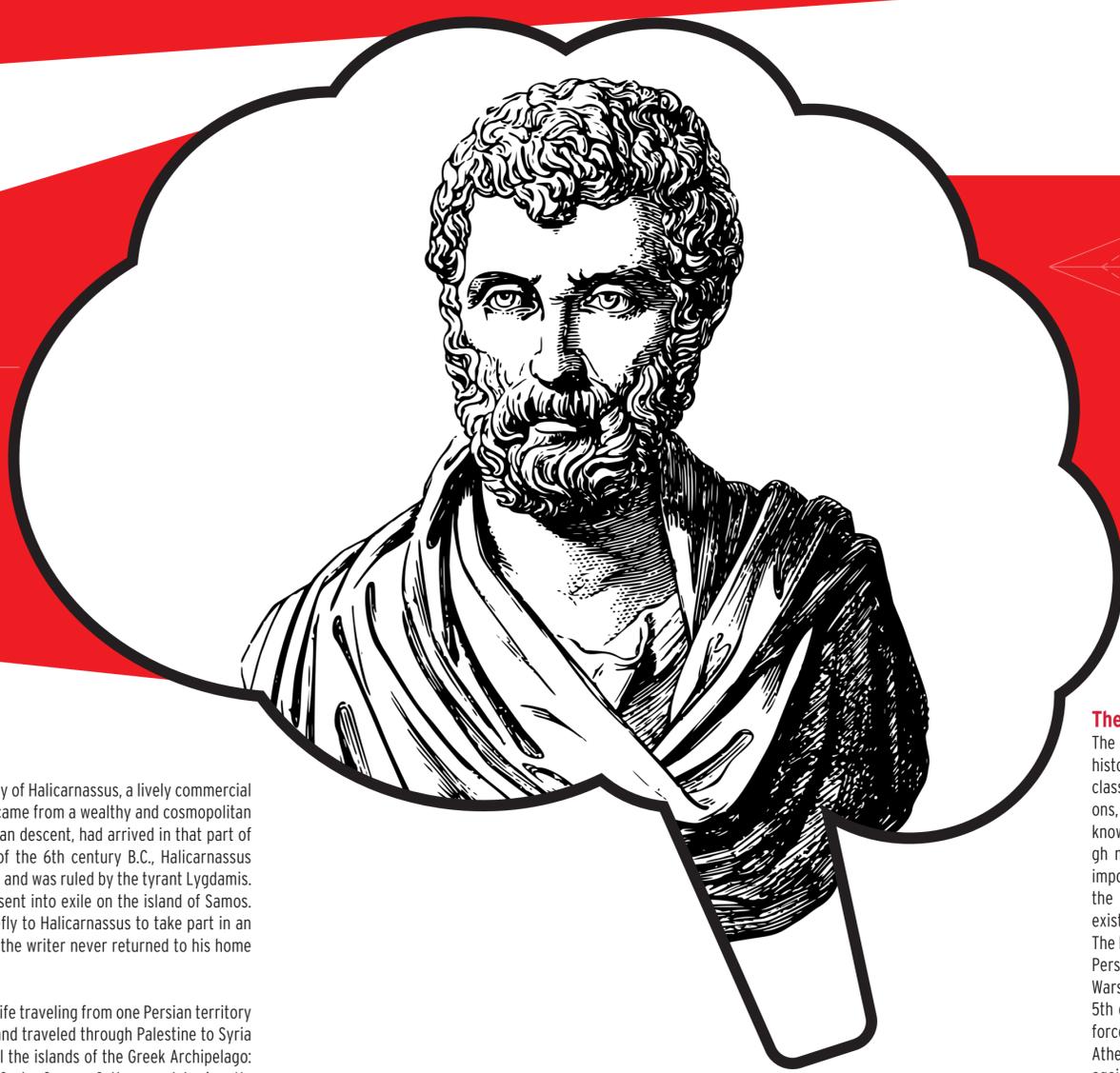


ANATOLIA "THE LAND WHERE SCIENCE WAS BORN AND FLOURISHED"



LIFE

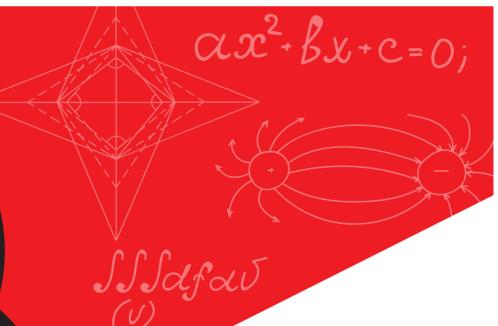
Herodotus was born in about 485 B.C. in the Greek city of Halicarnassus, a lively commercial center on the southwestern coast of Asia Minor. He came from a wealthy and cosmopolitan Greek-Carian merchant family. (The Carians, of Minoan descent, had arrived in that part of Asia Minor before the Greeks had.) In the middle of the 6th century B.C., Halicarnassus became a satrapy, or province, of the Persian Empire and was ruled by the tyrant Lygdamis. Herodotus' family opposed Lygdamis' rule and was sent into exile on the island of Samos. When he was a young man, Herodotus returned briefly to Halicarnassus to take part in an abortive anti-Persian rebellion. After that, however, the writer never returned to his home city again.

Instead of settling in one place, Herodotus spent his life traveling from one Persian territory to another. He crossed the Mediterranean to Egypt and traveled through Palestine to Syria and Babylon. He headed to Macedonia and visited all the islands of the Greek Archipelago: Rhodes, Cyprus, Delos, Paros, Thasos, Samothrace, Crete, Samos, Cythera and Aegina. He sailed through the Hellespont to the Black Sea and kept going until he hit the Danube River. While he traveled, Herodotus collected what he called "autopsies," or "personal inquiries": He listened to myths and legends, recorded oral histories and made notes of the places and things that he saw.

When Herodotus was not traveling, he returned to Athens; there, he became something of a celebrity. He gave readings in public places and collected fees from officials for his appearances. In 445 B.C., the people of Athens voted to give him a prize of 10 talents—almost \$200,000 in today's money—to honor him for his contributions to the city's intellectual life.

Herodotus spent his entire life working on just one project: an account of the origins and execution of the Greco-Persian Wars (499-479 B.C.) that he called The Histories. (It is from Herodotus' work that we get the modern meaning of the word "history.") In part, The Histories was a straightforward account of the wars. "Here is the account," the work begins, "of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus in order that the deeds of men not be erased by time, and that the great and miraculous works—both of the Greeks and the barbarians—not go unrecorded." It was also an attempt to explain the conflict—"to show what caused them to fight one another," Herodotus said—by explaining the Persians' imperial worldview. The Histories also incorporated observations and stories, both factual and fictional, from Herodotus' travels.

In 443 BC or shortly afterwards, he migrated to Thurium as part of an Athenian-sponsored colony. Aristotle refers to a version of The Histories written by "Herodotus of Thurium", and indeed some passages in the Histories have been interpreted as proof that he wrote about southern Italy from personal experience there. Intimate knowledge of some events in the first years of the Peloponnesian War indicate that he might have returned to Athens, in which case it is possible that he died there during an outbreak of the plague. Possibly he died in Macedonia instead, after obtaining the patronage of the court there; or else he died back in Thurium. There is nothing in the Histories that can be dated to later than 430 BC with any certainty, and it is generally assumed that he died not long afterwards, possibly before his sixtieth year.



The Histories of Herodotus:

The Histories of Herodotus is now considered the founding work of history in Western literature. Written in 440 BC in the Ionic dialect of classical Greek, The Histories serves as a record of the ancient traditions, politics, geography, and clashes of various cultures that were known in Western Asia, Northern Africa and Greece at that time. Though not a fully impartial record, it remains one of the West's most important sources regarding these affairs. Moreover, it established the genre and study of history in the Western world (despite the existence of historical records and chronicles beforehand). The Histories also stands as one of the first accounts of the rise of the Persian Empire, as well as the events and causes of the Greco-Persian Wars between the Achaemenid Empire and the Greek city-states in the 5th century BC. Herodotus portrays the conflict as one between the forces of slavery (the Persians) on the one hand, and freedom (the Athenians and the confederacy of Greek city-states which united against the invaders) on the other. The Histories was at some point divided into the nine books that appear in modern editions, conventionally named after the nine Muses.

HEREDOTUS

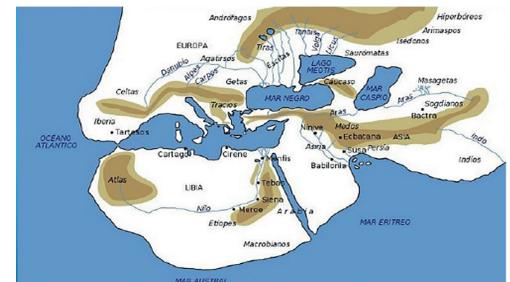
Born & Died: C. 484 – C. 425 BC

Main Interest: History

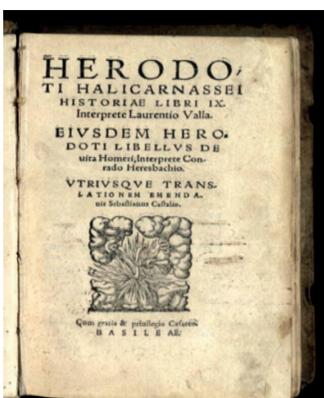
Notable Ideas: The Histories (He is Father of History)



Fragment from the Histories VIII on Papyrus Oxrhynchus 2099, early 2nd century AD



Reconstruction of the Oikoumene (inhabited world), ancient map based on Herodotus, c. 450 BC



He is often referred to as "The Father of History"

His accounts of India are among the oldest records of Indian civilization by an outsider.

The Histories serves as a record of the ancient traditions, politics, geography, and clashes of various cultures that were known in Western Asia, Northern Africa and Greece at that time

The Histories also stands as one of the first accounts of the rise of the Persian Empire...

Herodotus provides much information about the nature of the world and the status of science during his lifetime, often engaging in private speculation

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