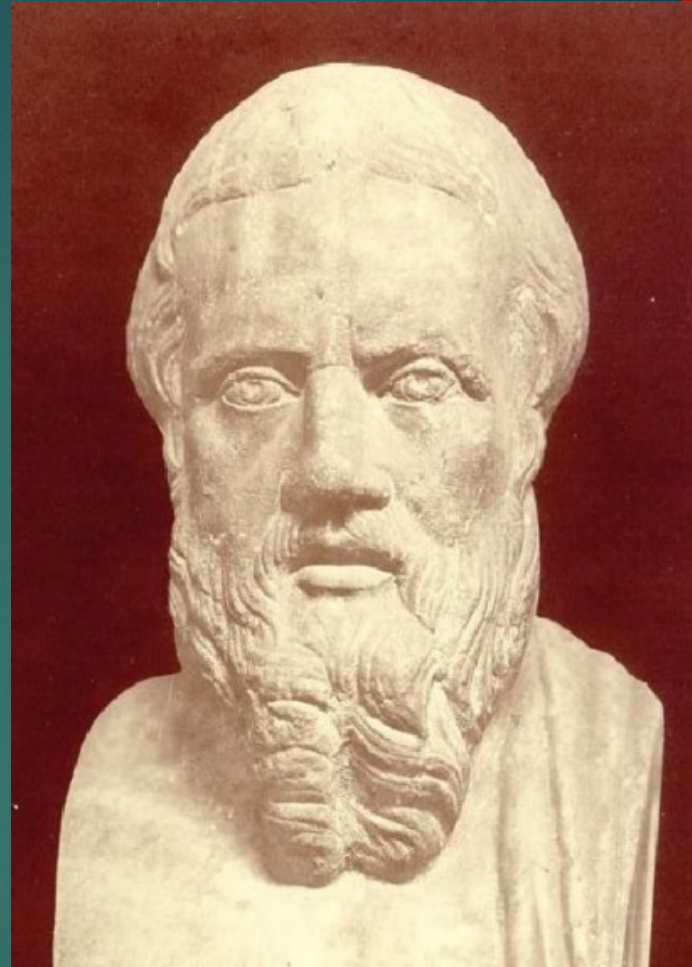


Herodotus



Development of History

- ▶ Homer as history?
- ▶ Lyric poems
 - ▶ could record recent events, e.g. Simonides recorded the Battle of Platea
 - ▶ not a huge step from praising victories at games
- ▶ Development of prose
- ▶ Authors before Herodotus
 - ▶ Hecataeus – early prose writer, Ionian, very influential on Herodotus and his work

Herodotus

- ▶ C485-424 BCE.
 - ▶ Wrote after the Persian Wars.
 - ▶ 1st historian = Father of History.
 - ▶ Born in Halikarnassos.
- ▶ 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 marvelous deeds, **some displayed by the Hellenes, some by the barbarians**, not lose their glory, including among others what was the cause of their waging war on each other. Herodotos 1.1

Long view of history

- ▶ Herodotos spends most of the books of the *Histories* covering not the Persian Wars per se but the events preceding them.
- ▶ The Ionian Revolt is not reached until Book 5 (of 9).
- ▶ In this way, the Persians say (and not as the Greeks), was how Io came to Egypt, and this, according to them, was the first wrong that was done. Next, according to their story, some Greeks (they cannot say who) landed at Tyre in Phoenicia and carried off the king's daughter Europa. These Greeks must, I suppose, have been Cretans. So far, then, the account between them was balanced. But after this (they say), it was the Greeks who were guilty of the second wrong. Herodotos 1.2

Sources and Witnesses

- ▶ Herodotos believes in presenting all views, rather than only his own.
- ▶ It is up to the reader to decide the truth, rather than up to the historian.
- ▶ **As for myself, although it is my business to set down that which is told me, to believe it is none at all of my business.** This I ask the reader to hold true for the whole of my history, for there is another tale current, according to which it would seem that it was the Argives who invited the Persian into Hellas, because the war with the Lacedaemonians was going badly, and they would prefer anything to their present distresses.
Herodotos 7.152

Gods, heroes and credibility

- ▶ Often Herodotos will include in his *Histories* tales that we would consider fantastic or supernatural.
- ▶ Now when the barbarians drew near and could see the temple, the prophet, whose name was Aceratus, **saw certain sacred arms, which no man might touch without sacrilege, brought out of the chamber within and laid before the shrine.** [2] So he went to tell the Delphians of this miracle, but when the barbarians came with all speed near to the temple of Athena Pronaea, they were visited by miracles yet greater than the aforesaid. Marvellous indeed it is, that weapons of war should of their own motion appear lying outside in front of the shrine, but the visitation which followed was more wondrous than anything else ever seen. [3] **When the barbarians were near to the temple of Athena Pronaea, they were struck by thunderbolts from the sky, and two peaks broken off from Parnassus came rushing among them with a mighty noise and overwhelmed many of them.** In addition to this a shout and a cry of triumph were heard from the temple of Athena. Herodotos 8.37