



Herodotus in Historiography

HPAH5027/6027 – HERODOTUS AND HIS HISTORIES

Aims

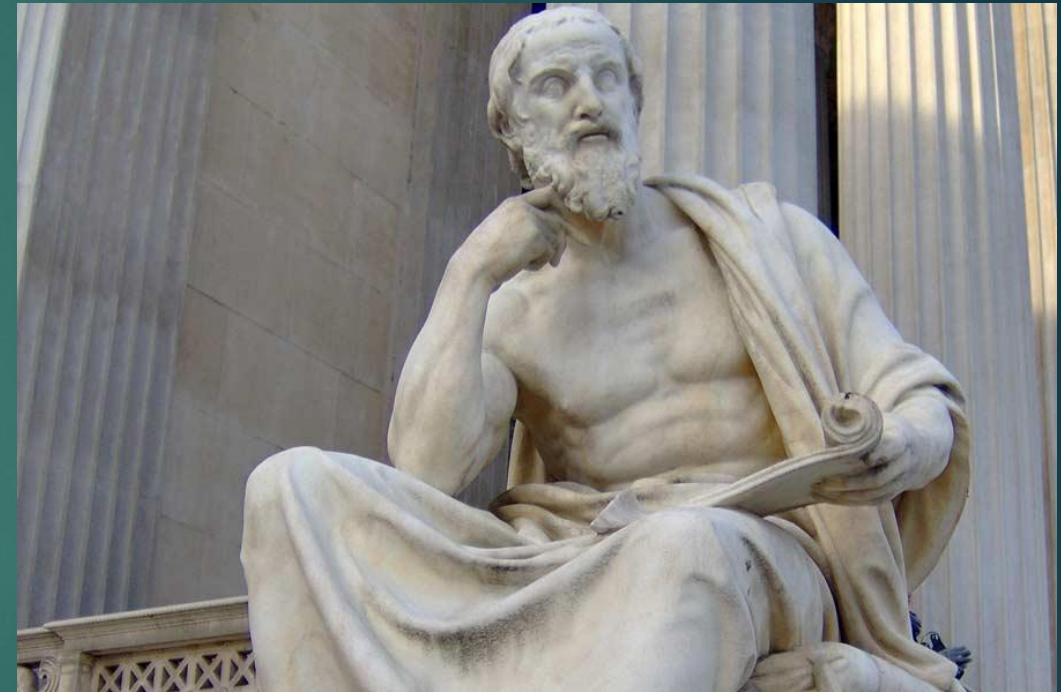
- ▶ Review concept of historiography and Herodotus' place in it
- ▶ Explore Herodotus' predecessors
- ▶ Discuss the performance of history

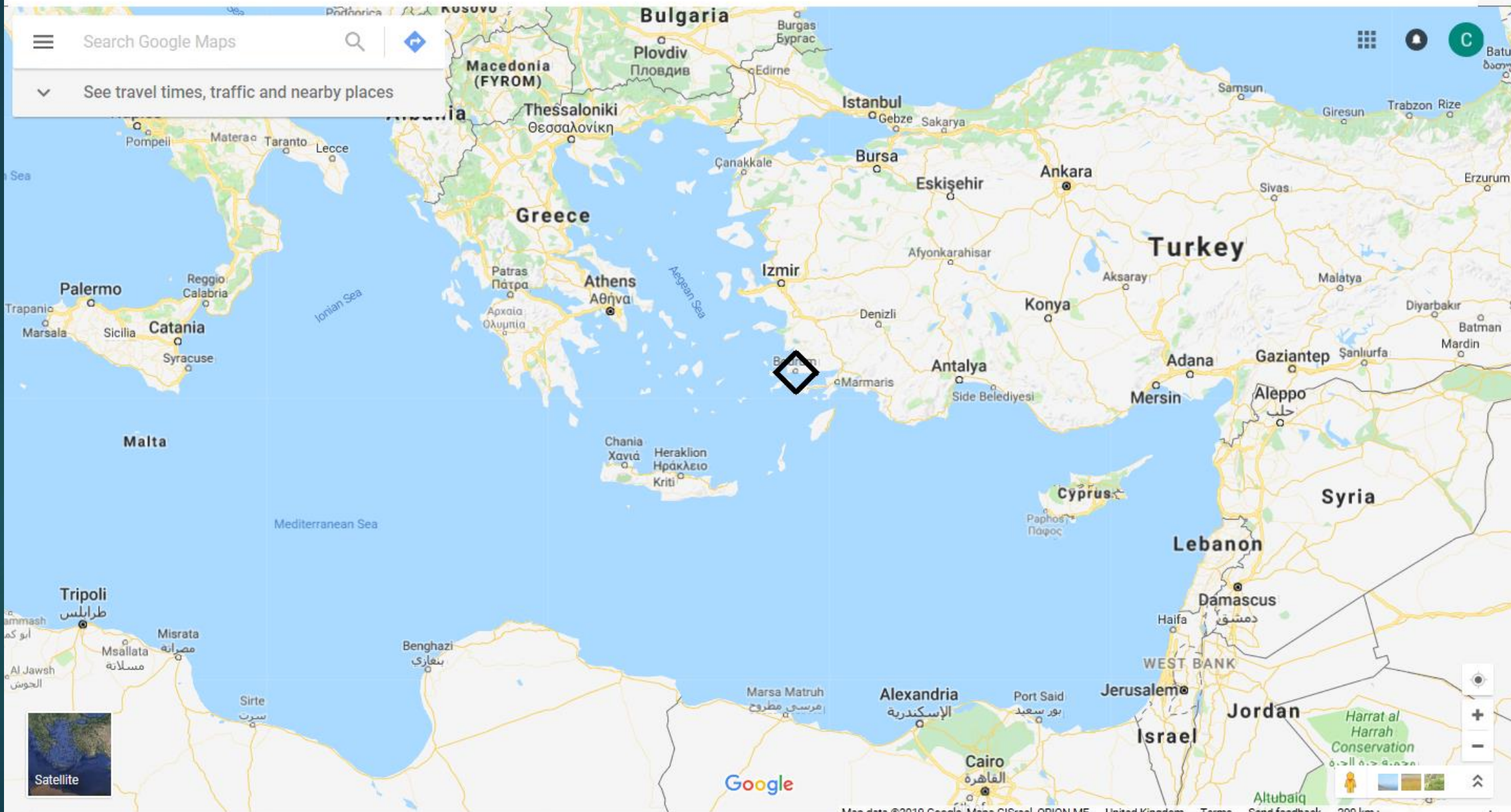


What is historiography?

Impact of Herodotus

- ▶ Herodotus as the 'father of history'
 - ▶ Marked transition between oral and written history
 - ▶ Established methodology for later historians
 - ▶ Used prose rather than verse
- ▶ 'There was no Herodotus before Herodotus'
 - ▶ Momigliano 1958

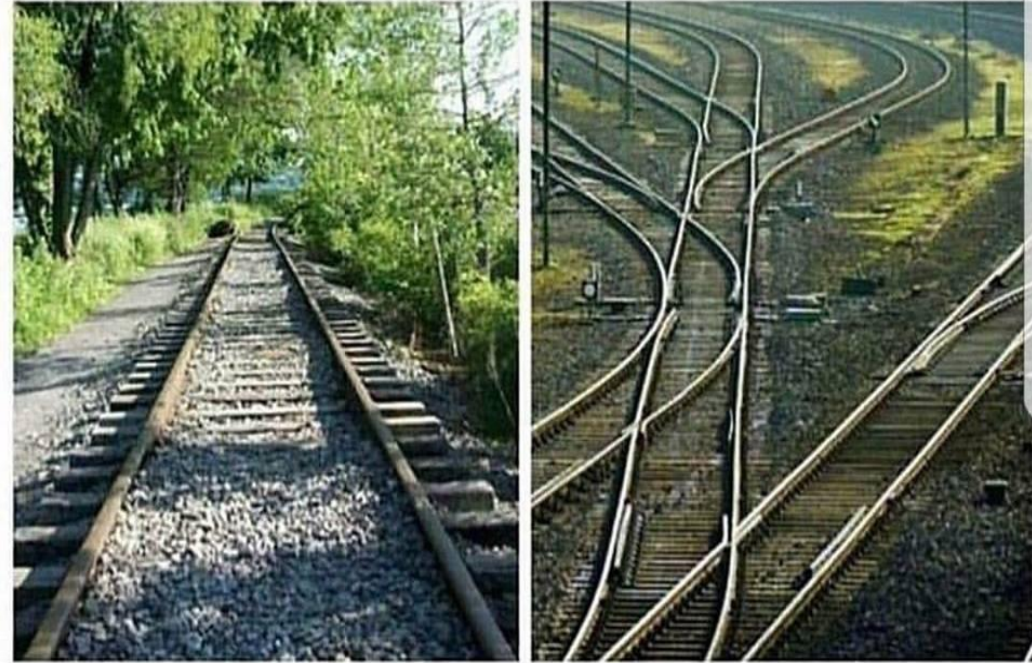




Herodotus' Methodology

- ▶ Oral accounts
- ▶ Community memory
- ▶ *Logoi digressions*
- ▶ '[Herodotus] did not invent his sources; he discovered the *problem* of sources'
 - ▶ Fowler 1996

Me telling a story Vs. Herodotus telling a story



Croesus and Solon

- ▶ Hdt. 1.29:
- ▶ When these were subdued and subject to Croesus in addition to the Lydians, all the sages from Hellas who were alive at that time, coming in different ways, came to Sardis, which was at the height of its wealth; and among them came Solon the Athenian, who, after making laws for the Athenians at their request, went abroad for ten years, sailing forth to see the world, he said. This he did so as not to be compelled to repeal any of the laws he had made, [2] since the Athenians themselves could not do that, for they were bound by solemn oaths to abide for ten years by whatever laws Solon should make.

Herodotus' predecessors

- ▶ Strabo 1.2.6 - Hecataeus/Hekataios, Cadmus, Pherecydes
- ▶ Dionysius, *On Thucydides*, 1.5 – Eugeon of Samos, Deiochus of Proconnesus, Eudemus of Paros, Democles of Phygele, Hecataeus of Miletus, Acusilaus of Argos, Charon of Lampsacus and Melesagoras of Calchedon

Hecateus

- ▶ 6th /early 5th cent author writing in prose – historian/geographer
- ▶ Two known works:
 - ▶ *Periodos ges* (journey around the world)
 - ▶ *Genealogies*
- ▶ Critical approach to oral histories
- ▶ Move towards rational explanation



Hecataeus

- ▶ Hdt. 5.36
- ▶ [2] All the rest spoke their minds to the same effect, favoring revolt, with the exception of Hecataeus the prose-writer who, listing all the nations subject to Darius and all his power, advised them that they should not make war on the king of Persia. When, however, he failed to persuade them, he counselled them that their next best plan was to make themselves masters of the sea. [3] This, he said, could only be accomplished in one way (Miletus, he knew, was a city of no great wealth), namely if they took away from the temple at Branchidae the treasure which Croesus the Lydian had dedicated there...

Hecataeus

- ▶ Hdt. 2.143
- ▶ [1] Hecataeus the prose-writer was once at Thebes , where he made a genealogy for himself that had him descended from a god in the sixteenth generation. But the priests of Zeus did with him as they also did with me (who had not traced my own lineage)...[4] Thus, when Hecataeus had traced his descent and claimed that his sixteenth forefather was a god, the priests too traced a line of descent according to the method of their counting; for they would not be persuaded by him that a man could be descended from a god...

Hecataeus

- ▶ Hecataeus' Intro (FGrH 1 F1):
- ▶ Thus Hecataeus the Milesian wrote: "These I shall write as they seem to me to be true; for the stories of the Greeks are many and to me seem to be ridiculous".

Herodotus' proem

- ▶ This is the display of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that things done by man not be forgotten in time, and that great and marvellous deeds, some displayed by the Greeks, some by the barbarians, not lose their glory, including among others what was the cause of their waging war on each other.
- ▶ “These I shall write as they seem to me to be true; for the stories of the Greeks are many and to me seem to be ridiculous”.

Reading List

- ▶ Grethlien, J. 2011, 'The Rise of Greek historiography and the Invention of Prose'. In Feldherr, A. and Hardy, G. (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: Volume 1: Beginnings to AD 600*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 149-169.
- ▶ Momigliano, A. 1958, 'The Place of Herodotus in the History of Historiography'. *History*, Vol. 43, No. 147, 1-13.
- ▶ West, S. 1991, 'Herodotus' Portrait of Hecataeus'. *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 111, pp. 144-160.