



Study Questions

Group A (1-6, 8-13, 19-22)

Question 1: How does Herodotus' introduction demonstrate his intentions for the rest of his work?

Question 2: How striking do you find the various abductions of mythical women which Herodotus describes? Might an ancient author have viewed them differently?

Question 3: To what extent do you sympathise with Gyges? Does he have any control over his actions or is he just caught between a rock and a hard place?

Question 4: To what extent do you think the story of Gyges and Candaules is a cautionary, moral tale? Do you think it serves any other functions?

Question 5: What is the purpose of the story of Thrasybulus and Alyattes? Do you think Herodotus may have included it for more than one reason?

Group B (29-45)

Question 1: 'Croesus is an immensely unlikeable character who deserves what he gets.' To what extent do you agree with this characterisation?

Question 2: To what extent do you think that Croesus and Solon's different values are intended by Herodotus to derive from their different backgrounds?



Question 3: How seriously do you think Herodotus took ideas of oracles and prophecy? What lessons, if any, do you think he intended his reader to take from his descriptions of them?

Question 4: How sympathetic do you feel towards the character of Adrastus? Is his decision to take his own life the right one?

Question 5: “After Solon’s departure, great Nemesis took Croesus, so it seems, because he thought himself to be the happiest of all men.” (Herodotus, *Histories*, 1.34). Does Croesus deserve the punishment he receives at the hands of Nemesis?