
D’s lively Introduction begins with the observation that ‘History for the ancient Greeks began with the *Iliad*, and offers a succinct and helpful sketch of some of the key ways in which the poem ‘set the agenda for later Greek and Roman historians’ (11). The discussion is nicely focused around the opening nine lines of the *Iliad*, which D quotes in full. Such generous use of quotation of the primary texts (in D’s simple and effective style of translation) as the centrepiece of his discussion—despite the obvious constraints of space in a work of this scope—is characteristic of D’s book as a whole, and enables his intended readers (school students, early undergraduates, and their teachers, as noted on the back cover) to gain a good sense of the style of the author concerned. D observes that for Herodotus, as for later Greek and Roman historians,

> Homer remained the ultimate model. Most strikingly, history never lost its essential association with war and politics, with the grand stage of human affairs; it was consequently never much interested in social life or economics, or in the affairs of women.

At this point, however, D’s necessary brevity (chapter 1 consists of 2 pages) leads to a misleading notion, for Herodotus *was* concerned with these three latter elements as well as telling the story of the Persian Wars, and in this respect (as well as, eg, in his far-wandering persona like Odysseus’—which D does refer to in his following chapter, 18) perhaps took his cue rather from the wider world depicted in Homer’s *Odyssey*, which D does not here mention. Thucydides, not the Homeric works taken together, narrowed down history’s focus to war and politics, as D observes at 31. D closes his chapter with what is indeed a ‘salutary reminder’ to his readers to dispose of modern preconceptions of ‘what history should be’ so as to gaze with an open mind at how it actually developed in Greece and Rome.

D’s careful contextualising of each author in the wider tradition, illuminating continuities and developments, should allow his readers to do this. His chosen framework is chronological: a chapter each for
Herodotus and Thucydides, followed by 'Fourth-century historians', 'Hellenistic historians', 'Roman Republican historians', 'Livy', 'Imperial Rome' (a short introductory chapter, 90-2), two chapters on 'Historians of imperial Rome' (respectively subtitled 'Tacitus', and 'other voices'), and finally 'Greek historians of the Roman imperial period'. But D disregards the constraints of chronology where that makes sense heuristically, for example in including his main discussion of Diodorus Siculus in the chapter on fourth-century historians. He warns, however, against an approach which 'treats Diodoros merely as a mine for earlier writers' (50), and returns to him briefly under 'Hellenistic historians' (60).

Chap. 2, 'Herodotos' (13-24), conveys admirably in the limited available space a sense of the spirit and content of the Histories. D bases his survey on an astute and wide-ranging selection of some of the most entertaining, as well as methodologically significant, Herodotean logoi, and so gives readers a good sense of the marvellous breadth of Herodotus' work. D first (in a section entitled 'Herodotos and Homer') sets Herodotus in the context of Halicarnassus and fifth-century events, emphasising to readers the significance of the Persian Wars—'truly a turning point in world history' (13)—in enabling Athenian democracy to flourish and confirming Greek belief in their 'native superiority ... over non-Greeks' (13), etc. D contrasts Herodotus' surprising, and Homeric, 'understanding of and sympathy for the non-Greek cultures which he describes' (15), and goes on to explore further Herodotus' debt to Homer, focusing his discussion around 1.1. D discusses other influences on Herodotus too, under the headings 'Herodotos and the new rationalism'—underlining his critical spirit towards the truth, emphasis on research, concentration on the recent past, desire to commemorate, etc.—and 'Herodotos the tragedian: *hybris* and *nemesis* sketching the outlines of the world-view Herodotus shared with Sophocles and Aeschylus.

A fourth section, 'The mirror of Herodotos', takes its title as well as the main thrust of its argument from Hartog's book (which along with Gould's is recommended under 'Suggestions for further reading,' 126-
30), reading the *Histories* in terms of its recurring ‘contrast between Greek love of freedom and Persian autocracy’ (20):

The Persians, once they have achieved their conquests, are luxury-loving and all, even the greatest of them, are slaves to a single master. The Greeks by contrast are, in Herodotos’ ideal projection, frugal, the hard products of a hard, unforgiving land; they serve no master but law itself.

But this ‘ideal projection’ is largely *Demaratus*’ (whose law-abiding, freedom-loving credentials are far from above board), not necessarily Herodotus’, and much recent scholarly work has considered the many ways in which the *Histories* actually works to deconstruct simple notions of Greek/(Persian) ‘Other’ polarity. The Constitution Debate, for example—which D sees Herodotus as using ‘to characterise both the Persians, as wedded to monarchy, and, by implication, the Greeks, as enlightened and free’—might equally (and perhaps, in this reader’s view, more interestingly) be read as a reminder to his Greek audience (with his strange assertion that ‘these words really were said!’) not to assume that democracy was unthinkable in Persia. Again, D notes the pattern of *hybris* and *nemesis* which marks Herodotus’ presentation of Persian defeat (22), but might have mentioned the signals in the *Histories* that Athens’ turn is coming next: many would argue that Xerxes’ humiliation is not ‘seen as the last [my italics] in a long series in which the cycle of *hybris* and *nemesis* is played out’ (24; D saves mentioning the possibility of a ‘warning’ for contemporary Athens until the questions relating to this chapter in his useful ‘Suggestions for further study’, 123-5).

Again, the limited discussion of the *Histories*’ ethnographic sections (focusing on Egypt, the most topsy-turvy example of all), and concluding observation that these serve the ‘profound end’ (20) of holding up a mirror to Greek culture, seems to this reader to leave an unfair impression. After all, Herodotus did indeed (as D elsewhere acknowledges: cf. above) have an understanding of and interest in these non-Greek cultures. It is a real challenge in a work of this scope, however, to determine how deeply to probe, and on the whole, both here and in the rest of the book, D’s selection is apt. The chapter concludes
by suggesting that to sense discomfort at the juxtaposition in the *Histories* of rational alongside religious and moral

would be to import our own notions of what history should be. Indeed, modern historians are beginning to realise that constructing a narrative, selecting and prioritising, always involves some kind of interpretation. Consciously or not, all historians impose some sort of story or meaning on to the mass of data which they have at their disposal (24).

Such parallels with interesting modern developments and the frequent connections D makes with the present lends his whole narrative a liveliness and sense of relevance that its intended readers will appreciate.

This close sketch of D’s discussion of Herodotus should, I hope, give a feel for the character and strengths of D’s book (as well as the occasional weaknesses arising from its brevity); I shall review in summary form the remainder. We continue to find good historical contextualising of the authors under discussion, and significant space devoted to discussion of the nature of predecessors’ influence. D is generous in his cross-referencing (possibly even too generous, considering the constraints of space). The chronological framework is regularly punctuated with thematic discussions drawing broad and illuminating comparisons between the historians of different periods: for example, on speech writing (several, esp. 20, 101), the inflation of enemy numbers (82), the usefulness of history (esp. 86), etc. D regularly includes informative sidelights, eg on ‘Cicero and the theory of history’ (71-4). His writing style is lucid and enjoyable throughout, even in discussing the fragmentary historians. D includes several helpful maps and a brief chronological table of historians and major events (120). There is the occasional typographical error (eg ‘if were they ruled’ [21] should be ‘if they were ruled’; ‘from each other’s’ [27] should be ‘from each other’ or simply ‘each other’s’; ‘Thucydides’ [30]) should have no apostrophe; ‘Sallustinus’ [66] should read ‘Sallustius’) and inconsistency (eg in the translation of Thucydides 1.1.1: ‘the war which *the Peloponnesians and Athens* waged against each other’ [26]; 28 has the [preferable] ‘Athenians and
Peloponnesians’). D’s book should prove a valuable additional introductory work on the Greek and Roman historians, to be used alongside the other staples (ie, particularly those of the Routledge and *Greece and Rome* series, which D lists along with other ‘Introductions’ at 128).

Emily Baragwanath
Christ Church, Oxford