



Reading Herodotus: A Guided Tour through the Wild Boars, Dancing Suitors, and Crazy Tyrants of The History

Debra Hamel

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Debra Hamel's book is a lively introduction to *The History of the Persian Wars*, Herodotus's account of Persia's expansion under four kings—Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes—and its eventual collision with the city-states of Greece.

The History can be a long slog for modern readers, but it is full of salacious tales about sex, violent death, divine prophecies, and cannibals. Following the structure of the original work, Hamel leads the reader through a colorful tour of the central stories that compose *The History*. She highlights the more interesting and important parts of the story while providing readers who are new to Herodotus with the background information necessary to appreciate the author's wide-ranging subject matter. At once academic and cheeky, the experience of this book is like reading Herodotus while simultaneously consulting a history of Greece and a scholarly commentary on the text.

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