



GRK 3002 Age of Herodotus

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Objectives. Upon completion of this course, you will have:

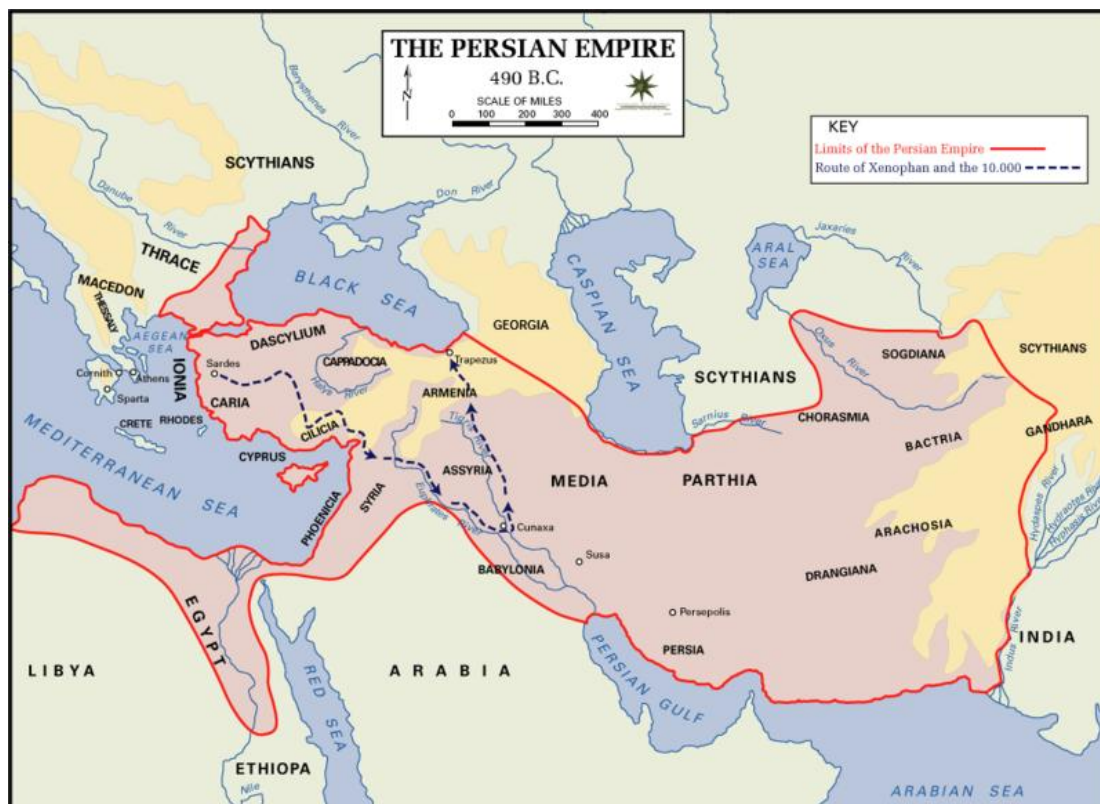
- advanced reading knowledge of Ancient Greek prose;
- understanding the dialect of Herodotus' Ionic Greek
- comprehension of the historical events that shaped the rise of the Athenian empire from the defeat of the Persians.

Herodotus was the originator of the term *ιστορία*, "investigation" from which we get our word "history". His work was also the first piece of literature written in prose. His debt to poetic forms of expression is clear. His investigation aims to make certain that the fame of men would not go unsung (the job of epic) and his narrative patterns, the role he assigns to the Delphic oracle in human events, the progression of man from the height of prosperity to folly to arrogance to suffering the vengeance of the gods (*olbios*; *atê*; *hybris*; *nemesis*) all suggest that his history is modeled on the framework of tragedy. Herodotus drew on other genres of writing as well: the travelogue, which was anthropological to the point of becoming vaguely historical, and philosophical writing which paid close attention to causation. All of these forms were popular either at Athens (epic and drama) or in Ionia, in the SW of which is H's home of Halikarnassus (travelogue, pre-Socratic philosophy). Herodotus' dialect is Ionic as well, which closely resembles Attic except in preferring *η* over *α*, and in the use of certain other endings which will be familiar from Homeric epic.

Herodotus is writing in the 450's BC, in the period immediately after Athens' great rise to power. And it is not so much this rise that he seeks to explain, but the causes of the war in which Athens triumphed: the second Persian war of 481-478 BC. The Persians began meddling in Greek affairs 20 years earlier. When they sacked Miletus in 499 (killing the men, selling the women and children into slavery, and making eunuchs of the young men, so no Milesian would ever be born again), the entire Athenian people were moved, so much so, that when Phrynichus composed a tragedy on the subject, he was forced to pay a fine for 'recalling pains too close to the heart.' The Persians eventually subjected the entire coast of Asia Minor to their rule and launched the first invasion of Greece with 50,000 men at the battle of Marathon in 490. The failure of this expedition had a number of consequences. The first was that it encouraged the Athenians to develop their own foreign policy and act in their own interests. They built a massive fleet in anticipation of the return of the Persians. The second was that it let the Persians know that Greece would not fall without the use of overwhelming

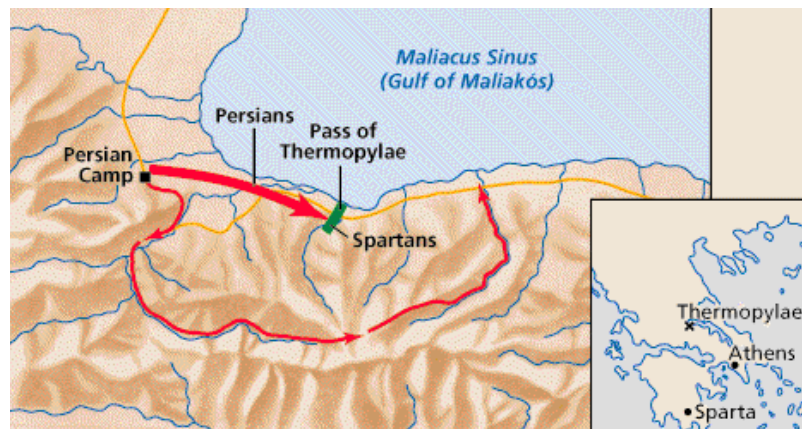
force. When they next invaded, it was by land and sea and with an army that Herodotus places at 1,700,000, which he doubles to include the baggage train, and half that many again on the fleet of 1207 ships, bringing to the total to 5,000,000. Historians think one tenth that amount the upper limit, with an army of 250,000.





Main battles:

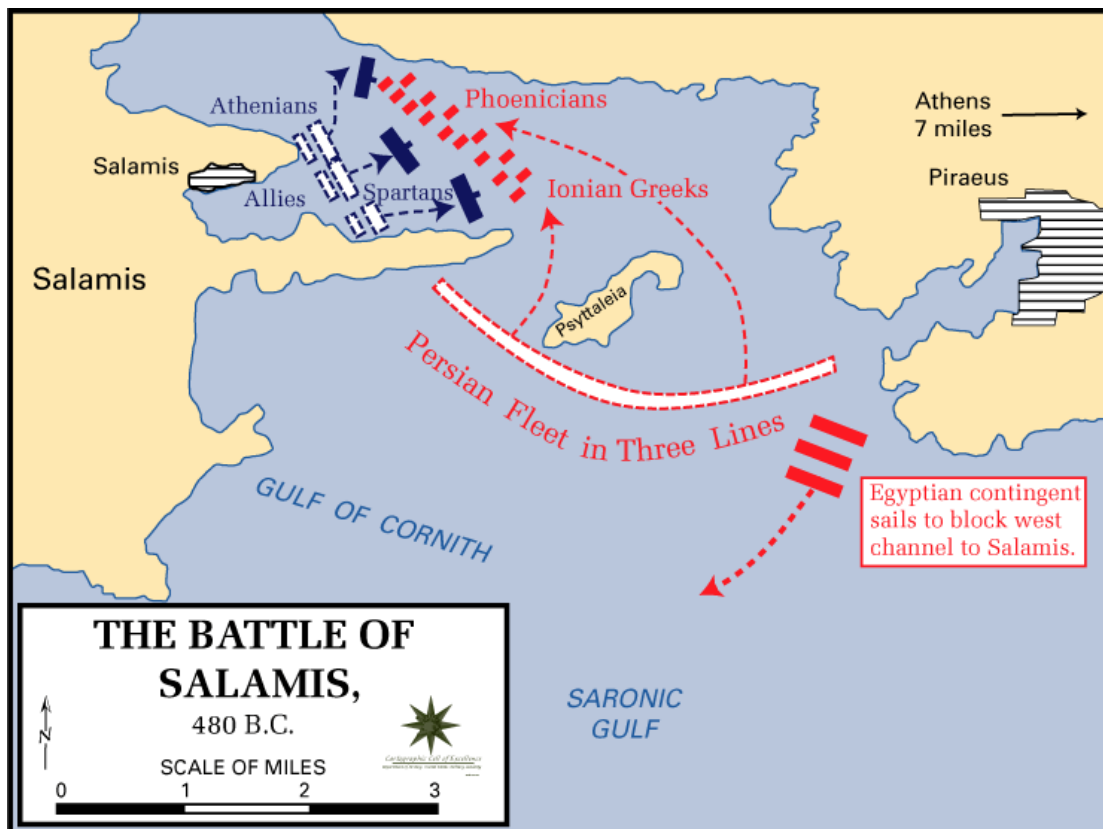
- 490 BC Marathon. Darius I sent his brother Artaphernes, and admiral, Datis with (Herodotus says) 600 triremes and 200,000 men and perhaps 10,000 cavalry who take part in the engagement. Modern historians suggest 25,000 men on the field for Persia, against 9000-10,000 Athenians and 1000 Plataeans. The leading political figure among Athens' 10 generals is Miltiades; Themistocles and Aristides were also commanders. The Athenians charged rather than sheltering during the arrow barrage, and drove the Persians back to the ships. H. claims Persian losses were 6400, Athenian 192, and 11 Plataean. Then the exhausted hoplites quick-marched it 25 miles back to Athens to get there before the Persian fleet.
- Special construction: 480 BC Xerxes orders construction of a pontoon bridge over the Hellespont, using ropes that weighed over 100 lbs per yard, which works out to bundles 10" thick made of papyrus and flax. When it broke he had the stream of water lashed, then quickly rebuilt. He also ordered a canal dug north of Mt. Athos through the eastern-most fork of the Chalcidike where Mardonius had encountered a storm in 492. Thus they 'walked on the water and sailed through the land.'
- Size of the 2nd invasion force: Herodotus gives their numbers as over 500,000 on ships and 1,700,000 on land and then doubles it for support personnel, saying they drank rivers dry. Modern historians consider these figures of mythical proportion and suggest that 250,000 is a more likely figure, and that even that many men might drink rivers dry.
- (Land) Battle of Thermopylae, Aug. or Sept. 480 BC. The Spartans always thought of the Isthmus of Corinth as the preferred line of defense, but fought at Thermopylae as a holding action and because it did not make sense to abandon all cities north of the Isthmus without a fight, as Themistocles the Athenian advised. The battle was fought in a pass between cliffs and the sea 100 yards wide, at a marshy place that was even narrower in which the small force of 300 Spartan hoplites and 5000-7000 allied troops could hold off the 100,000-150,000 Persians attacking in contingents of 10,000-15,000 through the narrow defile. On the 3rd day, the Persians flanked them by crossing the mountain behind the Spartan line. Leonidas proposed to stay behind with his hoplites and another 1200 allies to cover the retreat of over 3000 other soldiers. Those who remained were all killed. Another possible reason for the last stand was to show the Persians that Greece could not be ruled.



- (Sea) Battle of Artemisium, near Thermopylae, same time. H. says 1200 Persian ships were caught in a storm north of Cape Artemisium and the island of Skiathos and 1/3 were destroyed, while the Greeks were moored at Calchis in the Euboean strait. After the storm, 271 Greek ships took up positions at Cape Artemisium, across the straits from the Persian fleet at Aphetae. On the first day, the Greeks sank about 30 ships as the Persians tried to get SE past them to sail down the Euboean coast, but then those 200 Persian ships got caught in a 2nd storm and were lost. On the 2nd day, the Persians would not attack, and devoted themselves to repairs. On the 3rd day, the allies formed a line to prevent the Persians from sailing toward

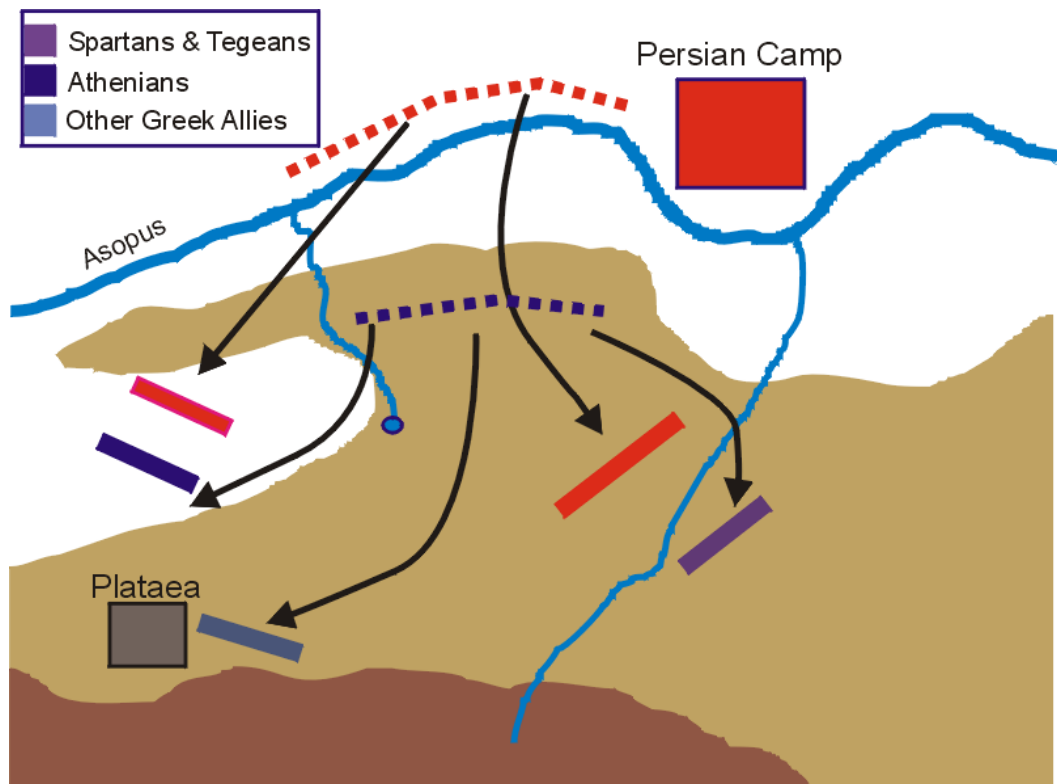
Thermopylae and fought an evenly pitched battle with heavy losses. When Thermopylae fell, they retreated to near Athens, on the island of Salamis.

- One contingent of Persians marched toward Delphi, but did not sack its treasures (H. claims because of divine portents and a skirmish, 8.35-39); another contingent did sack the Athenian acropolis. The Persians ordered it razed, including the old temple to Athena and the new one called the '100 footer' (*hecatompedon*) just begun.
- (Sea) Battle of Salamis, in the straits between Athens and the island of Salamis (8.83-97). In the narrows of the Athenian home waters, the Persian numbers were actually a liability. The Persians (perhaps 600-800 ships) attacked the Greek fleet of 380 ships, but while the Persians pursued targets of opportunity randomly, H. says, the Greek allies maintained formation, retreating in a back-wheeling alignment, waiting for the morning wind. Xerxes lost half his fleet and returned to Asia Minor. His army remained behind, but withdrew from Athens and wintered in Thessaly under Mardonius.



- (Land) Battle of Plataea (479 BC). When Mardonius learned from Argive spies that the Spartan general and regent Pausanias was leaving the Peloponnesus to give battle, he marched on Athens and burned the city to the ground, down to the last house and wall, and then pulled back west to Thebes. The battle itself, with perhaps 100,000 on each side, developed slowly over 10 days and took place on the N. side of Plataea, where the Persians were camped on the N. side of the Asopus river, and the Athenians on the S., with access to the road S. to the Peloponnesus. When the Greeks retreated back toward Mt. Cithaeron, the Persians followed, despite the fact that it gave the Greeks the high ground. The enemy right wing, manned by the traitorous Thebans, attacked the Athenians, while the Spartans faced the main Persian army. The Persian wicker shields were outmatched by the hoplite armor and it turned into a rout. Herodotus says that only 43,000 Persian troops survived the battle (though he also claims

300,000 were there, which seems impossible). On the same day in Asia Minor, the Greeks burned the Persian fleet at Mycale.



The Athenians gave chase, by sea more than by land, and slowly turned this tactic into a policy of harassing the Persians all over the Mediterranean coast using the Greek fleet, with allies contributing ships or money to try and take back every Greek island and every coastal city from the Persians. This worked flawlessly until 454 when an attempted Athenian invasion of the Nile led to disaster and the offensive posture of the Athenians returned to neutral. Thereafter the contribution of ships by allies declined along with their willingness to pay dues until finally the Athenians took two actions that converted their voluntary alliance into an imperial navy. The Athenians moved the treasury of this alliance, the Delian league, from the sacred island of Delos to the safekeeping of the Athenian acropolis; during the same period, the Athenians made contributions mandatory, and used them to finance the building program on the Athenian acropolis which “safeguarded” the treasury. Out of these steps came the enduring legacy of Athens, the buildings on her acropolis: the Parthenon (temple to Athena the maiden); the Erechtheion a shrine encompassing all the holy sites of Athens’ foundation myths; the temple to Nike (winged victory); and the dramatic Propylaeon (gateway). From these moves came the seeds of Athens’ destruction deriving from the hatred of her member cities and islands, the desire of Sparta to protect many of them and to curb Athenian ambition, and Athens’ own sense of invincibility and overweening arrogance: *hybris*. They began a war with Sparta they could not win and wound up garrisoned by a pro-Spartan force from 404-401, after which her military significance was lost for good. But this is the theme of Thucydides’ *Peloponnesian War*.

Herodotus’ is the fall of Persia. His tale of the great Persian army and the imposition of tyranny it represented directs the composition of the earlier books I-V. His work begins with a history of Anatolian tyranny (the ‘*Croesus Logos*’) and the rise of Greek aristocracy (Sparta) and democracy (Athens). As such, it was interpreted, together with Thucydides, not only as the foundation of the discipline of history, but of political science as well. Plato’s *Republic* shows rather obvious debts to the *Histories*, which he imitates in his characterization of how the perfect criminal Gyges rises to tyrannical power by gazing upon sexual perversion. The nexus of ‘seeing the forbidden’ and ‘wielding forbidden power’ produces some of the most memorable passages of *Republic*. It all begins with Herodotus.

Textbooks:

Barbour, Amy L. and M. Ottone, *Selections from Herodotus*, Oklahoma 2011² 0806141700

J. Enoch Powell (Ed.), *Herodotus Book VIII* (Bristol Classical Press 1991) 0862920043

George A. Sheets, *Herodotus Book I* (Bryn Mawr Greek Commentaries 1982) 0929524136

Grading:

Homework, Participation, Translation	30%	A 93-100, A- 90-92
Midterm	30%	B+ 87-89, B 83-86, B- 80-82
Article Presentation	10%	C+ 77-79, C 73-76, C- 70-72
6-8 page Final Paper	30%	D+ 67-69, D 63-66, D- 60-62, F 0-59

You will be graded largely on the degree of your preparation. I expect you to have read each assigned passage 2 or 3 times, to have identified every word carefully and to be prepared to translate and discuss the passage. At first this will be difficult. But with application, facility will come.

Late submission of work and make-up for missed assignments may be allowed with an excuse I find acceptable (e.g., medical, personal and family crises). For information about severe weather and university closings, see <http://www.ecu.edu/alert/>. East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 ((252) 737-1016 (Voice/TTY). Academic integrity is expected of every East Carolina student. Cheating, plagiarism (claiming the work or ideas of another as your own), and falsification, will be considered a violation of Academic Integrity (<http://goo.gl/l6QsdU>).

Tentative Schedule of Assignments:

8/22-24	Introduction to Herodotus and Ionian Dialect – Barbour pp. 2-46 1.1-5 – Barbour, pp. 49-51 (Introduction and prelude)
8/29-31	1.6-14 – Barbour, pp. 51-55 (Lydian history, Gyges)
9/5-7	1.23-24, 26-30 – Barbour, pp. 55-58 (Arion, Croesus & Solon)
9/12-14	1.31-35 – Barbour, pp. 58-61 (Croesus & Solon)
9/19-21	1.36-49 – Barbour, pp. 61-66 (Croesus, testing the oracles)
9/26-28	1.50-56, 59-64 – Barbour, pp. 66-71 (Honors paid to oracles by Croesus, Athenian history)
10/3	1.65-68 – Barbour, pp. 71-75 (Lacedaimonian history)
10/5	Midterm
10/10	Fall Break
10/12	1.84-88.1 – Barbour, pp. 76-79 (Capture of Sardis, Fate of Croesus)
10/17-19	7.19-22, 24-26, 32-37 – Barbour, pp. 169-72 (Xerxes flogs the Hellespont, canal at Mt. Athos)

10/24-26	7.54-56, 59.3-60, 87, 89 (Crossing the bridge, numbering the host), 7.138-139 (Athens Savior of Greece) – Barbour, pp. 172-75
10/31-11/2	7.140-144 – Barbour, pp. 175-78 (The Wooden Wall)
11/7-9	7.175-77, 196 (Plans of the Greeks to resist the invaders); 7.205-209 (Futile efforts to break down Greek resistance) – Barbour, pp. 178-82
11/14-16	7.210-220 (Battle of Thermopylae, treachery of Ephialtes) – Barbour, pp.183-86
11/22	7.222-228 (Final struggle at Thermopylae, Fame of those who fell) – Barbour, pp.186-89
11/24	Thanksgiving
11/28-30	Last Classes. 8.52-3 (Sack of Athens), 8.57-63 (Ruse of Themistocles to fight at Salamis) 8.76, 84-86, 89, 91, 117 (Battle of Salamis) – Barbour pp. 191-204
12/7	Papers Due

Bibliography:

Chiasson, Charles C. 2003. "Herodotus' Use of Attic Tragedy in the Lydian *Logos*." *Classical Antiquity* 22.1: 5–35. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ca.2003.22.1.5>)

Raubitschek, A. E. 1955. "Gyges in Herodotus." *The Classical Weekly* 48.4: 48- 50 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4343641>).

Danzig, Gabriel. 2008. "Rhetoric and the Ring: Herodotus and Plato on the Story of Gyges as a Politically Expendient Tale." *Greece & Rome* 55.2: 169–192. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20204208>).

Herington, John. 1991. "The Poem of Herodotus." *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 1.3: 5–16. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20163485>).

Shapiro, Susan O. 1996. "Herodotus and Solon." *Classical Antiquity* 15.2: 348–364 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25011045>).

Ostwald, Martin. 1991. "Herodotus and Athens." *Illinois Classical Studies*, 16.1-2: 137–148 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23064349>).

Hartog, François. 2000. "The Invention of History: The Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus." *History and Theory*, 39.3: 384–395 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2678018>).

Bartky, Elliot. 2009. Review of *Herodotus and the Philosophy of Empire* by Ann Ward in *The Review of Politics* 71.4: 668–672 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25655871>).

Grant, John R. 1983. "Some Thoughts on Herodotus." *Phoenix*, 37.4: 283–298 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1088150>).

Further suggestions: <http://people.duke.edu/~wj25/Herodotus/Bibliography.html>