utterly surrounded and overwhelmed by missiles.

    C. Herodotus says that the most courageous of all the Spartans was Dieneces, whose famous saying he recounts.

    D. The dead were buried where they fell, and epitaphs were written for them.

VI. One of these epitaphs has become justly famous. Simply translated, it says, "Oh stranger, tell the Spartans that here we lie, obedient to their decrees."

    A. This two-line verse is appropriately Laconic.

    B. It is also a perfect example of the inadequacies of translation.

        1. The word *xein'* cannot be simply translated into English; it means "stranger," but also "friend," "guest," "host," "foreigner."

        2. The word *peithomenoi* is usually translated "obedient" here, but can also mean "persuaded by."

        3. The word *rhêmasi*, often translated "laws," stresses the spoken word and comes from the same root as the Spartan Great Rhetra.

VII. The Thermopylae narrative is a brilliant piece of writing on the surface level. It gains even more resonance when we notice the narrative techniques through which Herodotus enhances its impact. These are most noticeable in Herodotus' treatment of Leonidas, where Herodotus invokes the myths of Heracles and Homeric epic.

    A. When Leonidas first appears in the narrative, his genealogy is given all the way back to Heracles.

        1. Heracles is named as an ancestor only four times in the *Histories*.

        2. Herodotus reiterates Leonidas' descent from Heracles twice more in the Thermopylae narrative.

        3. Several references to Heracles clustered around the beginnings of the Thermopylae narrative keep the importance of this hero firmly in the audience's mind.

        4. Thermopylae was very near to the traditional site of Heracles' death and apotheosis.

    B. Herodotus also uses Homeric echoes in his portrait of Leonidas, particularly of his death.

        1. Leonidas sends the allies away, Herodotus says, because he wanted to lay up a store of *kleos* for Sparta.

        2. This recalls the opening sentence of the *Histories* with its Homeric resonances.

        3. Herodotus says that a fierce fight took place over Leonidas' body; the Greeks drove the Persians back four times and finally rescued the body.

        4. The fight over a dead hero's body is a recurrent theme in the *Iliad*.

        5. Xerxes' later mistreatment of Leonidas' body must be seen in this context.

VIII. Thermopylae assumed the status of legend almost immediately; but in purely military terms, it was a terrible setback for the Greeks. The naval battle of Artemisium, which took place at the same time, was at least a partial victory.

    A. At first, the Greeks panicked and considered abandoning Artemisium.
        1. The local Euboeans, Herodotus says, bribed Themistocles to stay and fight there.
        2. Themistocles, in turn, bribed the other commanders to stay.

    B. Once the battle was joined, the Greeks prevailed for the first two days.
        1. In the first night, a great storm arose and wrecked many Persian ships.
        2. Herodotus comments that "the god" was reducing the size of the Persian fleet.
        3. The Greeks received reinforcements from Athens.

    C. On the third day, the battle was evenly fought.
        1. The Persians suffered heavier casualties, but the Athenian fleet sustained enough damage to need repairs.
        2. When word came of the defeat at Thermopylae, the Greeks retreated from Artemisium.
        3. Though technically a victory, Artemisium did not capture the imagination as Thermopylae did.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, Books VII.175–VIII.39.

Supplementary Reading:

Burn, *Persia and the Greeks*, Chs. 18–19.

Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 4, pp. 546–561.

Green, *Greco-Persian War*, Pt. 4.

Hignett, *Xerxes' Invasion*, Chs. 2–3.

Sealey, *History of the Greek City-States*, Ch. 8, pp. 208–212.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why did Thermopylae become so powerful a legend so quickly? Is it because of the "Spartan mirage," the appeal of a lost cause, Leonidas' character, or a combination of all these?

2. Herodotus stresses Leonidas' descent from Heracles in the Thermopylae narrative; earlier, he has recounted the story of the Scythians' descent from the great Greek hero. Is this merely a coincidence? Can you see any other similarities of character, narrative style, or overall presentation between Herodotus' account of Thermopylae and his account of Darius' failed Scythian expedition?

Lecture Nineteen
The Victory of Greece

Scope: In this lecture, we turn to three more crucial battles, Salamis, Plataea, and Mycale, and to the final siege of Sestos, which brought Xerxes' campaign against Greece to its end. The lecture concentrates on Herodotus' account of the events leading up to the Battle of Salamis. We begin by discussing Xerxes' actions after Thermopylae and Artemisium and the implications for Athens and the other Greek *poleis*. The lecture discusses the divergence between Herodotus' account and that of the Troezen Decree and the implications for our evaluation of Herodotus' accuracy. After sketching the Battle of Salamis itself and touching briefly on the account of it in Aeschylus' tragedy *The Persians*, we look quickly at the last two important battles of the Persian Wars, the Battles of Plataea and Mycale. Finally, the lecture discusses the Athenian siege of Sestos and Herodotus' use of Artaÿctes to reintroduce Cyrus the Great in the final chapter of the *Histories*.

Outline

I. After Thermopylae and Artemisium, Xerxes' continued his advance into Greece, heading toward Athens.

  A. Most of the Greeks just south of Thermopylae had medized.

    1. One region, Phocis, had not; Xerxes devastated it.

    2. Most of the inhabitants fled to the hills, but Herodotus lists fifteen towns that were destroyed.

  B. Herodotus reports that a detachment of Xerxes' troops turned aside to Delphi with the intention of plundering the temple there. The Delphians fled, with the exception of the interpreter/prophet and sixty men, but Apollo protected his temple.

    1. As the Persians approached, the interpreter saw sacred weapons (normally kept inside the temple) lying on the ground in front of it, though no one had brought them out.

    2. When the troops reached the temple of Athena, thunderclaps were heard, and two huge boulders fell from Mount Parnassus onto the invaders.

    3. A war cry sounded from inside the shrine.

    4. Eyewitnesses said that they saw two gigantic hoplites slaughtering the Persians.

II. As the Persians drew nearer, the Athenians' situation seemed desperate.

  A. The Greek forces led by the Spartans had advanced only to the Isthmus of Corinth, which they were fortifying.

    1. Before Thermopylae, the Hellenic League had said that reinforcements for Leonidas' troops were on the way.

    2. Scholars still disagree whether the league ever really intended to send the entire army northward to Thermopylae.

    3. In any case, there seems to have been no unified Greek plan in place to resist Xerxes' further advance.

  B. The Isthmus of Corinth could be defended easily on land, though it was vulnerable to a sea attack.

    1. But concentrating the league's attention on the Isthmus meant abandoning Athens and Attica to their fate.

    2. The Athenians requested that the fleet put in at the island of Salamis, just off Athens, and it did so.

  C. Herodotus says that at this point, the Athenians decided to evacuate Athens.

    1. He says that most of the noncombatants were sent to Troezen, across the Saronic Gulf from Athens; some went to Aegina, and some, to Salamis.

    2. The Athenians' decision to evacuate was motivated partly by the oracles they had received from Delphi.

    3. In addition, the sacred snake that guarded the Acropolis had disappeared, which was taken to mean that Athena had deserted Athens.

III. Herodotus' account implies that the evacuation of Athens was an emergency measure carried out without an advance plan. But an inscription discovered in 1959, the Troezen Decree, seems to tell a different story.

  A. The inscription records a decision proposed by Themistocles and taken by the Athenian Assembly, outlining the steps Athens will take to meet the Persian threat.

        1. The women and children will be evacuated.

        2. The men will man 200 ships, 100 of which will go to Artemisium and 100, to Salamis.

  B. Thus, the Athenians had decided to abandon their city, as Herodotus reports.

        1. But Herodotus dates this decision to after Artemisium.

        2. The decree unambiguously indicates that the decision was made before Artemisium.

  C. Scholars still debate whether the Troizen Decree is genuine or a third-century forgery. If it is genuine, it serves as a useful reminder that Herodotus' account of the chronology of events may be flawed.

IV. When the Greek fleet reached Salamis, the commanders debated whether to stay or to withdraw to the Isthmus; most favored protecting the Isthmus rather than fighting in the narrow waters around Salamis.

  A. As they were debating, news arrived that the Persians were burning their way through Attica and had taken Athens.

        1. Some few defenders had barricaded themselves on the Acropolis, putting up planks to make a "wooden wall."

        2. This held for a time, but eventually, Xerxes' troops stormed the Acropolis, slaughtered the defenders, and plundered and burned the temples.

        3. The next day, an eighteen-inch-long shoot of the sacred olive tree had reappeared.

  B. The news of the sacking of the Acropolis was profoundly disturbing to the fleet.

        1. Some commanders sailed away immediately; those who stayed voted to withdraw to the Isthmus.

        2. The fleet was under the command of the Spartan Eurybiades.

        3. Themistocles made an impassioned appeal to Eurybiades to stay and fight at Salamis, arguing that they could use the narrow waters to strategic advantage.

        4. A Corinthian jeered at Themistocles as a man without a *polis*; Themistocles replied that as long as the Athenians had their 200 *triremes*, they had a *polis* and a land.

        5. Finally, Themistocles said that if Eurybiades would not fight at Salamis, the Athenians would sail off to Sicily and settle there.

  C. Eurybiades was persuaded to stay and fight at Salamis.

        1. Herodotus here gives an impression of Themistocles that is, overall, favorable.

        2. But he also tells a very strange story about Themistocles sending a message to Xerxes the night before the battle, saying that he was really on the Persians' side, that the Greeks were about to retreat, and urging Xerxes to block their escape route.

  D. Herodotus also reports deliberations among the Persians; all of Xerxes' commanders except one were in favor of fighting at Salamis.

        1. The one commander who advised against fighting was Artemisia.

        2. She was the ruler of Halicarnassus, Herodotus' hometown; Herodotus says that she took over the tyranny after her husband's death.

V. The Battle of Salamis was a great victory for the Greeks and one of the decisive battles of the war.

  A. Fighting in a narrow channel and shallow water gave the advantage to the Greeks.

        1. The Persians' superior numbers worked against them; their ships crowded into one another.

        2. They were unable to take advantage of the greater maneuverability of their ships.

  B. The details of the battle are hard to reconstruct. Herodotus' account differs in some crucial details from the description given in Aeschylus' tragedy *The Persians*.

        1. In particular, Aeschylus and Herodotus disagree about the positions of the two sides' ships.

        2. Again, we are confronted with the difficulties of reconstructing the actual progress of a battle from Herodotus' account.

  C. Salamis resulted in a Persian rout and in Xerxes' personal withdrawal from Greece.

        1. Xerxes feared that the Greeks might sail to the Hellespont, destroy his bridge, and strand him in Europe.

        2. He decided to leave Mardonius in charge of his army in Greece.

        3. When Xerxes arrived at the Hellespont, he found that his bridge had been destroyed by a storm.

  D. Herodotus briefly mentions another battle that happened this same day: the Battle of Himera in Sicily, between the Sicilians under Gelon and Hamilcar of Carthage.

> 1. Some scholars think that the Carthaginian attack on Sicily was coordinated with the Persians' movements at Salamis.
> 2. If this is so, then Xerxes was planning a much wider campaign of conquest.

VI. Herodotus' account of the Persian Wars ends with the campaign of 479 B.C.E. Specifically, the Persians were decisively defeated in the Battles of Plataea and Mycale.

   A. Mardonius renewed his attacks on Athens but also made overtures for a separate peace to the Athenians on two occasions. The Athenians refused his offers.

> 1. However, the Athenians requested aid from the Hellenic League and made it clear to the Spartans that without such aid, Athens would have to accept Mardonius' offers.
> 2. The Spartans sent reinforcements under the leadership of Pausanias, and battle was finally joined near Plataea, when Mardonius attacked the Greek forces.
> 3. The battle ended in Greek victory when Spartan and Tegean forces killed Mardonius.
> 4. Pausanias refused to violate Mardonius' body as Xerxes had violated Leonidas'.

   B. Tradition said that the Battle of Mycale took place on the same day as Plataea.

> 1. The Greek fleet, under the Spartan king Leotychides, had crossed the Aegean in pursuit of the Persian fleet.
> 2. The Persians had camped at Cape Mycale, across from the island of Samos.
> 3. The Greeks attacked and burned the Persian camp, aided by Ionian deserters from the Persian side.
> 4. Herodotus calls this the "second Ionian revolt."

   C. Plataea and Mycale were the last significant battles of the war. However, Herodotus adds a coda about the Athenians' siege of Sestos, on the Hellespont.

> 1. After the victory at Mycale, Leotychides sailed for the Hellespont to destroy Xerxes' bridge.
> 2. When they found that the bridge was already gone, the Spartans and others sailed home.
> 3. The Athenians stayed and laid siege to Sestos.
> 4. This siege leads into the anecdote with which the *Histories* close.

   D. Sestos was governed by a man named Artaÿctes, whom the Greeks crucified after they took the town.

> 1. Artaÿctes' ancestor had once suggested to Cyrus the Great that the Persians should leave their own rugged land for a better one.
> 2. Cyrus disagreed, saying that soft lands make soft men.
> 3. Through the mention of Artaÿctes, Herodotus returns to Cyrus, the first great Persian king.

Essential Reading:
Herodotus, Books VIII.40–IX.

Supplementary Reading:
Aeschylus, *The Persians.*
Cambridge Ancient History, pp. 569–622.
Green, *Greco-Persian Wars*, Pts. 5–7.
Pelling, "Aeschylus' *Persae* and History."
Sealey, *History of the Greek City-States*, pp. 212–230.

Questions to Consider:
1. Some scholars believe that the Troezen Decree is genuine, while others are certain it is a forgery. What sort of evidence would indicate that such a record might be a forgery? What are the implications for our evaluation of Herodotus' accuracy if we assume that the decree is genuine?
2. Aeschylus wrote much closer in time to Salamis than Herodotus did, and Aeschylus was almost definitely a combatant himself. However, he was also a playwright, writing for dramatic effect, not for historical accuracy. Are historians justified, then, in following his description of events rather than Herodotus' when the two disagree?

Lecture Twenty
Persons, Personalities, and Peoples

Scope: This lecture begins by discussing one of the most characteristic elements of Herodotus' methodology, which we have seen at work throughout the *Histories*: his use of individuals and their actions as explanations for historical events. The lecture discusses some of the types of individuals who recur throughout the *Histories*, including the "wise advisor," the overly arrogant king, and the authoritative woman, and notes how, in Herodotus' presentation, the events of history are driven not by sweeping political or economic factors but by these individuals. We then consider the question of Herodotus' accuracy in his portrayal of relatively recent figures, such as Themistocles. Next, the lecture turns to examining Herodotus' treatment of whole peoples and nations and considers his statements about the importance of *nomos* (custom) for understanding different peoples and their interactions with the Greeks.

Outline

I. Throughout the *Histories*, Herodotus focuses on individuals and their actions as explanations for historical events.

  A. Where a modern historian would identify economic, political, or social causes, Herodotus names an individual's personal desires and impulses.
    1. For example, Aristagoras' and Histiaeus' personal impulses explain the Ionian Revolt.
    2. Darius' invasion of Greece depends on his desire for revenge against the Athenians.

  B. This focus on individual motivations and achievements is implicit in the *Histories*' opening sentence.
    1. *Ta genomena ex anthrôpôn* stresses the role of human beings in the events of history.
    2. *Kleos* belongs specifically to individuals.
    3. The "great and astonishing works," *erga*, are those performed by human beings.
    4. Herodotus includes a great deal of information about natural phenomena, geological "wonders," and so on, in the *Histories*, but the overall stress is on human achievement and individuals' actions.

  C. To a large extent, this may have been a function of Herodotus' dependence on oral tradition for his sources.
    1. Oral tradition preserves the memory of the past largely through coherent, compelling tales about individuals.
    2. A great deal of factual information can be "encoded" within those tales, for example, the listing of Persian satrapies.
    3. But oral narrative does not lend itself to the mere listing of facts without a framing story about memorable individuals.

II. As noted by Richmond Lattimore, one of the most important types of individual who appears in the *Histories* is the "wise advisor." The wise advisors can be divided into two groups, the "tragic warner" and the "practical advisor."

  A. Tragic warners give advice that fails to be heeded, most frequently to monarchs.
    1. The first memorable tragic warner we see is Solon.
    2. Later, Croesus himself takes on the role.
    3. Other examples include Artabanus, who advises Xerxes against invading Greece, and Demaratus, who tells him how formidable the Spartans at Thermopylae will be.

  B. Lattimore's second group, the practical advisor, is more diffuse. An example is Themistocles, who advises the Athenians to devote the earnings of the Laurion mines to building a fleet.

  C. An interesting subcategory of wise advisor is people who normally would have little power or authority. These include females and deposed kings.
    1. Gorgo is not only female but also a child; she warns her father, Cleomenes, king of Sparta.
    2. Croesus and Demaratus are both kings who lose their own power and become advisors to those who had previously been their enemies.

D. Other important types of individuals can be identified in the *Histories*, such as the overly arrogant king or the powerful woman.

    1. Croesus, Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes spring to mind as examples of the overly hubristic monarch.

    2. Powerful women include Candaules' wife, Tomyris of the Massagetae, and Artemisia.

E. All these types—wise advisors, hubristic kings, powerful women—show the processes of history driven by personal interactions.

III. For the modern historian, Herodotus' portraits of semi-legendary figures, such as Candaules or Croesus, are less interesting, and less exasperating, than his portrayals of individuals who lived relatively recently.

A. The question of Herodotus' accuracy in his portraits of individuals has far-reaching implications for our understanding of the events he reports.

    1. A modern historian may flesh out dry facts with "human interest" anecdotes.

    2. In an oral culture, the anecdotes *are* the facts.

B. Herodotus' portrayal of Themistocles highlights some of the problems.

    1. Herodotus glosses over Themistocles' early career.

    2. We know from other sources that he was archon in 493 B.C.E. and a general at Marathon in 490 B.C.E.

    3. But Herodotus introduces him as a man who has just "recently" come to the fore in politics, in the discussion of the "wooden wall" oracle.

C. He includes many discreditable stories about Themistocles' motives.

    1. Themistocles supposedly gave and received bribes before Artemisium.

    2. He sent a message to Xerxes right before Salamis, telling Xerxes to block the channel so that the Greeks could not sail away.

    3. He sent another message to Xerxes after Salamis, trying to curry favor by claiming that he had kept the Greek fleet from pursuing the Persians.

D. Themistocles fell into disfavor with the Athenians after the Persian Wars and fled to Xerxes' son Artaxerxes.

    1. Is Herodotus' account an example of "back-reading"?

    2. Or was Themistocles greedy and unscrupulous all along?

    3. In the absence of contemporary records, Herodotus had to depend on reports from sources who knew Themistocles' later history.

E. This sort of question is difficult to answer under any circumstances, but the difficulties are enormously increased when the historian is working at the remove of oral history.

IV. As we have already seen, Herodotus was interested in the customs and mores of whole peoples, not only in memorable stories of striking individuals. One of the most noteworthy things about his treatment of other nations is his recognition of the importance of *nomos*.

A. The *nomoi* of different peoples are clearly one of Herodotus' main interests in the ethnographical segments of his work.

    1. Often, he seems merely to catalog the strange customs of strange peoples.

    2. But his interest goes deeper; he recognizes that each culture thinks that its own *nomoi* are best.

B. This recognition is most clearly stated in his discussion of Cambyses and the Apis calf.

    1. Cambyses' actions in wounding the calf could be only explained by madness, Herodotus thinks.

    2. Any sane person will realize how necessary it is to respect the *nomoi* of other cultures, especially their religious *nomoi*.

C. To illustrate the importance of *nomoi* to each culture, Herodotus recounts a story about a test Darius once set.

    1. He asked a group of Greeks what it would take to make them eat their dead parents.

    2. They said they would not do so for any amount of money.

    3. Darius then asked the members of a tribe of Indians who did eat their dead parents what they would take to burn them instead.

    4. The Indians reacted with horror to the very idea.

    5. Herodotus sums this up by quoting the poet Pindar: *nomos* is king of all.

V. In his treatment of individuals in the *Histories* and in his view of other cultures' *nomoi*, Herodotus shows his debt both to oral tradition and to the intellectual movements of his own day.

    A. The use of individuals as structuring elements resembles the organizing patterns of oral tradition.

    B. Herodotus' interest in different cultures and his recognition of the supremacy of each culture's *nomoi* in its own eyes shows his debt to the intellectual movements of his own day.

        1. His interest in ethnography is derived from the Ionian *logographers*.

        2. The specific emphasis on *nomos* recalls the Sophists.

Supplementary Reading:

Burn, *Persia and the Greeks*, Ch. 14.

Evans, *Herodotus, Explorer of the Past*, Essay Two.

Flory, *Archaic Smile*, Ch. 3.

Lattimore, "Wise Advisor."

Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, Ch. 4.

Questions to Consider:

1. In real life, momentous decisions often do depend on the interactions of personalities, turns of phrase, and likes and dislikes of individuals who happen to be in positions of power. By foregrounding such elements in his work, is Herodotus being *more* realistic than later, more "scientific" historians?

2. Does Herodotus' statement that everyone thinks the *nomoi* of his own culture are the best imply a kind of Pythagorean relativism, in which beliefs are "true" for the societies that believe them? Or does Herodotus' work seem to imply some fixed standard of judgment?

Lecture Twenty-One
The Gods, Fate, and the Supernatural

Scope: This lecture examines the importance of divine beings and divine agency in Herodotus' work. Although he casts his narrative in terms of human responsibility for events, Herodotus nevertheless often cites divine or supernatural causes, as well. The lecture discusses Herodotus' use of several categories of supernatural causation, including named gods, "the divine" (*to theion*), oracles, and visions or dreams. We consider the seriousness with which Herodotus treats divine matters by examining his discussion of Heracles as an Egyptian god, then turn to Herodotus' treatment of divine retribution in the *Histories*. The lecture discusses the apparent tension between Herodotus' idea of divine retribution as just and his portrayal of divinity as jealous and troublesome. Finally, the lecture discusses Herodotus' treatment of the concept of fate and compares this to the same concept in tragedy.

Outline

I. Herodotus took human affairs as his subject, but this does not mean that he excluded the gods or the supernatural from the *Histories*. The gods are not characters in the *Histories* as they are in epic or tragedy, but they are present and important throughout the work.

    A. Herodotus sometimes names a specific god, particularly as the source of an oracle or a portent.
        1. Gods are usually named in association with a particular temple or shrine. For instance, Herodotus frequently mentions Apollo because of the importance of the oracle at Delphi.
        2. Often, Herodotus refers simply to "the god" (*ho theos*) without naming a specific deity; frequently, the context clarifies which god he means.

    B. Herodotus also refers to more abstract concepts of divinity.
        1. He uses the term *to theion*, literally "the divine thing," which can be translated as "divinity."
        2. He also uses, as abstract nouns, terms that are sometimes personified as gods, such as Nemesis.

    C. Whichever form of terminology he uses, Herodotus cites a god, or the gods, or divinity, as causes of events that affect human beings.
        1. Sometimes a god will be cited as the only cause for an event.
        2. More frequently, divine agency will be part of double causation; an event takes place both because a god wills it and because of human actions.

    D. An obvious question that arises with regard to Herodotus' citing of divine agency is how humans know about the gods' actions or precepts. Herodotus implies that humans can have both direct and indirect knowledge of the gods.
        1. Humans have direct knowledge of the gods' will, intentions, and actions through such means as oracles, dreams, omens, and portents.
        2. They have indirect knowledge of the gods through reasoning, as they would about anything else.

II. The *Histories* are filled with references to oracles, and Herodotus' belief in the validity of oracles seems undeniable.

    A. He never questions that valid oracles exist, and in fact, he directly states his belief in them.
        1. He recognizes that oracles can be falsified or priests, bribed.
        2. For instance, he mentions that the Alcmaeonids bribed the Pythia.
        3. However, human dishonesty does not invalidate the oracles themselves.

    B. Oracles are, of course, notorious for their ambiguity.
        1. The Delphic oracle's response to Croesus is the most famous example; it is probably apocryphal.
        2. But responses such as the "wooden wall" oracle are very likely historical.

III. Oracles are not the only way gods can communicate with humans; other methods include dreams and visions, omens, and portents of all sorts. True dreams, in particular, are notable in the *Histories*.

    A. Herodotus does not directly state his belief in the validity of dreams as he does in oracles, but he does not question their veracity.

1. **1.** Croesus' dream that Atys will be killed by a weapon is proven true, despite his attempt to avoid its fulfillment.
2. **2.** Xerxes' dream is even more striking than this. Its objective reality is proven by its appearance to Artabanus when he dresses in Xerxes' clothes, sits on Xerxes' throne, and sleeps in Xerxes' bed.

B. Xerxes' dream is similar to visions that appear elsewhere in the *Histories*.
1. **1.** On his run from Athens to Sparta, Pheidippides saw the god Pan and had a conversation with him.
2. **2.** Other examples of portents include heroes appearing on battlefields or driving the Persians away from Delphi.

C. There are also omens and portents, which are presumably sent by gods.
1. **1.** When Xerxes crossed into Europe, a mare gave birth to a hare.
2. **2.** Herodotus comments that Xerxes ignored this omen, but that its meaning was obvious.

IV. In most of these cases, Herodotus makes no clear statement about his own opinion of the veracity of the sign in question, and it is possible that Herodotus is simply reporting what others have told him rather than indicating his own view about divine causation. However, the Egypt *logos* indicates how seriously he takes the religious view as a starting point for his own inquiries.

A. The chronological difficulties Herodotus encounters when he tries to account for the Egyptian view of Heracles are a good example of his treatment of religious matters.
1. **1.** In Greek myth, Heracles was the son of Zeus and a mortal woman and, thus, a hero. He lived two generations before the Trojan War.
2. **2.** After his death, he became a god; thus, he was both a god and a hero.

B. The divine Heracles is identified as one of the twelve Egyptian gods.
1. **1.** The Egyptian priests told Herodotus that their pantheon changed from eight to twelve gods 17,000 years previously.
2. **2.** Thus, the god Heracles must have lived 17,000 years ago.
3. **3.** But the Heroic Age in Greek tradition was fixed some 800 years before Herodotus' own day.

C. Two obvious solutions spring to mind.
1. **1.** Herodotus could say that there were two different gods, the Greek Heracles and the Egyptian god.
2. **2.** He could say that the Heroic Age was much longer ago than normally believed.

D. Herodotus adopts neither solution.
1. **1.** He "knew" that the Greek Heracles and the Egyptian god were the same.
2. **2.** He "knew" that the Heroic Age was only 800 years in the past.
3. **3.** His solution was to posit two Heracleses: one a god, the other a hero.
4. **4.** Clearly, he took both his Egyptian information and the Greek religious tradition very seriously.

V. One of the clearest ways to see Herodotus' overall view of the interaction of divine and human causation is by looking at his treatment of divine retribution for human wrongdoing.

A. On several occasions, Herodotus states that unjust or impious acts trigger divine retribution. Herodotus' view of divine retribution can be broken down into two basic assumptions.
1. **1.** Wrong actions will inevitably receive divine vengeance.
2. **2.** The existence of such divine vengeance implies a wrong action.
3. **3.** The first of these is more obvious, but the second is clearly implied, as well.

B. Herodotus allows for the less-than-obvious workings of divine vengeance.
1. **1.** The divine can work through human agency; thus, one person's act of revenge against another can be seen as fulfilling divine vengeance.
2. **2.** Divine retribution can be delayed for several generations and, thus, can fall on the wrongdoer's descendants, as Gyges' wrongdoing did on Croesus.

C. This last point echoes the idea of "hereditary curses" that features so prominently in Greek mythology; Agamemnon's family, the House of Atreus, is only the most obvious example.
1. **1.** Modern readers often see such a concept as utterly unjust.
2. **2.** But it can also be seen simply as a description of the way things are, a statement of fact about the nature of the universe.

3. Herodotus' worldview here recalls Anaximander's theories about "penalty and retribution" as the driving forces of the way the world works.

VI. Herodotus' presentation of divine retribution may seem contradictory to his statements that divinity is jealous, troublesome, and prone to overthrow human happiness, but the contradiction is more apparent than real.

   A. This view of divinity, too, can be seen as descriptive. A good example is found in Themistocles' summing up of Xerxes' character, in which the gods are said to feel *phthonos* at Xerxes' power, because of Xerxes' arrogance and impiety.
   1. The gods are responsible for maintaining order and balance in the universe.
   2. For any one human to be excessively *olbios* throws the scales out of balance.
   3. The gods thus begrudge too much human happiness not out of pettiness, but because of the way the universe works.

   B. This idea may be reflected in the etymology Herodotus suggests for the word *theos*, "god."
   1. He assumes that this word is linked to the verb stem *thê-*, which means to "place, put, or ordain"; Herodotus says that the gods are called *theoi* because they set all things in order.
   2. If divinity, *to theion*, therefore, is conceived as the force by which the order of the universe is maintained, then the idea that this force militates against the stability of human fortune can be seen merely as a statement of observed fact.

   C. Indeed, it can be argued that Herodotus' whole framework of retribution, by which notable wrongdoings evoke notable divine vengeance, is descriptive, not prescriptive.
   1. It is useless for human beings to try to avoid such divine retribution.
   2. This is, in part, because of the role of fate.

VII. Like many other fifth-century writers, Herodotus clearly recognizes the concept of fate as one of the causes behind events.

   A. Moderns are often troubled by the apparent contradiction between the ideas of fate and free will, but this does not seem to have troubled the Greeks.
   1. Ancient Greek had no term for "free will."
   2. The interaction of a person's decisions and his destiny was complex but not contradictory.
   3. For instance, Croesus' downfall is brought about by his own wrong choices and by his fate.
   4. The human tendency toward misunderstanding of oracles and omens is part of the way fate works.

   B. In all these ways—his treatment of fate, oracles, and human misunderstanding and wrong actions—Herodotus' worldview can be compared with that of the tragedians, especially Sophocles.
   1. Tradition says that Sophocles and Herodotus knew one another.
   2. This may simply be an extrapolation from their works.
   3. Certainly, the treatment of oracles and fate in Herodotus recalls that of *Oedipus the King*, where the oracles are correct though misunderstood, and the fates of the human characters are brought about by their own actions.

Supplementary Reading:

Fornara, "Human History and the Constraint of Fate."

Harrison, *Divinity and History*, Ch. 2, and "Herodotus and the Certainty of Divine Retribution."

Questions to Consider:

1. Is the concept of "free will" and its apparent contradiction with the idea of fate a development of the monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), or is there another explanation for the apparent absence of the idea of free will in classical Greece?

2. Herodotus' discussion of Heracles in Egypt is one of his most careful and painstaking attempts to reconcile disparate strands of evidence. Can you think of other examples in the *Histories* where Herodotus takes great care to account for different traditions about the gods or heroes?

Lecture Twenty-Two
History or Literature—or Both?

Scope: In this lecture, we synthesize several points made in earlier lectures about the nature of history and the historian's role. The lecture discusses Herodotus' use of elements normally associated with literature, not history, in his account of the Persian Wars, such as careful balancing of motifs and characters, recurrent themes, and the sense of an overall pattern in the work. We examine several of these elements through a detailed discussion of "crossing *logoi*," the segments of the work in which Darius and Xerxes violate both physical and symbolic boundaries, and the results of these violations. Finally, the lecture provides a close reading of the final chapters of the *Histories*. We discuss the importance of evaluating literary patterning in the *Histories* to appreciate the Artaÿctes/Protesilaos *logos* and the implications of those patterns for the question of whether or not Herodotus intended the work to end as it does.

Outline

I. Herodotus' work clearly contains elements normally associated with literature, not with history, including recurring patterns.

    A. Any writer of narrative will order and arrange the material to find patterns.

        1. The writing of history depends on arranging the mass of raw data into orderly sequence and finding the connections between events.

        2. However, Herodotus does not merely arrange a sequence and make connections.

        3. The *Histories* contain elements that can best be called symbolic.

    B. These extra-historical elements in the *Histories* will strike some readers as more appropriate to literature or fiction than to history.

        1. Some scholars try to deny their existence.

        2. Others deny that the *Histories* are history at all.

        3. It seems worth examining the literary aspects of the *Histories* in some detail.

II. One excellent example of a thematic pattern in the *Histories* can be seen in the many *logoi* about boundary crossings and boundary violations, especially by Persian kings. These "crossing *logoi*," especially those associated with Xerxes, violate boundaries in several different ways.

    A. They violate literal physical boundaries.

        1. Darius' and Xerxes' bridges transgress the boundaries between Europe and Asia and eradicate the separation of the continents.

        2. These bridges also violate the boundaries between land and water, by turning water into land.

        3. Xerxes' canal through Mount Athos, similarly, turns land into water.

    B. Xerxes also violates boundaries of behavior in association with his physical crossings.

        1. He whips, fetters, and insults the Hellespont when his first bridge is destroyed.

        2. This violates all appropriateness, because as a human being, Xerxes should not attack or insult a natural element, which is also a god.

    C. Xerxes' tendency to transgress the boundaries of behavior is exemplified in his treatment of Pythius, the Lydian's son.

        1. Xerxes has the young man cut in two and marches his army between the halves of the boy's body.

        2. This physical violation of a subject's bodily integrity is also a primary example of Xerxes as the paradigmatic uncontrolled Eastern monarch.

    D. Xerxes' crossings also press the boundaries between *nomos* and *physis*.

        1. Xerxes' authority over other humans is a matter of *nomos*, as the Constitutional Debate reminds us.

        2. The inability of humans to control the forces of nature, such as the Hellespont, is a matter of *physis*. Xerxes confuses the two.

    E. Xerxes' blurring of the boundaries between the land and water brings other forms of category confusion with it, including confusion of gender roles, as exemplified in Artemisia.

1. At the battle of Salamis, Artemisia rams and sinks a Persian ship. The Greeks fail to recognize her but not the ship she has sunk; they think she has attacked a Greek ship.
2. Watching her, Xerxes exclaims that his men have become women and his women, men.
3. Artemisia thus represents confusions of nationality and gender.

F. All these actions—or some semblance of them—may very well have happened in reality. Undoubtedly, Xerxes did built a bridge; Artemisia did fight at Salamis.
1. Even the story of Pythius' son may conceal some rite of sacrifice.
2. But Herodotus' recounting of the events calls attention to the parallels and, thus, creates the pattern of boundary violations, hubris, and Eastern excess.
3. This sort of thematic pattern would later be seen as the hallmark of literature, not history.

III. The whole topic of literary patterning in the *Histories* is crucial for our evaluation of the last chapters of the work.

A. The basic story is simple and brutal.
1. After the siege of Sestos, the Athenians crucified Artaÿctes, the governor, and stoned his son to death before his eyes.
2. Artaÿctes' ancestor Artembares had once suggested to Cyrus that the Persians should emigrate to a "softer" land.

B. From the historian's point of view, these final chapters seem doubly unsatisfactory.
1. Herodotus gives no summing up of the end of the Persian War.
2. The anecdote he tells about the crucifixion of the governor of Sestos seems too insignificant to sum up his entire work.
3. The final paragraph about Cyrus the Great is, historically speaking, utterly irrelevant.
4. All these considerations led some historians to believe that Herodotus cannot have intended the work to end as it does and that the *Histories* must have been unfinished when Herodotus died.

C. In recent decades, however, opinion has been shifting, and the last chapters of the *Histories* are seen as providing a thematically rich and symbolically satisfying close to the work.
1. Scholars have pointed to references to the Trojan War that pick up the themes of the opening chapters of the work.
2. The reappearance of Cyrus gives a kind of "ring composition" to the *Histories*, as the first great Persian ruler appears to speak one of the morals of the work.

IV. The Artaÿctes story is far more complex, and significant, than it appears on the surface. The main point of interest is its close association with the Trojan War.

A. Artaÿctes had plundered and violated the tomb and sacred precinct of the hero Protesilaos.
1. Protesilaos was the first Greek soldier to die on Trojan soil.
2. Artaÿctes gains possession of the tomb by telling Xerxes that it is the house of a Greek man who has marched against Xerxes' territory and has justly met with death there.
3. Thus, Artaÿctes elides past and present, the Trojan War and the aftermath of the Persian Wars.

B. Artaÿctes recognizes that he will be subject to Protesilaos' vengeance when he interprets an omen.
1. After Artaÿctes has been taken prisoner, a sentry is cooking some dried fish.
2. The fish begin to leap as though they were freshly caught.
3. Artaÿctes correctly interprets this as an omen that Protesilaos, although dead and dry, will take vengeance on him.

C. Herodotus knows two locations for Artaÿctes' crucifixion, but according to one version, he was nailed to a plank at the spot where Xerxes' bridge had been.

D. This story recapitulates a number of motifs that have been crucial throughout the *Histories*.
1. It reiterates the antiquity of the East-West conflict.
2. It explicitly associates Troy and Persia.
3. It restates the idea that sacrilege will bring retribution.
4. It recapitulates the significance of Xerxes' bridge.
5. All these reiterated themes introduce the Cyrus coda.

V. Cyrus himself becomes, in effect, an unheeded tragic warner for later generations of Persians and restates the essential difference between Persian luxury and Greek austerity.

   A. Cyrus advises his subjects to stay in their own rough land, because soft lands breed soft men; no country can produce both excellent fruits and fine soldiers.

     1. In reality, the Persians spread far beyond their own small country.

     2. But the last sentence of the *Histories* depicts them heeding Cyrus, in terms that sound much more applicable to Greece than to Persia.

   B. If we insist on calling Herodotus only a historian, this final episode is puzzling. But if we recognize him as a literary artist as well, the ending is utterly appropriate.

   C. This distinction between literature and history is, of course, a construct of later generations; Herodotus himself could not have made any such distinction.

   D. Finally, the Artaÿctes episode may have a particular resonance for Herodotus' own day.

     1. Xanthippus, the Athenian commander who crucified Artaÿctes, was the father of Pericles, the Athenian statesman who led Athens at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War.

     2. Cyrus' words may be meant to warn not only his own Persians but the Greeks of Herodotus' present about the dangers of expanding empire.

Supplementary Reading:

Ayo, "Prolog and Epilog."

Boedeker, "Protesilaos and the End of Herodotus' *Histories.*"

Dewald, "Wanton Kings, Pickled Heroes, and Gnomic Founding Fathers."

Lateiner, *Historical Method*, Ch. 9.

Munson, "Artemisia in Herodotus."

Vandiver, *Heroes in Herodotus*, pp. 223–229.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do the presence of literary patterns, such as the "crossing *logoi*," make Herodotus' work any less a work of history? Put another way, are those scholars who argue that he has imposed symbolic patterns on his work justified in nevertheless trusting his historical analysis?

2. Do you think that the *logos* about Artaÿctes and Protesilaos and the Cyrus coda are a satisfactory end to the *Histories*?

Lecture Twenty-Three

Herodotus, the Peloponnesian War, and Thucydides

Scope: This lecture considers the political context in which Herodotus probably wrote the *Histories* and its importance for our understanding of both his work and his successor, Thucydides. During the 420s B.C.E., Athens and Sparta were at war with each other in a conflict called the Peloponnesian War; the lecture briefly summarizes the most important events of the early years of that war and discusses the questions of when Herodotus' work was published and when he may have visited Athens and Sparta. The lecture then turns to the vexing question of Herodotus' attitude toward Athens and discusses some of the possible interpretative implications of his treatment of these two city-states. We consider whether Herodotus was pro-Athenian, pro-Spartan, or a nonpartisan who regretted the conflict of these two great cities and hoped to remind them of their previous cooperation at the time of the Persian Wars. Finally, the lecture introduces Herodotus' successor, Thucydides, who wrote a history of the Peloponnesian War.

Outline

I. Herodotus wrote at least part of the *Histories* during the early years of the great conflict between Athens and Sparta, the Peloponnesian War, which began in 431 B.C.E. and ended with Athens' defeat in 404 B.C.E.

    A. The Peloponnesian War was the culmination of antagonism between Athens and Sparta, which had built up throughout the middle of the fifth century B.C.E., particularly with the increase of Athens' power through the Delian League.

        1. Sparta, too, had alliances with other *poleis*, in what modern historians call the "Peloponnesian League."

        2. This was the oldest known alliance; Sparta had made its first treaties with other Peloponnesian states in the sixth century B.C.E.

        3. However, Sparta never had the degree of control over allied states that Athens had in the Delian League.

    B. Athens and Sparta came to open war with each other in the First Peloponnesian War of 460–445 B.C.E.

        1. This war ended with the signing of a thirty-year peace treaty; the exact terms of the treaty are unknown.

        2. Athens gave up some recent acquisitions, but the treaty was not clearly advantageous to either side.

        3. War broke out again in 431 B.C.E.

II. The history of the Peloponnesian War is complex; we can only glance at the first few years, when Herodotus was writing.

    A. The first ten years of the war are often called the Archidamian War.

        1. Thucydides calls this the "ten-year war."

        2. It ended with a peace treaty, but the treaty did not hold.

    B. The war began with a quarrel between Athens and Corinth.

        1. Corcyra (modern Corfu) was a Corinthian colony.

        2. Corcyra and Corinth had a joint colony called Epidamnus, which appealed to both Corcyra and Corinth in turn for help in an internal power struggle.

        3. This led to hostility between Corinth and Corcyra; finally, in 433 B.C.E., Corcyra sought a formal alliance with Athens.

        4. Corinth, as a Peloponnesian city-state, was allied with Sparta.

        5. Therefore, when Corinth and Athens became open enemies, hostilities with Sparta couldn't be far behind.

        6. In addition, Potidaea, one of Athens' allies, revolted against Athenian rule in 432 B.C.E. and received Peloponnesian aid.

    C. There seems to have been strong pro-Sparta feeling among many Greek city-states that disliked Athens' growing hegemony. War was declared in 431 B.C.E., and the Spartans invaded Attica.

        1. Pericles advised the Athenians to put their trust in their fleet. He persuaded inhabitants of the rural *demes* to abandon their homes and move into the city.

2. They took refuge between the Long Walls, which linked Athens to its harbor, Piraeus.

D. The crowding and unsanitary conditions led to the outbreak of plague in 430, 429, and 427 B.C.E.

    1. Both Pericles' legitimate sons died of plague.

    2. He too died, in 429 B.C.E., probably of the disease.

III. The course of the war during the 420s B.C.E. is very complicated, with victories and defeats for both sides. During this period, Herodotus was probably finishing the *Histories*.

A. There was a one-year truce in 423 B.C.E.; the Peace of Nicias was then signed in 421 B.C.E.

    1. This treaty was supposed to hold for fifty years.

    2. In reality, all it accomplished was that Athens and Sparta refrained from invading each other's territory for six years and ten months.

B. Obviously, a foremost question for Herodotean studies is how many of these events he lived to see. Unfortunately, we do not know when Herodotus began to write or when he died.

    1. He makes some references to the early part of the war.

    2. The usual assumption is that his work was published by February 425 B.C.E., because most scholars think that a passage in Aristophanes' comedy *Acharnians* is a parody of Herodotus' opening account of the abductions of women.

    3. However, Charles Fornara has argued that the *Histories* were published much later, in 414 B.C.E.

    4. It is worth remembering that the work may well have been "published" over some period of time.

C. The question of Herodotus' publication date is significant, because one possible motivation for Herodotus' writing the *Histories* was to remind the warring Greeks of a time when they had worked together.

    1. It is always dangerous to try to read an author's intent from his work.

    2. But no author writes in a vacuum or truly objectively; there must have been resonances to contemporary events.

    3. Knowing what exactly was "contemporary," then, could be helpful for our interpretation of Herodotus' overall stance in the *Histories*.

IV. In particular, scholars have disagreed over Herodotus' precise attitude toward Athens. Herodotus has been seen as a partisan for Pericles' policies, as anti-Periclean, and as many things in between. In examining this issue, we must bear several points in mind.

A. First, we are hampered in trying to extrapolate Herodotus' attitude toward contemporary Athenian politics by the fact that we do not know when Herodotus began to write or where he was when he wrote most of the *Histories*.

    1. Tradition tells us that he lived in Athens for a time.

    2. Several passages in the *Histories* sound as though Herodotus had been to Sparta, as well.

    3. It also says that he died in Thurii, a colony in southern Italy.

    4. Thurii was founded in 444/43 B.C.E.; if Herodotus went as one of the founders, then he had left Greece some thirteen years before the beginning of the Peloponnesian War.

B. The question of Herodotus' target audience is also important.

    1. Herodotus wrote in a performance culture, in which persuasion and argumentation were highly valued.

    2. But whom is he trying to persuade and of what?

    3. Is he writing for Athenian allies, for Spartan allies, for both, or for neither?

C. Another important question is where Herodotus got his information about Athenian history. Who were his sources, and does his work reflect *their* bias?

    1. Most scholars agree that Herodotus drew heavily on the traditions of the Alcmaeonids, who had been accused of medizing tendencies.

    2. Various bits of evidence point to Alcmaeonid sources in the text.

    3. But knowing that Alcmaeonid tradition was Herodotus' source does not in itself help us interpret what he did with his materials.

V. One of the most important passages for evaluating Herodotus' position toward Athens and Sparta occurs at Book VII.139.

A. Herodotus says that he will express an opinion that he knows most people will dislike.

    1. If the Athenians had medized, Greece would have fallen.

2. Therefore, the Athenians can justly be called the saviors of Greece.

3. But great admiration for the Spartans is also implicit in this passage.

4. As Fornara has pointed out, Herodotus never even entertains the possibility that Sparta might have medized.

B. It is also important to realize that although Herodotus recognized Athens' crucial role in winning the Persian Wars, that does not mean that he either endorsed Athens' current policies or even that he was a wholehearted admirer of democracy.

1. Nor should his evident admiration for Sparta be discounted.

2. His description of the Athenians' valor at Marathon can be set against his telling of the Thermopylae legend.

3. In Book VI, Herodotus comments that Greece suffered more troubles under Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes than it had in the previous twenty generations and that these troubles were due in part to leading states quarreling with one another.

C. Herodotus' position can perhaps best be taken as one of admiration for some aspects of both Athens and Sparta and one of regret and sadness that two such cities should now be at war with each other.

1. He could expect that the war would end with the utter destruction of one *polis* or the other.

2. In fact, the Spartans chose not to destroy Athens entirely in 404 B.C.E., because of Athens' actions during the Persian Wars.

VI. The Peloponnesian War was the subject of Herodotus' first great successor, Thucydides. Thucydides is often seen as the true "father of history." However, without Herodotus' example, it is unlikely that Thucydides would have undertaken his own work.

A. Herodotus set the course of later historiography in two primary ways.

1. He decided that the events of the recent human past were worth recording in detail, with attention paid to motivations and causes rather than just listings of events.

2. Among those recent events, he gave pride of place to wars.

B. Thucydides refined and focused these aspects of Herodotus' historiography.

1. His position as Herodotus' intellectual heir is so clear that it is easy to forget that the two men were writing at the same time.

2. However, Thucydides did not fundamentally alter the subject matter of this new genre of writing; his topic is still *ta genomena ex anthrôpôn.*

Supplementary Reading:

Benardete, *Herodotean Inquiries*, Chs. 5 and 6.

Cambridge History of Classical Literature, Vol. 1, Pt. 3, pp. 29–45.

Evans, "Herodotus and Athens."

Fornara, "Herodotus' Knowledge of the Archidamian War"; "Evidence for the Date of Herodotus' Publication"; and *Herodotus: An Interpretative Essay*, Chs. 3 and 5.

Forrest, "Herodotus and Athens."

Sansone, "Date of Herodotus' Publication."

Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record*, pp. 264–282.

Questions to Consider:

1. It is often said that a historian is only as good as his sources. If Herodotus did indeed draw on the family tradition of the Alcmaeonids, what implications does this have for our evaluation of his work?

2. As you read the *Histories*, did Herodotus strike you as favorably disposed toward Athens, toward Sparta, toward both, or toward neither? Can you find particular passages to support your overall impression of his views of the two *poleis*?

Lecture Twenty-Four
Aftermath and Influence

Scope: This final lecture continues our discussion of Thucydides by considering some of the major differences between Thucydides' work and Herodotus', such as Thucydides' almost complete avoidance of mythical or fabulous materials, and discusses the degree to which the two historians' methodologies differ. We then turn to an examination of later writers' views of Herodotus and note how the breadth of his achievement led to a certain uneasiness about his methods. We consider the beginnings of the idea that Herodotus was untrustworthy because of the fabulous elements in his work, which led the historian Plutarch to write that Herodotus was the "father of lies," not the "father of history," an idea that has its adherents even today. The lecture then discusses the partial rehabilitation of Herodotus' reputation in the Renaissance and the lowering of his prestige again in the nineteenth century. Finally, the lecture discusses the growth of interest in Herodotus' work and the recognition of his achievement that took place in the twentieth century and some of the ways in which he has influenced genres other than history.

Outline

I. Herodotus was the first Greek to write a work that we can now recognize as history. But his immediate successor, Thucydides, had as much to do with fixing the parameters of the genre of history as Herodotus had to do with developing it in the first place.

   A. Major conceptual differences exist between the two authors.
      1. Thucydides omits the gods, fate, and the supernatural almost entirely from his account and focuses instead on verifiable human occurrences.
      2. Thucydides' motivation for writing is different; where Herodotus wanted to memorialize the great deeds of the past, Thucydides suggests that the horrors of the present can provide insight into future events.

   B. Thucydides directly states that he is not aiming to please the ear of his listeners, but rather to report the course of events as accurately as possible.
      1. This distinction is not one of leaving out stories that we would define as "mythical"; Thucydides accepts that the Trojan War, for instance, really happened.
      2. Nor is it a matter of exact and careful verification of statements; Thucydides reports speeches that he did not actually hear and admits openly that he cannot always remember the exact wording of those he did hear.

   C. On one level, this is a difference in presentation more than in methodology.
      1. Both historians depend on oral report to a great extent.
      2. Both use their own sense of what is likely or probable as a means of determining which version of events to follow.
      3. But Thucydides' presentation of his work as a straightforward, objective reporting of facts is very persuasive.

   D. The essential difference between the two is that Thucydides set the focus of history on the recent past or even the present and, within that timeframe, to political events.
      1. In fact, Thucydides was writing something more like "current events" than "history."
      2. Thucydides limited the scope of his work to the Peloponnesian War and events directly bearing on it.
      3. He thus excluded a great many subjects that Herodotus had included.

   E. In this regard, Thucydides' influence on later historiography can hardly be overstated.
      1. Most later Greek historians were mainly interested in the events of their own time.
      2. Among those events, war was considered the most important.
      3. One implication of this was that the focus of history remained primarily on *men* and masculine fields of endeavor.

II. The very breadth of Herodotus' achievement led to an unease about his methods, which only increased with the passage of time.

   A. Various Greek writers criticized Herodotus, accusing him of dishonesty and a lack of patriotism.

1. The first accusation assumed that Herodotus could not possibly have gathered all the information he reported; therefore, he made it up.
2. The second reproach took issue with Herodotus' presentation of the Persians; he was called *philobarbaros*, a lover of the barbarian.

B. Roman authors inherited an unease about Herodotus' methodology.
1. Cicero was the first to give Herodotus the title "father of history"; however, he also calls Herodotus *fabulosus*, or "given to story-telling."
2. By Plutarch's day (c. 50–120 C.E.), the idea had grown that Herodotus was deeply untrustworthy, the "father of lies" rather than the "father of history."
3. Plutarch wrote a work called "On the Malice of Herodotus."

C. Even Herodotus' admirers tended to praise him for his charm of style, rather than for his achievement as an historian.

III. Along with other classical authors, Herodotus reentered European consciousness in the Renaissance.

A. Lorenzo Valla's translation of the *Histories* into Latin was published in 1474; other translations were available in manuscript as early as 1416.

B. The first printed edition of the *Histories* was brought out in Venice in 1502 by Aldus Manutius.

C. The fifteenth-century humanists, for the most part, adhered to the Roman assessment of Herodotus as a liar. But in the sixteenth century, his reputation improved, under the influence of reports from the Americas.
1. Most of the explorers who wrote about their journeys of what they had seen in the Americas were not classicists.
2. However, their accounts indicated that travelers could practice *opsis* and *akouê* to good effect and could write up detailed descriptions of what they had seen and learned.
3. Herodotus' implied description of his own methods no longer seemed so impossible.

IV. The age of exploration may have rehabilitated Herodotus' reputation as an ethnographer, but it was not until the twentieth century that his work's full sophistication was recognized.

A. In the nineteenth century, Herodotus was regarded as naive both in his choice of material and in his presentation of his findings.
1. He was regarded as a charming *raconteur* but not as a careful literary artist.
2. His work was considered largely unorganized.

B. In the twentieth century, however, scholars became willing to recognize that Herodotus was writing something different from the later fully developed genre of history and that it is counterproductive to judge him by standards that did not exist in his own time.
1. Herodotus is no longer seen as a failed, incompetent, or dishonest historian.
2. Most scholars now recognize that he was doing more than writing history, not less.
3. In addition, archaeological discoveries continue to verify some of the most surprising aspects of Herodotus' account and to corroborate his reports.

C. Another important strand in the changing view of Herodotus is the development of scholarly understanding of oral culture and how it differs from literate culture.
1. Scholars have begun to reevaluate Herodotus' methodology and its position in a society undergoing the transition from orality to literacy.
2. In this regard, Herodotus has benefited greatly from the groundbreaking work in Homeric studies of the twentieth century.
3. Herodotus' dependence on, and reporting of, orally transmitted traditions are no longer seen as blemishes.

D. However, the idea that Herodotus was a "liar" also reappeared in the twentieth century, finding its clearest expression in the work of Detlev Fehling.
1. Some scholars find it unlikely or even incredible that Herodotus could have visited the places he claims to have visited.
2. They assume that his source citations are worthless.
3. But the confirmation offered by archaeology of such details as Scythian burial practices persuades most scholars that Herodotus is an accurate reporter of what he was told.

4. It is hard, however, to imagine how Herodotus managed to gather and organize all the material he includes in his work.

V. The Liar School takes Herodotus as utterly untrustworthy; another strand in modern thought takes him at face value, as utterly trustworthy—at least in regard to Egypt. Herodotus has played a remarkable role in one of the most controversial intellectual and political debates of recent years, the idea that central aspects of Greek culture derived from Africa and, specifically, from Egypt.

A. This position, usually called Afrocentrism, takes Herodotus as one of its most important pieces of ancient evidence.
   1. The difficulties with using Herodotus' text as evidence for actual cultural influence between Greece and Egypt are formidable, however.
   2. Undoubtedly, ancient Greece and ancient Egypt had a great deal of contact, and Greek culture was clearly influenced by Egyptian culture in many ways, such as archaic art.
   3. But the assumption that cultural influence is a simple, one-directional process is problematic.

B. The growth of Egyptian studies starting in the nineteenth century, especially the decipherment of hieroglyphics, demonstrated just how inaccurate Herodotus' picture of Egyptian culture was in many ways.
   1. Herodotus could be accepted as an authority on the relationship of Greek and Egyptian culture as long as the Egyptian documents could not "speak" for themselves.
   2. Once Herodotus' statements about Egyptian religion could be compared with accurate Egyptian documents, it became clear that Herodotus and/or his informants were mistaken in many regards.
   3. Few modern classicists or Egyptologists accept the idea that Egyptian culture was in any significant sense "the source" of Greek culture.
   4. But the idea still has powerful appeal; it is very tempting to think that an older culture must be the cause, or the source, of a younger one.

VI. Herodotus' work is not the purview of scholars alone, however; his influence can also be noted on literature and fiction.

A. Utopian literature reflects, among other things, the *Histories*' presentation of strange cultures and customs; Sir Thomas More and Voltaire, the author of *Candide*, were both familiar with Herodotus.
   1. The leap from Herodotus' account of strange, fascinating, and in some cases, impossible places and customs, through explorers' reports of places that seemed equally impossible at first glance, to fictional creations of such strange societies, is not a long one.
   2. Similarly, such satirical accounts of adventure as *Gulliver's Travels* may owe a debt not only to the reports of actual explorers but to Herodotus, as well.

B. More recently, Michael Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient* testifies to the continuing appeal of Herodotus' work as literature.
   1. The main love story of that novel is modeled on, and reflects, the story of Gyges and Candaules' wife.
   2. The physical text of Herodotus works as a kind of representation of tradition and the gathering of information in the novel. The title character, Almasy, carries a copy of the *Histories* around with him and pastes notes and accounts of his own in it.

C. Herodotus, then, is far from finished saying to us what he has to say. Ethnographer, anthropologist, writer of literature, historian: In popular culture as in scholarship, Herodotus defies easy categorization.

Supplementary Reading:

Fehling, *Herodotus and His "Sources."*

Fornara, *Nature of History*, Ch. 3.

Lateiner, *Historical Method*, Chs. 1 and 10.

Momigliano, "Herodotus in the History of Historiography."

Pritchett, *The Liar School*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can you think of any other works of popular literature or genres of writing that show a Herodotean influence?

2. Thucydides presents his work as a straightforward recounting of the facts of what happened. Do you think that he has actually done any less ordering and arranging of his facts to bring out patterns than Herodotus did, or is the difference one of presentation, not of method?

Timeline

3000–2100 B.C.E.	Early Bronze Age
2100–1600	Middle Bronze Age
1600–1150	Late Bronze Age
c. 1184	The most commonly accepted traditional date for the Fall of Troy
c. 1100–c. 776	The "Dark Ages" in Greece; 776, the traditional ending date of the Dark Ages, is the traditional date of the first Olympic Games
c. 800 (?)–780 (?)	The alphabet introduced into Greece
c. 776–490	The Archaic Age
c. 750 (?)–700 (?)	The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* probably transcribed into writing
Late eighth century	First Messenian War
683/82	Archonships become annual offices in Athens
c. 680	Gyges murders Candaules and usurps his throne
650	Second Messenian War
c. 640–545	Thales of Miletus
632	Cylon's failed attempt to establish a tyranny in Athens
620	Draco's law code established in Athens
c. 610–c. 547	Anaximander
594–593	Solon's reforms in Athens
c. 585–550	Astyages rules Media
ca. 560–546	Croesus rules Lydia
560	Peisistratus seizes power in Athens but is defeated and goes into ten-year exile
559	Cyrus ascends to Persian throne
550	Cyrus defeats Astyages and captures Median capital Ecbatana
546	Cyrus defeats Croesus and annexes Lydia
546–527	Tyranny of Peisistratus
c. 546–525	Anaximenes
539	Cyrus enters Babylon
530	Death of Cyrus
526–514	Peisistratus' sons are tyrants of Athens
525	Cambyses conquers Egypt
522	Death of Cambyses and Revolt of the Magi; Darius becomes king of Persia
514	Peisistratus' son Hipparchus assassinated
c. 513	Darius' expedition into Scythia
510	Hippias goes into exile
508–507	Cleisthenes' reforms

c. 500 .... Heraclitus

499 .... The Ionian Revolt begins

498 .... Sardis burned

c. 495 .... Birth of Pericles

494 .... Battle of Lade; Persians capture and sack Miletus

493/92 (?) .... Performance of Phrynichus' *Sack of Miletus*

490 .... The first Persian War; Battle of Marathon (September)

490–323 .... The Classical Period (the traditional end date of the Classical Period is the death of Alexander the Great)

486 .... Death of Darius, accession of Xerxes

484 (?) .... Birth of Herodotus in Halicarnassus

484 .... Xerxes begins canal through Mount Athos peninsula

480 .... Second Persian War; Battles of Thermopylae, Artemisium, and Salamis

479 .... Defeat of the Persians at the Battles of Plataea and Mycale

478–477 .... Formation of the Delian League

472 .... Aeschylus' tragedy *Persians* produced

465 .... Death of Xerxes

431–405 .... The Peloponnesian War

429 .... Death of Pericles from plague

c. 425 (?) .... Publication date of Herodotus' *Histories*

415–413 .... Sicilian expedition

411 .... Overthrow of democracy; temporary government by oligarchs

406 .... Battle of Arginusae

404 .... Peace declared between Athens and Sparta, ending the Peloponnesian War; Athens ruled by Thirty Tyrants

403 .... Democracy restored in Athens

399 .... The execution of Socrates

51 .... Cicero's *De legibus* calls Herodotus the "father of history"

c. 100 C.E. .... Plutarch's *On the Malice of Herodotus*

1474 .... Publication of Lorenzo Valla's Latin translation of the *Histories*

1502 .... First edition of Herodotus printed in Venice by Aldus Manutius

Bibliography

Essential Reading:

Note: I know of no translation of Herodotus that truly captures his tone and style. The two suggested here are both clear and readable, with useful introductions, notes, and supplementary material. Students who are interested in issues of translation are referred to the article by Steven J. Willett in the Supplementary Bibliography, below.

De Sélincourt, Aubrey, trans. *Herodotus: The Histories*. Revised edition with introductory matter and notes by John Marincola. London, New York: Penguin Books, 1996.

Waterfield, Robin, trans. *Herodotus: The Histories*. With an introduction and notes by Carolyn Dewald. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Supplementary Reading:

Note: The scholarly bibliography on Herodotus, not to mention on the cultures about which he wrote, is enormous and continues to grow apace. I have tried to include a representative selection of useful and interesting studies that take a number of different approaches. I have included several works that disagree, in whole or in part, with my own views about many issues in Herodotean studies. I have also included some works that are now several decades old, and with which many recent critics disagree, but that had and continue to have a strong influence on scholars' understanding of tragedy. Finally, I have tried to favor works that have good bibliographies to aid those students who wish to continue their investigations.

Aeschylus. *Aeschylus II. The Suppliant Maidens, The Persians, Seven against Thebes, Prometheus Bound*. Trans. Seth G. Benardete and David Grene. *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, D. Grene and R. Lattimore, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991. A good, readable translation. *The Persians* contains Aeschylus' account of the Battle of Salamis.

Arieti, James A. *Discourses on the First Book of Herodotus*. Lanham, MD, and London: Littlefield Adams Books, 1995. A close examination of Herodotus' opening book, giving detailed readings of several key passages.

Ayo, Nicholas. "Prolog and Epilog: Mythical History in Herodotus," *Ramus* 13 (1984): 31–47. Argues that the rationalized abduction *logoi* and the references to Protesilaos at the end of the *Histories* function as "bookends" by which the Trojan War is foregrounded at the work's beginning and end.

Benardete, Seth. *Herodotean Inquiries*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969. An original and interesting study of Herodotus' work, covering his presentation of foreign peoples, Athens, and Sparta.

Blanco, Walter, and Jennifer Tolbert Roberts, eds. *Herodotus: The Histories*. Norton Critical Edition. New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992. Translates selections from the *Histories*; most useful for its collection of secondary source material and scholarly articles and excerpts.

Boedeker, Deborah. "Protesilaos and the End of Herodotus' *Histories*," *Classical Antiquity* 7 (1988): 30–48. Examines the thematic and symbolic importance of the Protesilaos and Artaÿctes story as a reference to the Trojan War.

Brillante, Carlo. "History and the Historical Interpretation of Myth," in Lowell Edmunds, ed., *Approaches to Greek Myth*. Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990, pp. 93–138. Discusses the relationship between myth and history from the viewpoints of ancient Greek culture and modern scholarship. The discussion of the Greeks' assumption of the historicity of their heroes is particularly useful.

Burn, A. R. *Persia and the Greeks: The Defense of the West, c. 546–478 B.C.* 2nd ed. London: Duckworth, 1984. Postscript by D. M. Lewis. First published in 1962 and enhanced by the 1984 postscript, this remains an indispensable text for understanding the course of the Persian Wars. Detailed, fully documented, and readable.

The Cambridge Ancient History. Vol. 3, Pt. 2. *The Assyrian and Babylonian Empires and Other States of the Near East, from the Eighth to the Sixth Centuries B.C.* 2nd ed., edited by John Boardman, I. E. S. Edwards, N. G. L. Hammond, E. Sollberger, and C. B. F. Walker. Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1991. This multivolume standard reference work contains in-depth articles by leading scholars. The article on Scythia in this volume is particularly useful.

———. Vol. 3, Pt. 3. *The Expansion of the Greek World, Eighth to the Sixth Centuries B.C.* 2nd ed., edited by John Boardman and N. G. L. Hammond. Cambridge, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge

University Press, 1982. This volume includes valuable information on the Greeks in Egypt and the eastern Greeks of Ionia.

———. Vol. 4, *Persia, Greece, and the Western Mediterranean, c. 525 to 479 B.C.* 2nd ed., edited by John Boardman, N. G. L. Hammond, D. M. Lewis, and M. Ostwald. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid: Cambridge University Press, 1988. This volume contains invaluable material on the Persian Empire, the Greek *poleis*, and the Persian Wars.

———.Vol. 5, *The Fifth Century B.C.* 2nd ed., edited by D. M. Lewis, John Boardman, J .K. Davies, and M. Ostwald. Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1992. This volume covers Greek history in the fifth century B.C.E., from the immediate aftermath of the Persian Wars to the end of the Peloponnesian War.

The Cambridge History of Classical Literature. Vol. 1, Pt. 3, *Philosophy, History, and Oratory*. Edited by P. E. Easterling and B. M. W. Knox. Cambridge, New York, Oakleigh: Cambridge University Press, 1989. Standard reference work; this volume includes useful essays on Herodotus, Thucydides, and fifth-century historiography.

Cartledge, Paul. *Spartan Reflections*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001. A collection of essays by a foremost historian of Sparta, covering Spartan history, culture, education, and daily life.

Chiasson, Charles. "The Herodotean Solon." *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 27 (1986): 249–262. Argues persuasively that Herodotus' portrayal of Solon in Book I shows his familiarity with Solon's actual poetry.

Cook, J. M. *The Persian Empire*. New York: Schocken Books, 1983. A thorough, readable introduction for the nonspecialist.

Demand, Nancy. *A History of Ancient Greece*. New York, St. Louis, San Francisco: Overture Books, 1996. A concise, clear, and useful general history for the nonspecialist.

Dewald, Carolyn. "Wanton Kings, Pickled Heroes, and Gnomic Founding Fathers: Strategies of Meaning at the End of Herodotus's *Histories*," in Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn, and Don Fowler, eds., *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, pp. 62–82. An in-depth examination of the possible functions and interpretations of the end of the *Histories*.

Drews, Robert. *The Greek Accounts of Eastern History*. Washington, DC, and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973. Very useful examination of Herodotus' work in relationship to his predecessors and successors.

Evans, J. A. S. "Herodotus and Athens: The Evidence of the Encomium," *L'Antiquité classique* 48 (1979): 112–118. Argues that Herodotus took a balanced view of the positive and negative aspects of both Athens and Sparta.

———. *Herodotus, Explorer of the Past: Three Essays*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991. Three essays on different aspects of the *Histories*: "The Imperialist Impulse," "Individuals in Herodotus," and "Oral Tradition in Herodotus." All three are thought-provoking and useful.

Fehling, Detlev. *Herodotus and his "Sources": Citation, Invention, and Narrative Art*. Trans. J. G. Howie. Leeds: Francis Cairns Publications Ltd., 1989. A radical reevaluation of Herodotus' work, which argues that Herodotus invented his "sources" and that the work is, therefore, "pseudohistory."

Flory, Stewart. *The Archaic Smile of Herodotus*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987. A study of the literary qualities of Herodotus' *Histories*, focusing on four groups of anecdotes that illustrate patterns of logical antithesis (logic and accident, truth and fiction, nature and culture, discipline and freedom).

Fornara, Charles W. "Evidence for the Date of Herodotus' Publication," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 91 (1971): 25–34. Martials complex textual and historical evidence to argue that the *Histories* were published considerably later than is usually assumed, closer to 414 B.C.E. than to 425 B.C.E.

———. "Herodotus' Knowledge of the Archidamian War," *Hermes* 109 (1981): 149–156. Answers several objections to his arguments for later publication of the *Histories*.

———. *Herodotus: An Interpretative Essay*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971. A short, elegant, clearly written book that examines the development of Herodotus' thought and his "expanding vision" as he wrote the *Histories*.

———. "Human History and the Constraint of Fate in Herodotus," in June W. Allison, ed. *Conflict, Antithesis, and the Ancient Historian*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1990, pp. 25–45. Argues that Herodotus is a "theological historian" whose views of fate and retributive justice are crucial for his work.

———. *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983. A short survey of Greek and Roman historiography and its development. Chapters 1 through 3 are particularly relevant for the student of Herodotus.

Forrest, W. G. "Herodotos and Athens," *Phoenix* 38 (1984): 1–11. Argues that Herodotus' attitude toward Athens was fundamentally that of the Alcmaeonid aristocrats who served as his main source of information about Athenian history.

Fowler, Robert L. "Herodotus and His Contemporaries," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 116 (1996): 62–87. Discusses Herodotus' relationship to the Ionian *logographers* and other early prose writers. Argues that the recognition of the necessity for source criticism was one of Herodotus' main contributions to the development of historiography.

Green, Peter. *The Greco-Persian Wars*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1996. A well-written, gripping account by one of the foremost modern historians of the ancient world; intended for the nonspecialist.

Guthrie, W. K. C. *The Sophists*. Cambridge, London: Cambridge University Press, 1971. An essential introduction to the Sophists, their theories, and their importance.

Harris, William V. *Ancient Literacy*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1989. A pioneering study of the development and importance of literacy in classical culture.

Harrison, Thomas. *Divinity and History: The Religion of Herodotus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000. Examines Herodotus' religious thought and the use of religious themes and modes of explanation in the *Histories*.

———. "Herodotus and the Certainty of Divine Retribution," in Alan B. Lloyd, ed., *What Is A God? Studies in the Nature of Greek Divinity*. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1997, pp. 101–122. Discusses Herodotus' beliefs in retribution and fate.

Hartog, François. *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*. Trans. Janet Lloyd. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988. A difficult but fascinating study of Herodotus' Scythian *logos*, arguing that the Scythians in Herodotus represent a "rhetoric of otherness."

Herodotus and the Invention of History. *Arethusa* Vol. 20, Special Issue (1987). D. Boedeker, ed. A useful collection of essays on various aspects of Herodotus' historiography, with an extensive bibliography.

Hignett, Charles. *A History of the Athenian Constitution to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1952. The standard discussion of Athenian political and constitutional developments.

———. *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963. A thorough and clear discussion, including excellent appendices.

Immerwahr, Henry R. *Form and Thought in Herodotus*. Cleveland: Western Reserve University Press, 1966. American Philological Association Monographs 23. A close and careful analysis of the structure of the *Histories* and the way Herodotus fits his narrative units together. Identifies Persian expansionism as the overall theme of the *Histories*.

Kirk, G. S. "On Defining Myths." In Alan Dundes, ed., *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984, pp. 53–61. A discussion of the difficulties inherent in attempts to arrive at any single theory of what myth is; suggests that the only safe definition is "traditional oral tale."

Kirk, G. S., J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield. *The Presocratic Philosophers*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1983. An invaluable sourcebook, collecting all the fragments of the Pre-Socratic philosophers with translations and commentary.

Lang, Mabel L. *Herodotean Narrative and Discourse*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1984. Martin Classical Lectures, Vol. 28. Examines techniques of oral composition in Herodotus, including his use of speeches.

Lateiner, Donald. *The Historical Method of Herodotus*. *Phoenix* Suppl. Vol. 23. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989. An extremely rich and thorough examination of Herodotus' method, concentrating on its literary, as well as its historiographical, aspects.

Lattimore, Richmond. "The Wise Advisor in Herodotus," *Classical Philology* 34 (1939): 24–35. Describes, categorizes, and discusses Herodotus' use of the "wise advisor" motif. Despite its age, this article remains indispensable for understanding Herodotus' technique.

Lloyd, Alan. *Herodotus Book II. Introduction and Commentary*. 3 vols. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975. The most thorough available commentary on Herodotus' Egyptian *logos*. For the nonspecialist, Vol. 1 (Introduction) is particularly useful.

Lloyd, G. E. R. *Early Greek Science: Thales to Aristotle*. New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1970. A concise and fascinating account of the development of scientific and rational thought among the Greeks. The early chapters are particularly useful for understanding Herodotus' background.

Marincola, John. "Introduction." In Aubrey de Sélincourt, trans., *Herodotus: The Histories*. Revised edition. London, New York: Penguin Books, 1996. A succinct, readable, and helpful introduction to Herodotus and Herodotean studies.

Meier, Christian. "Historical Answers to Historical Questions: The Origins of History in Ancient Greece." *Arethusa* 20 (1987): 41–57. Discusses the factors that led Herodotus to the "invention of history," paying particular attention to political and cultural developments in Athens.

Meiggs, Russell. *The Athenian Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972. The standard work on Athens' empire in the fifth century B.C.E. Meiggs discusses the literary and epigraphical evidence clearly and thoroughly.

Miller, Andrew M. *Greek Lyric: An Anthology in Translation*. Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996. A clear, readable translation with useful explanatory notes. Includes selections of Solon's poetry on pp. 64–76.

Momigliano, Arnaldo. "The Place of Herodotus in the History of Historiography," in *Studies in Historiography*. New York, Evanston: Harper & Row, 1966, pp. 127–142. A fascinating discussion of Herodotus' reputation from classical antiquity onward. Repr. in Blanco and Roberts, eds., *Herodotus*, pp. 356–368.

Munson, Rosaria V. "Artemisia in Herodotus," *Classical Antiquity* 7 (1988): 91–106. Examines the role of this queen, who is ethnically Greek but a Persian commander, in the *Histories*. Identifies several ways in which Artemisia represents both Greeks and Persians.

Nagy, Gregory. "Herodotus the *Logios*," *Arethusa* 20 (1987): 175–184. A close and careful reading of the opening of the *Histories*, arguing that *logioi* are "master[s] of oral tradition in prose" (p. 182).

Orlin, Louis L. "Athens and Persia ca. 507 B.C.: A Neglected Perspective," in Louis L. Orlin, ed., *Michigan Oriental Studies in Honor of George G. Cameron*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1976, pp. 255–266. Argues that the Persians would have interpreted the Athenian envoys' offer of earth and water in 507 B.C.E. as a religiously binding treaty of vassalage. (This article may be difficult to locate, but the argument is an important one.)

Osborne, Robin, ed. *Classical Greece*. *The Short Oxford History of Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. A useful compilation of essays on Greek culture and history by leading scholars.

The Oxford Classical Dictionary. 3rd ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth, eds. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. The standard one-volume reference work on Greek and Roman antiquity.

Pelling, Christopher. "Aeschylus' *Persae* and History," in Christopher Pelling, ed., *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1997. Discusses the relationship of Aeschylus' tragedy to the events of Salamis, focusing on *Persians*' function as a dramatic vehicle, not a historical text.

Pritchett, W. Kendrick. *The Liar School of Herodotos*. Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1993. An answer to the "liar school" as represented by such authors as Fehling. Pritchett argues that for the most part, Herodotus' source citations are valid and accurate.

Redfield, James. "Herodotus the Tourist," *Classical Philology* 80 (1985): 97–118. Argues that in Herodotus' worldview, the edges of the world are marked by oddities and extremes. Particularly useful on Herodotus' treatment of the Egyptians and Scythians.

Rolle, Renate. *The World of the Scythians*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980. A readable and informative book for the nonspecialist, providing information on the history, culture, and burial customs of the Scythians.

Romm, James. "Herodotus and Mythic Geography: The Case of the Hyperboreans," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 119 (1989): 97–113. Discusses the crucial sentence in Book IV in which Herodotus says that if there are Hyperboreans (people of the utmost North), there are also Hypernotians (people of the utmost South), and argues that this is not meant to indicate Herodotus' disbelief in the Hyperboreans. Further examines the implications for Herodotus' views of north-south geographical symmetry.

———. "The Shape of Herodotus' World," in Blanco and Roberts, *Herodotus*, pp. 323–327. A clear, concise treatment of Herodotus' conception of the shape of the world. Pays particular attention to Herodotus' statements about the River Ocean.

Sansone, David. "The Date of Herodotus' Publication," *Illinois Classical Studies* 10 (1985): 1–9. Responds to Fornara's arguments for late publication of the *Histories* by discussing the evidence for Aristophanes' 425 B.C.E. parody of Herodotus' opening *logos*.

Sealey, Ralph. *A History of the Greek City-States ca. 700–338 B.C.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976. An excellent, clearly written overview, "intended to introduce readers to the study of Greek history" (p. xxi).

Shapiro, Susan O. "Herodotus and Solon," *Classical Antiquity* 15 (1996): 348–364. Argues that Solon's speech about divine jealousy and the mutability of human fortune is programmatic for the entire *Histories*.

———. "Learning through Suffering: Human Wisdom in Herodotus," *The Classical Journal* 89 (1994): 349–355. Examines Herodotus' treatment of wisdom gained through suffering and argues that such wisdom is difficult to gain but, once gained, lasting.

Thomas, Rosalind. *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science, and the Art of Persuasion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. A ground-breaking study that considers Herodotus' debt to the intellectual climate of his day. Especially fascinating in its discussion of the medical writers and Herodotus' relationship with them.

———. *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. An examination of the development of writing in Athens and the survival of oral tradition.

———. *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Examines the interaction of orality and literacy in Greek culture, with particular reference to Homeric epic and its performance.

Vandiver, Elizabeth. *Heroes in Herodotus: The Interaction of Myth and History*. *Studien zur klassischen Philologie* 56. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991. Examines the function of mythological heroes in the *Histories* of Herodotus. Unfortunately, Greek and other foreign languages are left untranslated (if I had it to do over again, I would change this), but the recommended sections do not depend on the Greek to be comprehensible.

Vasunia, Phiroze. *The Gift of the Nile: Hellenizing Egypt from Aeschylus to Alexander*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001. A fascinating and original study of Egypt in the Greek imagination. Chapters 2 and 3 are particularly useful on Herodotus.

Waters, K. H. *Herodotos the Historian: His Problems, Methods and Originality*. London, Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985. A concise introduction written for the general reader that pays particular attention to the ways in which Herodotus' work differs from a modern historian's.

Willett, Steven J. "Catching Xerxes' Tears in English: The Styles of Herodotean Translation," *Arion* 3rd series 8.1 (2000): 119–158. Compares and critiques five leading translations of the *Histories*, including Waterfield's and de Sélincourt's.