Historians often refer to past events which took place prior to their narrative’s proper past – that is, they refer to a ‘plupast’. This past embedded in the past can be evoked by characters as well as by the historian in his own voice. It can bring into play other texts but can also draw on lieux de mémoire or on material objects. This volume explores the manifold forms of the plupast in Greek and Roman historians from Herodotus to Appian. The authors demonstrate that the plupast is a powerful tool for the creation of historical meaning. Moreover, the acts of memory embedded in the historical narrative parallel to some degree the historian’s activity of recording the past. The plupast thereby allows Greek and Roman historians to reflect on how (not) to write history and gains metahistorical significance. In shedding new light on the temporal complexity and the subtle forms of self-conscious reflection in the works of ancient historians, the book significantly enhances our understanding of their narrative art.

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TIME AND NARRATIVE IN ANCIENT HISTORIOGRAPHY

The ‘Plupast’ from Herodotus to Appian

EDITED BY

JONAS GRETHLEIN AND CHRISTOPHER B. KREBS
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Preface

Why, we wondered in 2005, have references to the past embedded in historical narratives not received the same systematic attention as references to the stage and poetry in plays (metatheatre) and poems (metapoetics)? At a conference in Freiburg in the summer of 2006, ten participants presented their case studies of ‘The Historian’s Plupast. Embedded Images of the Past in Greek and Roman Historians’. The topic proved fruitful, and we decided to follow up with a collected volume. In the course of work, the original cast changed: only half of the contributors to this volume were speakers at Freiburg. But the result is, we hope, a coherent multifaceted reflection on an interesting phenomenon: the historian’s plupast.

Many are those who have in one way or another made this volume possible. First and foremost, we would like to thank the contributors, who graciously responded to our suggestions, read and commented on each other’s contributions and patiently bore with delays. Michael Sharp, with his usual efficiency, found readers whose comments were immensely helpful. And Sabine Hug, along with Marie-Charlotte von Lehsten, Dominic Meckel and Leonhard Graf von Klinckowstroem at Heidelberg University, and Andrew C. Johnston at Harvard University, checked references, formatted the manuscript and cleaned up the bibliography.
Note on abbreviations


Abbreviations of journal titles correspond to those used in *L'Année philologique*. 