

## Cameron Dickson – Narrative Game Script

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# The Histories

### Summary

The Histories is a historical walking-simulator style game, intended for console or controller play. The player takes control of an unnamed writer and historian, living in Greece during the Greco-Persian Wars c.490 BC, with the aim of travelling around Ancient Greece to collect stories and amass a record of history.

The Histories will have a non-linear, branching story, as the player gets the opportunity to 'flashback' and play through the stories of some of the narratively important NPC's they talk to. This employs a small scale branch and bottleneck structure, with the players actions within the 'flashbacks' ultimately affecting whether they get a 'good' or 'bad' ending.

### Themes

Themes of greed, the complexity of family and power corrupts. Exploring humanity, just as the contemporary Greek writers of the 400's BC did.

### Mechanics

As a walking-simulator, The Histories has a simple controller control scheme. The examples here are referring to an Xbox controller. Players can use the A, B, and X buttons to interact with the world around them (when presented with prompts to do so). The left analogue stick can be used for movement.

One unique mechanic that this game offers is that the player can play through the stories of the major NPC's that they talk to. After interacting with certain NPC's, a prompt will allow the player to 'flashback' into the memories of the NPC storyteller, letting them witness and take a role in the stories of each side character. Their actions can even change the outcome of the stories in certain situations.

### Aesthetics

A first-person game, with a smooth 3D art style similar to other walking-simulators such as Firewatch. Set in Ancient Greece, the game will have a warm feeling to it, full of landscapes covered in white hues from a golden sun.

### Narrative Summary

The overall arc of the game follows an Ancient Writer whose aim is to travel around, collecting stories from the people of Greece. They write these tales down in a book, with the goal of presenting their work to their contemporaries back in Athens.

Depending on the player's actions within the NPC 'flashback' stories throughout the game, when they eventually go to present their book to the people of Athens they will get either a 'good' or 'bad' ending, with their work being well-received or mocked.

The section of the game that this script is taken from is after the beginning. By this point, the player has already experienced the gameplay loop a few times before. Their quest is to find a man called Pheidippos, the father of the famous figure Philippides, and listen to his story.

### **Additional Information**

The main character is nameless, and will be referred to as the 'protagonist' in this script excerpt.

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## **Script**

*Athenian Countryside, Exterior, Day*

The camera falls onto a spanning landscape of Greek countryside, focusing on the fluffy green hedgerows and spacious white buildings of a vineyard.

The audio is quiet, the faint strumming of a lyre can only just be heard alongside the ambient noises of a Greek vineyard, such as crunching footsteps, a barking dog and distant chatter.

When the camera finishes lowering, it settles down into a first person perspective, with the protagonist's hands being just visible.

A prompt appears in the top right to "Find Pheidippos." Beneath it, it says "Press X for more information."

IF the player presses X, the screen blurs out and the following information about the person they are looking for appears in the middle of the screen:

*"Pheidippos, the father of Philippides, is said to live nearby. He may have stories to tell about the part his son played in Athens' victory at the Battle of Marathon."*

IF the player presses X again, the prompt disappears and the screen unblurs. The player is then free to walk around the countryside. There are several pillars and stone statues to interact with, as well as farmers who are in the fields of the vineyard.

IF the player interacts with a pillar:

**Protagonist**

Athenian stonework, even this far from the city.

IF the player interacts with a stone statue:

**Protagonist**

A statue of Dionysus.  
The God of Fine Wines looks over the vineyard. How fitting.

IF the player tries to start a dialogue with the farmers:

**Protagonist**

Any stories to tell?

The workers will respond with one of three bark lines, randomly chosen:

Response 1:

**Farmer**

Not I. Let me get back to work.

Response 2:

**Farmer**

If it's stories you want, Pheidippos lives a short walk away.

Response 3:

**Farmer**

I'm but a humble servant of Dionysus, do not disrupt the harvest.

IF the player tries to walk too far away from the quest location, the protagonist will say:

**Protagonist**

This isn't the way. I should talk to Pheidippos whilst I am still in the area.

Control is removed and the character turns back around, walking a few paces back in the correct direction. Control is then resumed.

Nearby the starting location, there is a small clutter of trees that can be explored.

WHEN the player walks into the forest area:

**Protagonist**

Yes, this could be promising. Pheidippos could live through here.

Within these trees, the player comes across an old cabin built from chunks of stone and beams of wood. The exterior looks well lived-in, with clothes hanging on a line between trees and carpentry tools left out. The audio quiets a little upon entering the woods, almost like it's muffled now the player is no longer in the open air.

When the player approaches the door, a prompt appears saying: "Press A to knock." Nothing happens unless the player presses A, and when they do player control is removed and they see their hand tap on the door alongside hearing a quick knocking sound.

A voice from within the cabin speaks:

???

Who's there?

The sound of the voice is followed by a rustling sound of someone moving. The door eventually clicks open, revealing an elderly man.

The following dialogue options appear to the player:

Dialogue Option 1: "*Pheídippos?*"

Dialogue Option 2: "*I've heard you have stories to tell.*"

IF the player chooses Option 1:

**Protagonist**

Pheídippos?

-

**Pheídippos**

Who wants to know?

-

**Protagonist**

An Athenian writer.

-

IF the player chooses Option 2:

**Protagonist**

Are you Pheídippos? I've heard you have stories to tell.

-

**Pheídippos**

I am. And that I do.

-

After either Option 1 or Option 2, Pheídippos will say:

**Pheídippos**

I suppose you'll want to come in.

-

Pheidippos reluctantly allows the door to open and the player enters into the cabin.

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#### *Pheidippos' Cabin, Interior, Day*

The cabin is a modest, one room home. Once entered, ambient indoor sounds begin, including creaking wooden window frames accompanied by soft background lyre music.

#### **Pheidippos**

Close the door behind you, there can be an awful draught this time of year.

-

A prompt appears saying: "Press A to close door." Nothing happens unless the player presses A, and when they do they see their hand creak the door closed. Player control, once inside the cabin, is resumed.

Within the house, there are a few interactable items. There is a letter, a map and a wooden carving of an Athenian trireme.

The letter is a small piece of folded parchment left on a countertop. If the player interacts with it, a prompt appears saying: "Press A to read."

IF the player presses A, the screen blurs out and the following text appears:

*"Father.*

*The Persian army has landed at Marathon. Their fleet waits just off the coast. Athens alone will not be able to cope with the onslaught, aid is needed. Plataea has already offered men, but that may not be enough.*

*The War Archon deemed it proper to ask Sparta for aid and I have been chosen as the runner. I must do my duty. Sparta is over a hundred miles away, in the mountains of Laconia. But I will get there.*

*Even if it kills me.*

*I hope someday you get to read this."*

-

The wooden carving of an Athenian seafaring vessel sits on a shelf.

IF the player interacts with the wooden carving:

#### **Protagonist**

Impressive craftsmanship.

-

#### **Pheidippos**

The trireme? Yes, I was happy with how that project turned out.  
Been interested in boats since I was a child.  
Used to be in the Athenian navy, you know. Served under Kleisthenes.

-

IF the player interacts with the map, the screen blurs out and an image of a map of Greece appears.  
The player can press B to stop looking at the map.

-

Pheídippos is sat at the table, carving a bit of wood with a small knife. When looking at Pheídippos, the prompt “Press A to talk” appears. The dialogue options are as follows:

Dialogue Option 1: *“How do you fare?”*

IF the player has read the letter from Phillipides, they have an extra dialogue option:

Dialogue Option 2: *“(Letter) So you did get to read the letter.”*

IF the player chooses Option 1:

**Protagonist**

How do you do, Pheídippos? Are we meeting on fair winds?

-

**Pheídippos**

Fair as can be, I suppose.

-

**Protagonist**

May I be seated?

-

**Pheídippos**

Of course. Never let it be said that Pheídippos doesn't  
look after his guests.

-

A prompt appears, saying “Press A to take a seat.” Nothing happens until the player presses A, and when they do the protagonist sits down opposite Pheídippos.

IF the player chooses Option 2:

**Protagonist**

So you did get to read it.

-

**Pheidippos**

Phillipides' letter? I did, in the end.  
It provided some small closure.

-

**Protagonist**

Closure? Curious.  
Would you mind if I took a seat?

-

**Pheidippos**

Not at all, be my guest.

-

A prompt appears, saying "*Press A to take a seat.*" Nothing happens until the player presses A, and when they do the protagonist sits down opposite Pheidippos.

After sitting down at the end of either Option 1 or Option 2, Pheidippos will say:

**Pheidippos**

I think I can gather why you're here. You've come a long way from Athens, writer.

-

The player's new dialogue options are as follows:

Dialogue Option 1a: "*For good reason.*"

Dialogue Option 2a: "*I hope my journey won't be in vain.*"

IF the player chooses Option 1a:

**Protagonist**

For good reason, I assure you.  
I'm creating a record of the war, writing down stories.

-

**Pheidippos**

And you want to know the story of Phillipides?

-

**Protagonist**

I do. There are many rumours surrounding your son's role at the  
Battle of Marathon. I'd like to write down what happened,  
and it seems that you would be the best teller of this tale.

-

**Pheidippos**

Hmph. I'm flattered.

-

IF the player chooses Option 2a:

**Protagonist**

I hope my journey here won't be in vain.  
You see, I'm keen to learn more about Phillipides.

-

**Pheidippos**

As is everyone that comes here.

-

**Protagonist**

I'm trying to create a record of the war,  
writing down stories from across Greece.  
There are many rumours about Phillipides' actions at  
the Battle of Marathon, and I was hoping you could shed some  
light onto the whole affair.

-

**Pheidippos**

I thought as much.

-

After either Option 1a or Option 2a, Pheidippos will say:

**Pheidippos**

Phillipides was a fine son. Loyal to a fault.  
I could never stay in Athens after it happened.  
Too difficult to escape the thought of it all.

-

As Pheidippos' says his response following Option 1a or Option 2a, soft lyre music begins to slowly build up in the background.

The player's new dialogue options are as follows:

Dialogue Option 1b: *"Go on."*

Dialogue Option 2b: *"It's an uncomfortable topic for you, I understand."*



IF the player chooses Option 1b:

**Protagonist**

Go on.

-

**Pheidippos**

Alright, alright. It's difficult to put into words

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IF the player chooses Option 2b:

**Protagonist**

I'm sure that this isn't an easy topic for you to discuss.

I understand if you need a moment.

-

**Pheidippos**

My life's been one big *moment* since it happened.

No, I'm happy to talk now. Together we can  
put Phillipides story into the physical world, where  
it can last forever.

-

**Protagonist**

Well put.

After either Option 1b or Option 2b, Pheidippos will say:

**Pheidippos**

I hope you're comfortable. This is the story of  
Phillipides, the Athenian runner. My son.

The lyre music in the background begins to build to a crescendo, and a prompt appears at the bottom of the screen to "*Press A to witness the story of Phillipides.*" Nothing happens until the player presses A, and when they do the screen fades to black. Player control is removed.

Whilst the new area is loading, white text appears in the middle of the black screen. A title saying:

"The Story of Phillipides"

After the new area finishes loading, the white text fades and the black loading screen disappears.

Player control is still removed. The player finds themselves in a first-person perspective, but not the same one as the protagonist. The hands are different. The first-person camera is stood looking over a vast expanse of water from a rocky cliff. On the horizon, a vast fleet of dark ships can be seen massing.

Suddenly, a voice calls out from behind the player:

**War Archon Callimachus**

Runner! Phillipides!

-

The camera turns around, signalling that the player is indeed seeing through the eyes of Phillipides. A man in shining armour is stomping towards the player, with another well dressed man behind him. The man behind the War Archon, having to keep up, begins to speak:

**Miltiades**

Callimachus! Do you really need to run to Sparta for help?

-

**War Archon Callimachus**

Miltiades, are you blind to the fleet massing off the coast?  
We need all the help we can get.

-

The two men reach the player, nodding to the camera. The camera nods back. Miltiades continues:

**Miltiades**

A Runner is needed, Phillipides. According to  
Callimachus here.

-

**War Archon Callimachus**

Indeed. You've seen the Persian fleet, they'll be landing  
at the bay of Marathon in a matter of days.  
Someone needs to run to Sparta, request aid.

-

**Miltiades**

This is what you train for, Phillipides.  
Will you accept the honour of this task?

-

Player control is resumed for a moment, as the player has to select a dialogue option as follows:

Dialogue Option 1: *"I accept."*

Dialogue Option 2: *"No. I want to fight."*

IF the player chooses Option 1:

**Phillipides**

I will run to Athens.

Mark my words, I will be there and back before the  
Persians reach shore.

-

**War Archon Callimachus**

Your confidence does you credit, boy.

IF the player chooses Option 2:

**Phillipides**

I've trained as a runner, but I've also trained to fight.  
I want to meet the Persians on the battlefield.

-

**War Archon Callimachus**

You think you have a say in the matter, *boy*?

Pah! The gall.

Miltiades shouldn't even have asked.

You're going. I decree it.

-

**Phillipides**

I don't get a say?

Are Athenians no longer democrats?

-

**Miltiades**

Not out here, it seems.

Not in wartime.

-

**War Archon Callimachus**

Tough times call for tougher measures, Miltiades.  
If you become a War Archon one day, you shall understand.

-

After either Option 1 or Option 2, Miltiades says:

**Miltiades**

Come, Phillipides, time is of the essence.  
Your journey south, to the mountains of Laconia, must begin now.  
Take what provisions you need and go.

-

**War Archon Callimachus**

I wish you luck, boy. The journey is over a hundred miles.  
May the Gods give you strength.

[End of game excerpt.]