
In recent years a plethora of remarkable publications have marked what could be termed a renaissance in Herodotean studies. Virtually every aspect and detail of Herodotus' history has been researched, analyzed and scrutinized. Earlier scholarship on Herodotus had tended to focus on methodological issues and what seemed then the all important question of accuracy and source citation. Herodotus was understood and interpreted primarily as a historian and treated as such. The waves of praise or criticism of his trustworthiness as a historian flowed back and forth and produced some memorable works of scholarship such as Detlev Fehling's remarkable work on Herodotus' source citation, Herodotus and his 'Sources': Citation, Invention, and Narrative Art, trans. J.G. Howie (Leeds, 1989), and the virulent reaction to and critique of his line of approach adopted by W.K. Pritchett, The Liar School of Herodotus (Amsterdam, 1993).

Only recently though has Herodotus received the appreciation which is his due, not necessarily just for his qualities as a historian, but for his consummate ability as a storyteller. Herodotus, the literary artist and narrator has finally arrived in the field of serious scholarship. Arguably this focus on the narrative rather than the historical dimension of the Histories was begun by the great François Hartog in his memorable work, The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History, J. Lloyd, trans. (Berkeley; London, 1988). Recently Herodotus' ethnography and his attitude towards religious practices have also received much attention. However, the focus of Emily Baragwanath's new work on Herodotus is primarily on his narrative genius. Rather than the suffocating question of accuracy, whether the historian was correct to attribute certain motives to certain personalities or certain causes
to such and such events, the paramount concern of Baragwanath is the complexity of meaning presented by the narrative itself.

In this narratological approach to text interpretation Baragwanath follows in the footsteps of well-known narratologists such as Irene de Jong and Wolfgang Iser.

She is particularly influenced by Iser’s theory that differentiates the implied narrator from the actual author (*Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology*, Baltimore; London, 1989, 32). This is amply demonstrated in her interpretation of the Alcmaeonid excursus (27-34). Her focus on Plutarch towards the beginning of her book is perhaps due primarily to the influence of C.B.R. Pelling. However, instead of focussing on Plutarch’s venom and denunciation of Herodotus, Baragwanath directs our attention to what she sees as his somewhat misguided appreciation of Herodotus’ subtlety as a narrative artist (8).

After a detailed introduction the book progresses on to a substantial analysis of the influence of Homeric narrative techniques on Herodotus. In particular, the interest of the Homeric poet(s) of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in human psychology and their artistic usage of their omniscient, authorial perspective both to illuminate motives (human and divine) and at times also to conceal them for the poetic purpose of eliciting greater audience participation and suspense, receive much attention (35-54). The poet’s appreciation of changing perspectives accentuated through narrative manipulation such as the technique of presenting successive, parallel scenes, is also noted (43).

Such narrative sophistication, as Baragwanath correctly asserts, clearly functioned as a model for Herodotus in forming his own narrative, the notable difference being of course that Herodotus, expanding on Homer, utilized the same or similar narrative techniques and strategies for epistemological and historical ends. In the exploration of Herodotus’ narrative techniques
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Baragwanath’s work is also to some extent preceded by Donald Lateiner’s *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto; London, 1989), which notes Herodotus’ inclination for offering alternative versions of historical events and motives. However, this does not diminish the usefulness of Baragwanath’s work as she develops her analysis not from a historiographical perspective, as in the case of Lateiner, but from a narratological perspective. Her work, therefore, complements and expands on Lateiner’s analysis of motivations in Herodotus.

Throughout the book Baragwanath displays an impressive understanding of Herodotus’ narrative and highlights his skill both as a literary artist and a truth-teller. She recognizes the great difficulty faced by the historian in his quest for determining the motivation (human and divine) behind historical events. However, she also convincingly demonstrates how Herodotus, far from being overwhelmed by this difficulty, as some critics have claimed, masterfully manipulates that very complexity both as a means of developing his own, distinctive narrative tool and as a means of communicating with his audience by eliciting their active participation in his great inquiry.

Through her detailed analyses of key *logoi* she outlines the various types of motivation exhibited by Herodotus in the *Histories*. There is the conflicting motivation arising from Herodotus’ own ‘double persona’: the conscientious historian on the one hand and the sophistic inquirer on the other, e.g. in his narrative of the story of Hellenic heroism at Thermopylae (55-81). Some motivations are inherently difficult to fathom and are simply problematic, e.g. the motives behind the Spartan invasion of Samos (88-96). Some are idealistic, others are blatantly unjust (132-159) and through these plethora of human motivations Baragwanath also manages to discuss some of the key issues of current Herodotean scholarship such as the rhetoric of freedom, Greek unity, and the historian’s representation of tyranny (chapter 6 onwards).
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One is left in no doubt that nothing is as straightforward as it seems initially in Herodotus' narrative. The complexity of narrative reveals an artful genius at work and this artistry is brought to life in Baragwanath's careful analysis. In short, through a well-crafted and in depth analysis of motivation and narrative in Herodotus, Baragwanath makes a unique contribution to the excellent quality of Herodotean scholarship that we have seen in recent years.

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