

HERODOTUS
MWF 11-12, BOYLSTON 237

Instructors:

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Office hours: Wednesdays 1-2 in Boylston 222, or by appointment.

Storyteller, traveler and ethnographer, “the father of history” surveyed the multiethnic Persian Empire and preserved the memory of the Persian Wars. This course is an introduction to Herodotus’ dialect and style, concept of history, authorial voice and narrative strategies, and his representation of non-Greek cultures. Selections in Greek from Books I-IV and IX; the entire *Histories* read in English.

Prerequisite

The equivalent of one year's college training in ancient Greek.

Requirements

- ¶ regular attendance (excused absences only);
- ¶ prepared readings in Greek building up to 8-10 Oxford pages per week;
- ¶ Herodotus in translation, an average of 50 pp. per week (weekend assignments);
- ¶ brief diagnostic quizzes (translation, syntax, contents of *Histories*) every other week;
- ¶ occasional brief oral or written reports on matters of interest;
- ¶ in-class midterm (date TBA);
- ¶ in-house final examination (date TBA).

Required course books

1. *Herodotus Book I*. Text and Commentary by George A. Sheets. Bryn Mawr Commentaries. Provided at no cost.
2. *Herodoti Historiae Libri I-IV*, ed. N. G. Wilson, vol. 1, Oxford University Press 2015 (OCT). **Obtain your own copy ASAP**. List price OUP \$74. Available on Amazon.com for \$74. Other websites charge between \$46 and \$56 for new copies but may have longer delivery times.
3. J. Enoch Powell, *A Lexicon to Herodotus*. Cambridge 1938. Indispensable and provided on loan.
4. **Acquire a translation of Herodotus**. Highly recommended:
Herodotus, The Histories. Translated by Aubrey De Sélincourt. Revised with *Introductory Matter and Notes* by John Marincola. Penguin Classics. London/New York 1996. List price \$13.00.
Herodotus, The Histories. A New Translation by Robin Waterfield, with an *Introduction and Notes* by Carolyn Dewald. Oxford World’s Classics. Oxford/New York 1998. List price \$10.95.

Recommended

H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, Harvard University Press 1956. List price \$65.50. Available for less through Amazon.com and other sellers.

Grading scheme

Preparation, participation and reports: 30%

Quizzes: 20%

Midterm: 20%

Final Exam: 30%

Academic integrity policy

Students are encouraged to discuss the course readings and questions about translation with the instructors and other students. All written work must, however, be each student's own in writing and research. Any work submitted for a grade that is not the sole work of the student will be considered plagiarism and reported. English translations may be used as aides for checking work and solving difficulties outside of class, but they should never be produced verbatim in a translation examination. Students must follow standard procedures for citing sources (books, articles, websites, or other) in any written work. The instructors will be happy to answer any questions about source-citation or research practices at any time.

Academic calendar

No class: Feb. 20 (M) Presidents' Day; March 13-17 Spring Break.

Last day of classes: April 26 (W).

Approximate schedule

Weeks 1-4: Book I; weeks 5-6: Book II; weeks 7-8: Book III; week 9: Book IV; weeks 10-13: Book IX.

Some recent books on Herodotus

- D. Asheri, A. Lloyd and A. Corcella, *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I-IV*, Oxford 2007. Smyth Classical Library Gh 44.240.
- E. J. Bakker, I. J. F. de Jong and H. van Wees (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, Leiden 2002 and 2012. Smyth Gh 44.380. Internet link available with HarvardKey.
- E. Baragwanath and M. de Bakker (eds.), *Myth, Truth, and Narrative in Herodotus*, Oxford 2012. Internet link available with HarvardKey.
- C. Dewald and J. Marincola (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, Cambridge 2006. Smyth Gh 44.501. Internet link available with HarvardKey.
- M. A. Flower and J. Marincola, *Herodotus Histories Book IX*, Cambridge 2002. Smyth Gh 44.446.90.
- T. Harrison, *Divinity and History: The Religion of Herodotus*, Oxford 2000. Smyth Gh 44.540. Internet link available with HarvardKey.
- D. Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus*, Toronto 1989.
- N. Luraghi (ed.), *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus*, Oxford 2001. Smyth H 1.62.
- R. Thomas, *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion*, Cambridge 2000.

Assignments

1/23 (M):

Course introduction; Hdt. Book 1, lines 1-5: opening sentence with *sphragis* (“seal,” i.e. author’s ID) and statement of purpose; Hdt. 1.8.1 Gyges and Kandaules.

1/25 (W):

- (1) Review Hdt. 1.8.1, with Sheets’ notes.
- (2) Gyges and the wife of Kandaules: 1.8.2-10.1 with Sheets’ notes (one Oxford page).
- (3) Submit in writing: Select 10 Ionic forms from the assigned section and provide the Attic equivalents for them.
- (4) Read Sheets on the life of Herodotus and the Ionic dialect (commentary part, pp. 1-2).

1/27 (F):

- (1) Gyges and the wife of Kandaules: 1.10.2-12.2, with Sheets’ notes (1.5 Oxford pages).
- (1a) Collective assignment: 1.10.2-11.1.
- (1b) Individual assignments: 11.2 assigned to **Daniel**; 11.3 assigned to **Charles**; 11.4 assigned to **Caroline**; 11.5 assigned to **Denis**; 12.1 assigned to **Richard**; 12.2 assigned to **Ben A**.
- (2) Read the entry “Herodotus” by J. P. A. Gould in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed. Oxford 2012, 674-676. Available on Hollis with HarvardKey and on the website of the Classics Dept. (under Resources, Favorite Link: Inter Libros, User Favorites: Oxford Classical Dictionary).

1/30 (M)

Instructor: Prof. Naomi Weiss

- (1) Arion and the dolphin: 1.23.1-24.8, with Sheets’ notes (close to 1.5 Oxford pages).
- (1a) Individual assignments: 23.1 assigned to **Ben R.**; 24.1-2 **Alejandro**; 24.3-4 **Theo**; 24.5 **Daniel**.
- (1b) Collective assignment: 1.24.6-8.
- (2) Find one example of each of the three functions of the participle in today’s assignment: attributive (Smyth, *GG* 2049-2050), circumstantial (including genitive absolutes, Smyth 2056-2058), supplementary (Smyth 2088-2089, 2096).

2/01 (W):

- (1) Kroisos’ rise to power: 1.26.1-28, with Sheets’ notes (1.3 Oxford pages).
- (2) Identify all dependent clauses by type.
- (3) Practice loud reading with attention to the flow, inner rhythm and syntactical structure of the sentences, for performance in class.

2/03 (F):

- (1) Solon and Kroisos: 1.29.1-31.4, with Sheets’ notes (2 Oxford pages).
- (1a) Individual assignments: 29.1-2 **Charles**; 30.1-2 **Caroline**; 30.3-4 **Richard**; 30.5-31.2 **Denis**; 31.3 **Ben A.**; 31.4 **Theo**.
- (2) Who is Solon? Read entry in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed. Available online.
- (3) What is wrong with Kroisos?

2/06 (M):

(1) Solon and Kroisos: 1.32.1-32.6, with Sheets' notes (1.3 Oxford pages, one of the most memorable and pivotal passages in Hdt.). Read as much of the Greek text as you possibly can.

(1a) Collective assignment: Figure out the math in 1.32.2-4 and make sure you understand all the numerals (Smyth 347, with p. 103 n. 2 on Herodotean forms; 350 and 352). How does the formation of compound numbers in Hdt. differ from that of their English equivalents? Why does Hdt. play this number game?

(1b) Individual assignments (translation and exegesis): **Alejandro** 32.1; **Ben R.** 32.5; **Daniel** 32.6.

(2) **1st Quiz (20 minutes), based on the Greek assignments for last Wednesday and Friday (1.26.1-31.4).** You will translate 2 brief sentences out of 4 and answer three syntactical questions out of 5.

2/08 (W):

(1) Solon and Kroisos (conclusion): 1.32.7-33 (a little over half an Oxford page). Read in translation, with a close eye on the Greek. What does the Solon and Kroisos story add up to?

(2) Kroisos and Adrastos: 1.34.1-38.2, with Sheets' notes (2.5 Oxford pages). How does Kroisos' dream affect his son Atys (34.2)? Why is the Phrygian Adrastos polluted and in need of "purification" (κάθαρσις, 35.2)?

(2a) Individual assignments (paraphrase with occasional translation; comments on direct speech and the progression of the story): **Charles** 34.1-2; **Caroline** 34.3-35.1; **Richard** 35.2-3; **Denis** 35.3-4; **Ben A.** 36.1-2; **Theo** 36.3; **Alejandro** 37.1; **Ben R.** 37.2; **Daniel** 37.3.

(2b) Collective assignment (translation and use of infinitives [consult Smyth 1966-2038]): 38.1-2.

2/10 (F):

(1) Kroisos and Adrastos (conclusion): 1.39.1-1.45.3, with Sheets' notes (2.25 Oxford pages). How does Atys die, and what is Adrastos' role in his death? Why is the story about Kroisos and Adrastos reminiscent of a Greek tragedy?

(1a) Individual assignments (summary of content; loud and articulate reading of the Greek): **Charles** 39.1-2; **Caroline** 40-41.1; **Richard** 41.2-3; **Denis** 42.1-2; **Ben A.** 43.1-2; **Theo** 43.3-44.1; **Alejandro** 44.

(1b) Collective assignment: 45.1-3. How does the last sentence unfold, and what is so remarkable about it (45.3)?

(2) Carolyn Dewald, "Reading the World: The Interpretation of Objects in Herodotus' *Histories*," in R. M. Rosen and J. Farrell (eds.), *Nomodeiktes : Greek Studies in Honor of Martin Ostwald* (Ann Arbor 1993) 55-70. What is a "significant object"? Where is this concept found and how does it apply to Kroisos and Adrastos?

2/13 (M): Class cancelled. Make-up session during reading period.

2/15 (W):

(1) Set aside 4 hours to read the entire Book I of Hdt. in translation (82 pages in Aubrey de Sélincourt's Penguin transl., 92 pages in Robin Waterfield's Oxford transl.). Take

occasional notes for discussion in class on the following: story line and time line; nature of digressions; authorial comments; asides on the supernatural and the human condition; and cast of characters (Greeks/barbarians; women vs. men; kings and tyrants vs. commoners).

(2) Kroisos on the funeral pyre: 1.86.1-90.4 (4 Oxford pages), with Sheets' notes.

(2a) Collective assignment: 1.86.1-87.4 (2 Oxford pages). Lengths of sentences. Identify the three longest and the three shortest sentences. What is their structure?

(2b) Individual assignments: 1.88.1-90.4 (2 Oxford pages). Translation, syntax, and use of moods:

Caroline 88.1; Alejandro 88.2; Theo 88.3; Denis 89.1; Richard 89.2-3; Ben A. 90.1; Charles 90.2; Daniel 90.3; Ben R. 90.4.

Explain the function of every subjunctive and optative in your individual assignment.

Consult Smyth, GG, English Index, p. 742f. and 752.

2/17 (F):

(1) Cover Hdt. 1.91.1-107.2 in translation.

(2) The birth and childhood of Kyros: 1.108.1-113.3 (4 Oxford pages), with Sheets' notes.

(2a) Collective assignment: 1.108.1-110.3 (2 Oxford pages). Loud reading and translation/paraphrase. Who are the μάγοι and ὄνειροπόλοι? What is Kyros' ethnicity? What does Harpagos tell the cowherd?

(2b) Individual assignments: 1.111-113 (2 Oxford pages). Translation and two or three interesting examples of morphology or syntax.

2/20 (M): No class. Presidents' Day

2/22 (W):

(1) The upbringing of Kyros and the punishment of Harpagos: Hdt. 1.114.1-119.7 (4.5 Oxford pages), with Sheets' notes.

(1a) Cover 1.114.1-119.1 in translation with an eye on the Greek (almost 3.5 Oxford pages). Consider the interaction between Kyros and his age mates as well as Astyages' reaction to Harpagos' attempt to deceive him.

(1b) Collective assignment: 1.119.2-7 (1 Oxford page). Translation with close attention to the language of cooking, eating and dining.

(2) Quiz 2 (20 minutes), based on today's collective assignment (1.119.2-7). Pick 1 sentence out of 2 for translation. Comment on the language of cannibalism and on the progression of the cannibalistic meal in your chosen passage.

(3) Last Friday's individual assignments: 1.111-113.3 (2 Oxford pages). Paraphrase, occasional translation and two or three interesting examples of morphology or syntax. Theo 111.1; Daniel 111.2; Richard 111.3; Charles 111.4; Ben R. 111.5-112.1; Alejandro 112.2; Caroline 112.3-113.1; Ben A. 113.2-3.

2/24 (F):

(1) The customs of the Persians: 1.131-140 (4 Oxford pages), with Sheets' notes. In addition, read David Asheri's wide-ranging commentary on the entire assignment: D. Asheri, A. Lloyd and A. Corcella, *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I-IV* (Oxford 2007) 165-172 (xerox).

(1a) Collective assignment: 1.131.1-133.4 (1.5 Oxford pages). Translation and

commentary. How does Persian animal sacrifice differ from the corresponding Greek ritual? To what extent does Hdt. comment on Persian eating and drinking habits?

(1b) Individual assignments: 1.134.1-140.3 (2.5 Oxford pages). Loud reading and paraphrase/translation. Which aspects of Persian life is Hdt. interested in? How reliable is Hdt. as an ethnographer? Does he make mistakes? How do we know when he is right? Consult Asheri's commentary for guidance.

Theo and Daniel 134.1-3; Richard and Charles 135.1-137.1 (ἔρδεν); Ben R. and Alejandro 137.1 (ἀλλὰ λογισάμενος)-138.2; Caroline and Ben A. 139.1-140.3.

2/27 (M)

1a. Read Herodotus II.1-II.5 (c. 3 Oxford pages).

1b. As you read, consider the following questions:

- What is the reason for Psammetichos' experiment? How would you characterize his reaction to the results?
- What are Herodotus' sources for Book 2? What is his "research" process? How does he evaluate and rank his sources?

3/1 (W)

1. Read Herodotus II.33.2-II.36.2 (c. 2 Oxford pages).

2a. Read F. Hartog "A Rhetoric of Otherness" from *The Mirror of Herodotus* trans. J. Lloyd (Berkeley, 1988) 212-259. [copies provided]

2b. How convincing is Hartog's approach?

3/3 (F)

1a. Read Herodotus II.53-II.57 (c. 2 Oxford pages).

1b. How would you describe Herodotus' analysis of the stories about the oracle of Dodona? What are his analytical priorities? What assumptions does he bring to his analysis?

3/6 (M)

1. Read Herodotus II.99.1 (Herodotus begins his account of Egyptian history, structured as a kinglist), II.102 and II.110 (The Pharaoh Sesostris), II.111 (The Pharaoh Pheros) [c. 2.5 Oxford pages].

2a. Read "The Blinding of Pharaoh" from *The Petese Stories* (fragment C1). [translated from the Demotic; copies provided]

2b. Note similarities and differences between Herodotus II.111 and "The Blinding of Pharaoh." Do you think Herodotus had access to a story like "The Blinding of Pharaoh?" If so, how might he have had access to it? What does this evidence mean for our understanding of Herodotus as a historian?

3/8 (W)

1a. Read Herodotus II.113-II.116.2 (c. 2.25 Oxford pages).

1b. What is Herodotus' approach to literary criticism? What is his attitude toward Greek "classics?"

3/10 (F)

1a. Read Herodotus II.142-145.1 (c. 2 Oxford pages).

1b. What was Hecataeus' mistake according to Herodotus? How does Herodotus use chronology as an analytical tool?

SPRING BREAK!

3/20 (M)

1. Read Book 2 in translation, considering the following questions:

- How does Herodotus structure his account of Egypt?
- What are the main features of Egyptian culture and society according to Herodotus?
- How would you characterize the picture of Egyptian history that we receive from Herodotus? Does the reader receive a consistent picture of Egyptian kingship?
- We have talked a lot about Herodotus' research technique and his use of sources. Having read books 1 and 2 in their entirety, how would you describe Herodotus' historical method?

2. Read Herodotus III.80-81 (c. 2 Oxford pages).

3/22 (W)

MIDTERM, covering the collective assignments from **Books 1 and 2**

3/24 (F)

1a. Read III.82-84 (c. 2 Oxford pages).

1b. How is the "constitutional debate" structured (III.80-84)? Which position do you think is most persuasive in terms of style and argument? Why do you think Herodotus presents Otanes in the way that he does?

3/27 (M)

1. Read III.1-79 in English.

1b. Is the entirety of Book 2 necessary for a reader to understand the Persian encounter with Egypt? How does the "constitutional debate" fit into the greater narrative context?

2a. Read III.85-88 in Greek.

2b. How would you describe the character of Oibares? How would you characterize the story of Darius' rise to power (e.g. epic, folk tale)?

3/29 (W)

1. Read III.89 in Greek; III.90-105 in English; III.106-108 in Greek (c. 2.25 Oxford pages).

2. Consider the following questions:

- Why does Herodotus include the very detailed account of Persian tribute?
- How does the ethnography of India compare to the ethnography of Egypt? Why is India special according to Herodotus?
- How would you characterize Herodotus' description and analysis of animals? Does he have any sort of scientific method, or does he bring any assumptions/theories to his investigation?

3/31 (F)

1. Read III.109-121 in English.

2a. Read III.122-125.2 in Greek (c. 2 Oxford pages).

2b. How are the Greek characters presented in the story of Polycrates' death? Do you notice any differences between Herodotus' treatment of Greek and non-Greek characters? Who is Anacreon of Teos, and why is he mentioned (see the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v Anacreon [available online through HOLLIS])?

4/3 (M)

1a. Read III.125.3-128 in Greek (c. 2.5 Oxford pages).

1b. What is Darius' approach to ruling? Is he a good king?

1c. How does the story of Polycrates' death relate to previous parts of the *Histories*? Why do you think Herodotus tells this story here?

2a. Read III.129-160 in English.

2b. Does Book III work as a unit? How do the various parts fit together (or not)?

4/5 (W)

1. **Quiz 3**, covering the episode of Polycrates' death and its aftermath (III.122-128).

2. Read in English IV.1-70.

3. Read in Greek IV.71-72 (c. 2 Oxford pages).

4/7 (F)

1. Read in Greek IV.73-77 (2.5 Oxford pages).

2a. Read in English, Lucian *Anacharsis*. [copies provided]

2b. Lucian was a satirists/essayist of the 2nd century CE. He wrote in Greek, although Greek was probably his second language. He was born in Samosata on the Euphrates, and his native language was most probably Aramaic. How would you characterize Lucian as a reader of Herodotus? Do Solon and Anacharsis make sense as a pair? Does Herodotus pair them?

4/10 (M)

1. Read in Greek IV.78-80 (2.5 Oxford pages).

2. Read in English IV.81-205 and Book V.

3. How do the Scythians fit into Herodotus' worldview/presentation of the world? Does Herodotus change his style or narrative technique when he turns to more contemporary history or the "real subject" of his work?

4/12 (W)

1a. Read in Greek IX.58-62.2 (c. 2.5 Oxford pages) with Flower and Marincola's notes.

1b. How do Mardonios' speech and Pausanias' message to the Athenians characterize the Persian and Greek commanders, respectively?

2. Read in English VI.1-50 and IX.1-57.

4/14 (F)

- 1a.** Read in Greek IX.62.2-68 (c. 2.5 Oxford pages) with Flower and Marincola's notes.
1b. How does Herodotus describe and narrate the battle?
2. Read in English VI.51-140.

4/17 (M)

- 1.** Read in Greek IX.69-72 (c. 2.5 Oxford pages) with Flower and Marincola's notes.
2a. Read in English Books VII and VIII.
2b. What picture do we get of Xerxes, of Themistocles? How does Herodotus structure the conflict between Greece and Persia?

4/19 (W)

- 1. Quiz 4,** covering IX.62.2-72, the Battle of Plataea.
2. Read in English IX.73-75.
3. Read in Greek IX.76-80.2 (c. 2.5 Oxford pages) with Flower and Marincola's notes.

4/21 (F)

- 1.** Read in Greek IX.80.3-85 (c. 2.5 Oxford pages) with Flower and Marincola's notes.
2a. Read Simonides' Poem on Plataea, with D. Boedeker "Heroic Historiography: Simonides and Herodotus on Plataea," in D. Boedeker and D. Sider (ed.) *The New Simonides: Contexts of Praise and Desire* (New York and Oxford, 2001), 120-134. [copies provided]
2b. How was the Battle of Plataea remembered and commemorated? Does our reading of Herodotus' account change when we consider the greater context?

4/24 (M)

- 1.** Read in English IX.86-106.
2. Read in Greek IX.107-111.1 (c. 2.5 Oxford pages) with Flower and Marincola's notes.
3. Almost at the end of the *Histories*, we find ourselves back in Sardis. Should we as readers take this as a signal?

4/26 (W)

- 1.** Read in Greek IX.111.2-116 (c. 2.75 Oxford pages) with Flower and Marincola's notes.
2. Choose one sentence from today's assignment and comment on Herodotus' syntax, style, and narrative technique. Judging from the selections we have read this semester, do you think Herodotus maintains a consistent style throughout the *Histories*?

4/28 (F) Makeup Class

- 1.** Read in Greek IX.117-122 (c. 2.5 Oxford pages) with Flower and Marincola's notes.
2a. Read C. Dewald "Wanton Kings, Pickled Heroes, and Gnomic Founding Fathers: Strategies of Meaning at the End of Herodotus's *Histories*," in D. Roberts, F. Dunn, and

D. Fowler (ed.) *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (Princeton, 1997), 62-83. [copies provided]

2b. What kind of ending does the *Histories* have?

May 4 (Th) FINAL EXAM 1-3 pm