

Introduction *The Authoritative Historian*

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Historiography differs . . . in that it also contains commentary on the narrative by the historian himself: here the narrator employs an ‘artificial authority’ by which he interprets the events in his work for the reader, and explicitly directs the reader to think in a certain manner.

—John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography*

I

The ancient historian’s privileged discursive position within the text depends upon the creation of a circuit of consent with the audience, one that establishes the narrator’s power and authority in detailing the unfolding of past events, their causes, and the agents animating them. The contract between the narrator and audience is brought about by the careful curation of the historian’s agency in and out of the process of textual production. In antiquity, the stakes for this curation were even higher than in modernity because of the widespread association of literary production with individual character. The struggle for authority was uniquely pressing for Greek and Roman historians, as their texts could not call upon the inspiration of the Muse as the poets could. As a result, the self-positioning of the historian was highly self-aware and charged with meaning, constructed in relation to the authority of the poets, but with a degree of distancing from these figures and their Muse in the development of a new mode of narrative.

The modern study of the creation of authority within the genre of historiography has its roots in two strands of scholarship arising in the latter half of the twentieth century: first, in the critical methodologies pioneered on the effects that texts create for their readers and the importance of interaction of the text and audience in the process of interpretation; second, in the rise of the rhetorical school of historiography,

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according to which ancient history was, like poetry and oratory, a species of rhetoric.

The significance of the relation between the text and its readership was popularized beginning in the 1970s by the German literary scholar Wolfgang Iser, the father of reader response theory. According to Iser, the text/narrator alone cannot determine interpretation; this interpretation rests in the liminal space between the text/narrator and its reader. The way in which texts/narrators determine their own interpretative horizons was pushed further in 1984 by the narrative theorist Ross Chambers in *Story and Situation: Narrative Seduction and the Power of Fiction*. This work examines the intersection of the theory of narrative and of textual interpretation. In it, the storyteller and audience are connected in an underlying negotiation of power through the ‘art’ of seduction. The reliance on narrative manipulation through seduction is, for Chambers, a distinctive component of fiction itself, whose authority arises from the production of art rather than the dissemination of information.¹ The focus on the negotiation of power between text/narrator and the reader in fiction provided a critical language to approach works of non-fiction, including those centred on the transmission of ‘information’, such as historiography.

A further intellectual movement contributing to the study of ancient historians’ claims to authority rests in the alliance of rhetoric with historiography. From T. P. Wiseman’s *Clio’s Cosmetics* in 1979 to A. J. Woodman’s *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* in 1988, ancient historiography witnessed a seismic shift away from the hunt for ‘what actually happened’ and toward its representation in narrative.² The literary techniques familiar from oratory and poetry quickened the study of historiography. Even with the subsequent recognition that ancient historians aimed at truth in a way that poets and orators did not have to, it has continued to be productive to attend to the narrative strategies they deployed to reproduce it.³ It is the confluence of these two academic movements that gave rise to the study of the rhetorical strategies that Greek and Roman historians use to arouse readerly consent.

The title of this volume harks back to what is the gold standard of such research, John Marincola’s 1997 *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography*. That monograph reinforced the emerging consensus on the forms of persuasion that historians deployed in the literary

¹ Chambers (1984), 207.

² Brunt (1993), for the preceding tradition that these two scholars were building on.

³ For the discussion of impartiality and truth, Marincola (1997), 158–74.

composition of the past, even as it innovated by expanding literary criticism's concern for the distribution of the authority between the fictional text/narrator and audience to historical narrative. With the recognition that the ontological status of history as the past was not sufficient to 'seduce' (to use Chambers' language) the reader, this work looked to the generic conventions by which Greek and Roman historians cultivated consent: it canvassed the 'call to Clio', the use of contemporary and non-contemporary evidence, self-presentation as a historical agent, and self-positioning in the tradition as a continuator or innovator. Moreover, Greek and Roman historical writing was viewed as part of a single tradition.

In this respect, Marincola moved well beyond the conclusions of his advisor, Charles William Fornara, who had influentially argued for the importance of distinguishing the labour-intensive research undertaken by the Greek historians from their Roman counterparts, who were generally statesmen. The latter relied upon their own participation in politics and on the more circumscribed project of recording the history of Rome. Fornara held that it was the Roman historian for whom a specifically political and institutional *auctoritas* was essential. By contrast, he states of Herodotus, and Greek history by extension, 'the work was all and the writer little'.⁴

The success of *Authority and Tradition* can in part be measured by its continuing prominence in discussions on ancient historiography.⁵ More recently, its impact has been felt by those investigating the construction of authority in non-historiographical genres, including the Hippocratic corpus and poetic verse.⁶ Outside of classics, it has galvanized research in biblical and Byzantine studies.⁷ The current volume also takes its cue from *Authority and Tradition* by surveying the effects of authority in the long arc of the Greek and Roman historiographical tradition, with historians ranging from the fifth century BC to the third century AD. Narrative histories form the central core of the contributions, but the contributors also examine related genres, such as mythography, local history, biography

⁴ Fornara (1983), 54; for the discussion of the two traditions, 47–61.

⁵ Cartledge and Greenwood (2002); Akujärvi (2005); Rood (2006b); Bradley (2010); Grethlein (2012); Roche (2016).

⁶ On the Hippocratic corpus, Massar (2010). For its stimulation of a discussion of self-authorization in verse, J. Barrett (2002); Kahane (2005); Calame (2005); Mitsis and Tsagalis (2010); Morrison (2011); Bakker (2017).

⁷ For authority in the New Testament, Moles (2011); Strelan (2013). In Byzantine studies, Armstrong (2013); Lilie (2014). For a broader survey of authority from antiquity to the Renaissance, Ceulemans and de Leemans (2015).

and autobiography, and the *commentarius*.⁸ Individual chapters target the narrator's authority as *Authority and Tradition* did, but also the effects of the text as a whole in seducing the reader. At the same time, it embraces a broad set of critical approaches, including narratology, reader response theory, reception studies, and cognitive science. Further, it takes as essential to this project the productive tension maintained by ancient historians in their adherence to convention and their simultaneous innovation within it.

In the wake of post-structuralism's internment of the author, however, it may appear somewhat retrograde to return now to the figure of the historian as the producer of the text and a privileged site of authority. Yet in recent decades feminist narratology has productively re-examined the relation of the narrator to authority in the modern novel as a response to the gender-neutral analysis of traditional narratology. First, this research has complicated the strict separation of the author from the narrator, which has been taken to be foundational, on the grounds that the narrator's authorial voice is a performative commentary upon the kinds of authority espoused by the author.⁹ The return to the narrating author in feminist narratology has stressed the fact that the narrator effects the 'structural and functional situation of authorship' for the audience, which has important implications for the negotiation of authority in narrative.¹⁰ Second, it has emphasized the way in which discursive authority is shaped by a narrative's power relations in rhetorical and sociocultural terms. For feminist narratologists, this has presented an invitation to examine how marginalized voices respond to and challenge a patriarchal model of narrative authority. Such research has found that marginalized authors adopt, adapt, and subvert the dominant rhetoric of authority. As Susan Lanser has expressed it, this requires 'standing on the very ground one is attempting to deconstruct'.¹¹

This critical methodology has been successfully applied to fiction, but the return to narrative authority may offer even greater advantages to historiography, where the narrator and implied author collapse into one another and where narrators are bidding for canonical status.¹² As has long been noted, the ancient historian's narratorial self-consciousness presents a crucial difference from the more anonymous narratorial voice of epic. In a

⁸ For history's relationship to related genres, including geography and biography, Clarke (1999); Pigoń (2008); Hägg (2012).

⁹ Lanser (1992); Nünning (2012); Birke (2015). ¹⁰ Lanser (1992), 16. ¹¹ Lanser (1992), 7.

¹² For the return of the author, Lamarque (1990); Birriotti and Miller (1993); Woodmansee and Jaszi (1994); Simion (1996).

sense, this urges a return to Fornara and his recognition of the importance of the extratextual, lived experience of the historian as an essential component to laying claim to authority. Beyond the *auctoritas* of the Roman statesman-historian, however, Greek historians were also appealing to their own autobiographical bona fides. Certainly, it is present in Polybius' near-unrivalled access to the levers of Roman political power, but doesn't Thucydides too give his reader a window in his post-exile activities for his own protreptic purpose (5.26)?

Positioning historiography within feminist narratology's return to the author will simultaneously enrich the modern discourse of self-authorization; as we shall see, even within the dominant paradigm of elite male authorship, authority is part of a continual and contested negotiation, often consisting of construction and deconstruction in turn.¹³ Further, narratorial self-fashioning is internal to historical works and also part of a diachronic dialogue with predecessors and successors. In a different way, this dialogue extends into our present, as historical authority is dependent on and formulated in response to readerly expectations. For this reason, at stake in this volume is not an essentialist project dedicated to restoring authorial intention to historiography, but a set of readerly responses on the conditions of authorial self-fashioning and the power dynamics operating within historical texts.

II

The chapters that follow take as their point of departure *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* and the contexts in which ancient historians shored up authority and operated within and beyond their generic margins. The historical works range in time and space, but the chapters have been assembled based on the themes that they share. In Part I, 'Myth, Fiction, and the Historian's Authority', the volume begins by challenging the position that the ancient historian's establishment of authority places him in opposition to fiction, the folktale, and myth.

In Chapter 1, 'Seven Types of Fiction in the Greek Historians', Michael A. Flower examines the apparent paradox in historiography's rhetoric of truth and accuracy in its establishment of authority and its simultaneous use of 'fictional' devices familiar from the modern novel to narrate past events. These include the invention of speeches, exaggeration of

¹³ Our own approach avoids the critique of the gender binary presumed by this movement, for which Page (2006).

methodological rigour, imaginative elaboration of gaps in the record, omissions, manipulation of chronology, attribution of motivation on the basis of likelihood, and the creation of patterns in events to explain historical change. The chapter investigates these aesthetic choices and the kinds of truth they produce and the authority they espouse.

If fiction cannot be disentangled from ancient historiography, neither can the folktale. Nino Luraghi analyzes the two in Chapter 2, 'Folktale and Local Tradition in Charon of Lampsacus'. The fifth-century historian's integration of the folktale presents a neglected avenue for gaining insight into the transformation of oral tradition into historical narrative. Luraghi offers evidence for rationalized folktales in the fragments of Charon's local history and uses this in support of the significance of oral storytelling culture in the writing of early Greek history. His conclusion turns to Herodotus and the attractions and drawbacks of his traditional 'splendid isolation'.

Tim Rood brings Herodotus to centre stage in Chapter 3, 'Mythical and Historical Time in Herodotus: Scaliger, Jacoby, and the Chronographic Tradition', which scrutinizes the opposition of myth and history in the *Histories*. Rood's argument complicates the temporal demarcations of 'myth' and 'history' by revealing the relative novelty of the *spatium mythicum* and *historicum*. After tracing the terms and their concepts in the scholarship of Felix Jacoby, Joseph Justus Scaliger, and ultimately Varro's tripartite division of time, Rood shows that Varro and ancient historians' use of the 'mythical' as a temporality is more nuanced than has been previously recognized. Significantly, Herodotus' own language of myth relies on its traditional associations with authoritative speech in order to reject it, but not on the grounds of its position in chronology.

How the opposition of myth and history develops in the Roman tradition of historiography is the subject of Chapter 4, A. J. Woodman's 'Myth and History in Livy's Preface'. Woodman approaches the apparent separation of *poeticae fabulae* (poetic fables prior to the founding of Rome) from *rerum gestarum monumenta* (hard historical facts after its founding). A close reading of Livy's preface, however, complicates this division. 'Before the founding' blurs into the more nebulous 'process of the founding' and both elicit narratorial neutrality, not rejection. Livy draws attention to the indulgence required of foundation narratives involving mortal-divine couplings, in an allusion to Romulus' divine paternity. Woodman determines that this reference undermines the common reading according to which Roman history proper begins only with the founding of the city; instead of a chronological qualification, Livy's is a thematic one.

based on divine-human interaction. This chapter concludes the section's theme of re-examining the temporal borders of historiography even as it references divine-human interaction, in a return to the opening discussion of history's relation to fiction.

As historians engage with fiction, oral tradition, and 'myth' to bolster their own authoritative stance in their narrative histories, likewise, the historical narrator plays a key role in the construction of persuasive history. Part II, 'Dislocating Authority in Herodotus' *Histories*', focuses on the narratorial persona of the first fully extant historian, Herodotus. As Marincola noted in *Authority and Tradition*, in comparison with epic Herodotus innovates by crafting a highly intrusive first-person narrator. In light of the historian's collapsing of the author/narrator distinction (for which, see Pelling, Chapter 19 in this volume), these chapters illustrate how Herodotus' authority-effects extend beyond first-person commentary and gesture to his establishment of a highly interactive and intersubjective authority, one that engages the audience in the creation of meaning through the use of ambiguity, irony, polyphony, and causal puzzles such as coincidence. The historian's credibility arises, then, from the seduction of the reader as symmetrical collaborator.

Chapter 5, Scott Scullion's 'Herodotus as Tour Guide: The Autopsy Motif' opens this part with an exploration of Herodotean ambiguity and irony in the historian's use of autopsy statements. Scullion examines the 'autopsy motif' in cases of apparent eyewitness accounting that beggar belief. Classic examples include Herodotus' viewing of thin Persian skulls on the battlefield or of skeletons of flying snakes, which have long inspired impassioned defence or critique from scholars of the *Histories*. To explain these episodes, Scullion revisits the infamous suggestion made by Detlev Fehling that Herodotus was willing to invent episodes wholesale. However, he departs from Fehling in his contention that Herodotus' language signals virtual tour-guiding, as it relies on oral sources rather than invention. As he argues, the autopsy motif enhances the immediacy of Herodotus' text and bolsters its authority. In line with the earlier contributions of Flower and Luraghi, this challenges modern, anachronistic expectations of the critical methodologies used by ancient historians.

Ambiguity and irony structure more than first-person claims to autopsy, as Carolyn Dewald shows in Chapter 6, 'Interpretive Uncertainty in Herodotus' *Histories*'. Ambiguity presents itself to Herodotus' audience in his use of irony and narrative glosses, and by paradoxical statements made by the narrator and the historical actors. Equally important in this regard are the interpretive circuits and intra-textual references generated by

the unfolding narrative of the *Histories* itself. These circuits, Dewald maintains, at times disrupt apparently stable causal sequences. Dewald explains this interpretive indeterminacy by reflecting on the historian's considered understanding of time and human language. The instability inherent in change in time motivates Herodotus' introduction of ambiguity from the proem onward, where cities large and small enter his purview. Human language too has its limits in communicating reality and forms the second stimulus for Herodotus' embedding of ambiguity. The chorus of voices that populate the *Histories* works to resist any coherent, but ultimately illusory whole.

Chapter 7, Richard Rutherford's "It is no accident that . . .": Connectivity and Coincidence in Herodotus', advances the discussion of causation in the *Histories* by considering the historian's combination of apparently unconnected events to produce coincidences. Rutherford follows Herodotus' interest in connections between space, peoples, customs, and beliefs. Coincidences call for explanation (Herodotus draws upon both human and divine causes), but they can also elicit the historian's suspension of judgement. Such uncertainty creates inconsistency in Herodotus' approach, as at times coincidence is attributed to the divine, while on other occasions the narrator keeps ostentatiously aloof from such extra-terrestrial causal paradigms. Discussion of chance and necessity were, significantly, prominent in fifth-century Presocratic circles, and they continued to preoccupy later philosophers, including Aristotle. In his conclusion, Rutherford calls attention to the difficulty of placing Herodotus either within this intellectual tradition or within the alternative tradition of traditional belief in the divine.

Chapter 8, 'Through Barbarian Eyes: Non-Greeks on Greeks in Herodotus', by Deborah Boedeker, turns to the polyphonic style of the *Histories* and the way in which the historian embeds foreign peoples' cultural commentary on the Greeks against the authoritative backdrop of his own narrative. Of course, negative judgements on Greek customs can prove highly tendentious, and instead illustrate the self-interestedness of some foreign appraisers of Greece. Yet, as Boedeker shows, ethnographic observation on the Greeks may be entirely justified; it may also reflect domestic critique in the voice of the 'Other'. Further, it can operate as a distorted mirror, showcasing Greece's exoticism to itself. Finally, Greece is revealed to itself by insider-outsiders, such as the exiled Spartan ruler Demaratus, and Artemisia, ruler of Halicarnassus and Persian subject. The measure of all such cultural commentary is, Boedeker finds, the authority of the narrative of the *Histories* itself.

In the context of narrative authority, the polyphony of voices in the *Histories* serves as a valuable counterweight to the narrator's own first-person comments. Part III of this volume, 'Performing Collective and Personal Authority', delves into this negotiation of power through the manipulation of point-of-view in narrative by investigating choral, first-, and second-person speech.

Chapter 9, 'Singing and Dancing Pindar's Authority', by Lucia Athanassaki, visits the subject of poetic authority in Pindar's choral compositions. The plurality of the choral voice complicates the straightforward authority assured by the intimate relationship of the solo poet with the Muse. Athanassaki underscores the heightened prominence of the Graces in these compositions, in addition to the Muses, and argues for the authority of these songs as constituted by an audiovisual spectacle that embraces melody, movement, and lyrics. The shared authority in this model has important implications for early Greek historiography, which similarly relied upon a community of voices in the oral tradition.

The volumes shifts from the choral voice to that of the narratee in Chapter 10. K. Scarlett Kingsley's 'Authority, Experience, and the Vicarious Traveller in Herodotus' *Histories*' takes the reader as its subject and Herodotus' *Histories*' embedding of second-person virtual experience into the narrative as a strategy of producing interactive authority. Recent narratological and cognitive approaches to second-person narration have found that it generates uniquely vivid mental simulations of space and spatial relationships. This methodological background is then leveraged against the *Histories*, where the enfranchisement of the narratee leads to the virtual confirmation of the historian's conclusions. It is noteworthy that second-person narration creates readerly simulations in regions where Herodotus' first-person autopsy explicitly dries up; in these areas, hearsay is translated into second-person embodied, virtual travel. The narratee adds an additional layer to the prior section's exploration of the contractual nature of Herodotus' structuring of authority: the actual reader's role is not only implicitly present in the integration of ambiguity, irony, and causal puzzles; it is modelled in the explicit integration of the second-person narratee as well.

With Chapter 11, '*Veni, vidi, vici*: When Did Roman Politicians Use the First-Person Singular?', by Harriet Flower, the volume contextualizes the uses of the first person in experimental Roman memoirs. Of course, by Cicero's day, the former consul could affirm that a third-person account of his achievements would be more authoritative than a first-person one. Caesar seems to have had similar sentiments in light of his third-person

dispatches. However, Flower argues that prescriptions against the first person were not always present in the Roman rhetorical imaginary: the first person had a brief but notable efflorescence in the autobiographical writings of several prominent senators in the early first century BC. The issue that animates Flower's contribution is thus the milieu that produces this phenomenon. Account books, legal documents, correspondence, epigrams, satire, epigraphy, and speeches all provide venues for first-person display. Indeed, it emerges as vital to the Roman politician's rhetorical arsenal, and experimentation with it as a politically advantageous gambit in the second century and beyond.

Chapter 12, Frances B. Titchener's 'Self-Praise and Self-Presentation in Plutarch', highlights another aspect of the centrality of the figure of the author and his desire to provide readers with a sort of *sphragis* that makes him recognizable. Titchener's essay draws inspiration from Marincola's categories for the techniques used by historians to build and advertise their own authority, but she applies them to the writings of the eclectic Plutarch. In doing so, Titchener goes beyond the classic Plutarchan work (*De se laudando*) that is typically used in scholarly discussions of self-praise. She highlights the way in which Plutarch, like many other historians, utilized self-presentation together with a deliberate and carefully managed self-praise to foster his authoritative voice.

The success of historiography's claims to authority are partially visible from its cross-fertilization with related genres. In Part IV, 'Generic Transformations', we transition to select genres adjacent to narrative history, including political philosophy, the *commentarius*, and biography. This part reflects on the interrelation of such categories and argues that their overlap validates the prospect of tracing historical authority in hybrid historical texts.

Chapter 13, Paul Cartledge's 'Thucydides' Mytilenaeon Debate: Political Philosophy or Authoritative History?', surveys the vexed question of the relation of historical truth and embedded speeches by using the Mytilenaeon debate in Athens in 427 BC as a case study. At stake in this scholarly debate is the status of Thucydides as historian (with a fundamental commitment to truth) or as a political philosopher (with a commitment to relating his own philosophy of political action). There are elements within the Mytilenaeon debate that may hint at invention – for example, the shadowy figure of Diodotus; the neat political agenda recalling prior themes of fear, honour, and material interest; the speakers' dogged pragmatism; or the philosophical nature of the disquisition on the deterrence theory of punishment. Yet Cartledge counters such