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During the fifth century BC, a small and quarrelsome band of Greek city-states united to repel a mighty Persian army. While the story of this heroic drama forms the main theme of Herodotus' narrative, the author's curiosity fleshes out the text with digressions, folk tales and stories.

The Histories of Herodotus, completed in the second half of the 5th century BC, is generally regarded as the first work of history and the first great masterpiece of non-fiction writing. Few history books since can compare for sheer drama with Herodotus's narrative of the Persian invasions of Greece. His accounts of the great battles of Marathon and Thermopylae, of Salamis and Plataea, retain to this day a matchless epic quality. More than this, though, The Histories is also the source of much of our knowledge of the ancient world. Herodotus was an endlessly curious man, and gathered information about the world around him from as many people and places as he could investigate. History was only the beginning of his interests. Whether it was the pyramids of Egypt, the cannabis habit of the Scythians, the flora and fauna of Arabia or the table dancing of the Athenian aristocracy, he was fascinated by them all. To this day, phrases derived from The Histories - from 'rich as Croesus' to 'tall poppy syndrome' - are part of the mental furniture even of those who haven't read him. Sometimes he is sceptical, and sometimes credulous, but his love of recounting what he has learned never ceases. Above all, as Tom Holland says in his introduction, "Herodotus is the most entertaining of historians. Indeed he is as entertaining as anyone who has ever written - historian or not." This absorbing new translation, by one of Britain's most admired young historians, allows all the drama and mysteriousness of this great book to be fully appreciated by modern readers. The sources of our information about the world are now more in flux than they have been for generations: there could be few better moments to read and reflect upon the book which first sought to organise knowledge. TOM HOLLAND is the author of Rubicon: The Triumph and Tragedy of the Roman Republic, which won the Hessel-Tiltman Prize for History and was shortlisted for the Samuel Johnson Prize. Persian Fire, his history of the Graeco-Persian wars, won the Anglo-Hellenic League's Runciman Award in 2006. His most recent book, In the Shadow of the Sword, describes the collapse of Roman and Persian power in the Near East, and the emergence of Islam. He has adapted Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides and Virgil for the BBC, and is the presenter of BBC Radio 4's Making History. In 2007, he was the winner of the Classical Association Prize awarded to 'the individual who has done most to promote the study of the language, literature and civilisation of Ancient Greece and Rome'. He served two years as the Chair of the Society of Authors 2009-11, and is currently on the committee of the Classical Association. PAUL CARTLEDGE is the inaugural A. G. Leventis Professor

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of Greek Culture at the University of Cambridge and President of the Fellowship, Clare College. His numerous books include *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300-362 BC*; *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others*; *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Ancient Greece* (winner of the John D. Criticos Prize); *Thermopylae: The Battle That Changed the World*; *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice*; and *Ancient Greece. A Very Short Introduction*. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, holds the Gold Cross of the Order of Honour (conferred by the President of the Hellenic Republic) and is an Honorary Citizen of Sparta, Greece.

The story of the Greek city-states uniting to repel a superior Persian army is the main theme in this classical narrative, but Herodotus fleshes out his text with digressions, describing the wonders of Egypt and recounting stories and folk tales.

The fascinating story of a lost city and an unprecedented American civilization While Mayan and Aztec civilizations are widely known and documented, relatively few people are familiar with the largest prehistoric Native American city north of Mexico—a site that expert Timothy Pauketat brings vividly to life in this groundbreaking book. Almost a thousand years ago, a city flourished along the Mississippi River near what is now St. Louis. Built around a sprawling central plaza and known as Cahokia, the site has drawn the attention of generations of archaeologists, whose work produced evidence of complex celestial timepieces, feasts big enough to feed thousands, and disturbing signs of human sacrifice. Drawing on these fascinating finds, Cahokia presents a lively and astonishing narrative of prehistoric America.

More than fifteen centuries after its fall, the Roman Empire remains one of the most formative influences on the history of Europe. Its physical remains dot the landscape from Scotland to Syria. Its cities are still the great metropolises of the continent. Its law and institutions have shaped modern practice, and its ideal of a united Europe has haunted politicians ever since. Fully illustrated and featuring more than sixty full-colour maps, this atlas traces the rise and fall of the first great multinational state. It looks at its provinces and cities, its trade and economy, its armies and frontier defences; follows its foreign wars and internecine struggles; and charts its transformation into a Christian theocracy and its fall in 476.

What is history and how should it be written? This important new anthology, translated and edited by Professor John Marincola, contains all the seminal texts that relate to the writing of history in the ancient world. The study of history was invented in the classical world. Treading uncharted waters, writers such as Plutarch and Lucian grappled with big questions such as how history should be written, how it differs from poetry and oratory, and what its purpose really is. This book includes complete essays by Dionysius, Plutarch and Lucian, as well as shorter pieces by Pliny the Younger, Cicero and others, and will be an essential resource for anyone studying history and the ancient world.

Books VI-X of Livy's monumental work trace Rome's fortunes from its near collapse after defeat by the Gauls in 386 bc to its emergence, in a matter of decades, as the premier power in Italy, having conquered the city-state of Samnium in 293 bc. In this fascinating history, events are described not simply in terms of partisan politics, but through colourful portraits that bring the strengths, weaknesses and motives of leading figures such as the noble statesman Camillus and the corrupt Manlius vividly to life. While Rome's greatest chronicler intended his history to be a memorial to former glory, he also had more didactic aims - hoping that readers of his account could learn from the past ills and virtues of the city.

After the execution of Socrates in 399 BC, a number of his followers wrote dialogues featuring him as

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the protagonist and, in so doing, transformed the great philosopher into a legendary figure. Xenophon's portrait is the only one other than Plato's to survive, and while it offers a very personal interpretation of Socratic thought, it also reveals much about the man and his philosophical views. In 'Socrates' Defence' Xenophon defends his mentor against charges of arrogance made at his trial, while the 'Memoirs of Socrates' also starts with an impassioned plea for the rehabilitation of a wronged reputation. Along with 'The Estate-Manager', a practical economic treatise, and 'The Dinner-Party', a sparkling exploration of love, Xenophon's dialogues offer fascinating insights into the Socratic world and into the intellectual atmosphere and daily life of ancient Greece.

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