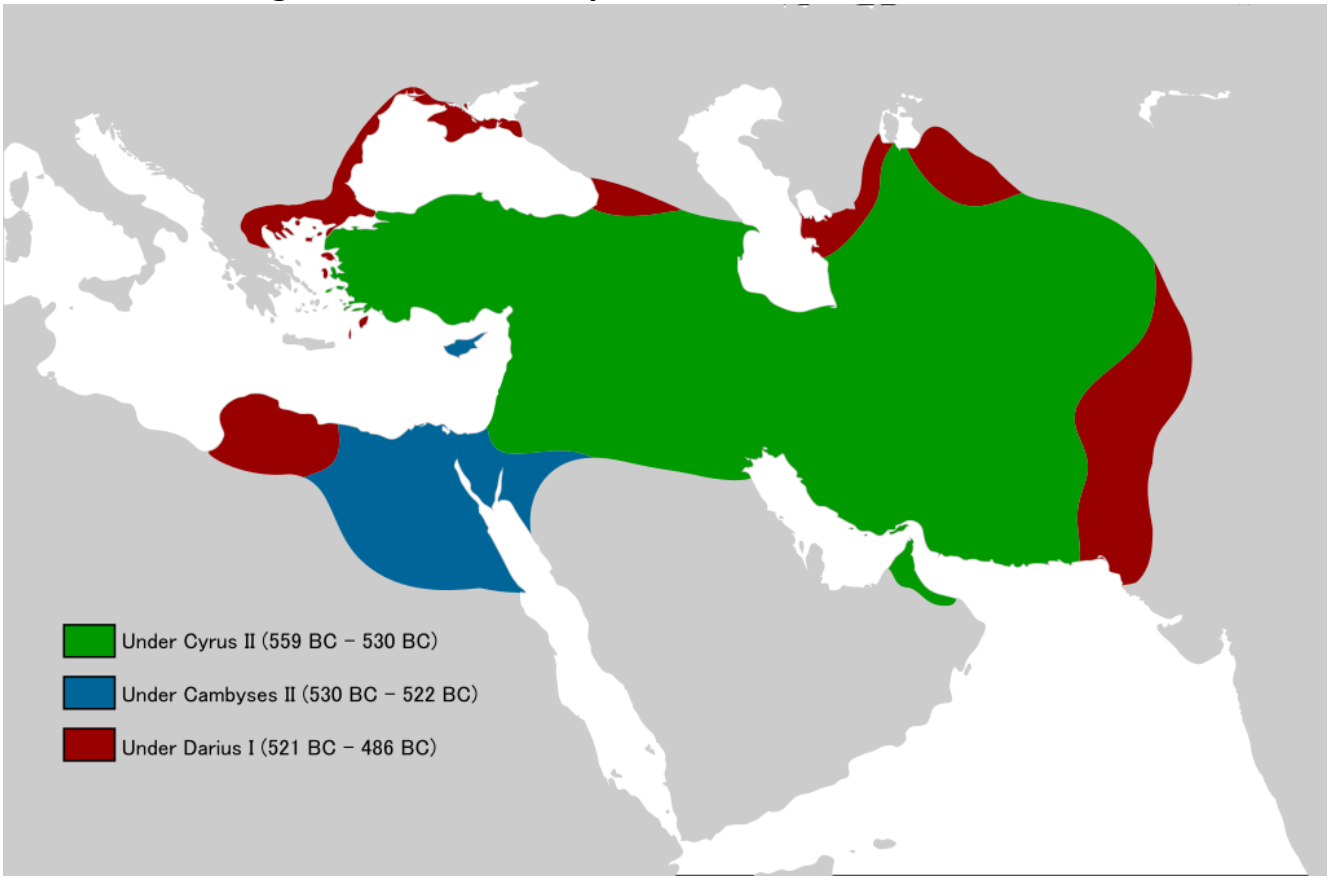
Period Study:
Relations between Greek states and between Greek and non-Greek states, 492-404BC

A: The challenge of the Persian Empire 492–479 1. Mardonius' expedition of 492 BC 2. Persian approaches to the Greek states 3. The Battle of Marathon 4. Greek and Persian strategy 5. The threat of Greek medizing 6. Sparta's response 7. Persian aims and intentions in 480s: Darius' and Xerxes' policies towards the Greek states 8. Greek and Persian preparations in 480s 9. Differences in responses to the Persians among the Greek states, including medizing 10. The formation of the Hellenic League and its leadership; the states involved in the Hellenic League 11. The involvement of Greek states in the events of 480-479, including examples of medising, co-operation and conflict, debates and differences of opinion before Salamis and Plataea on strategy.	**Herodotus**, ***Histories*** (Penguin Classics) **Book 6**: 42–49; 94–117; 120–124 **Book 7**: 1; 5–10h; 49–50; 102; 131–133; 138–139; 141–145; 151–152; 174–175; 207; 219–222; 228.2 **Book 8**: 1–3; 49–50; 56–63; 74; 94; 100–103; 143–144 **Book 9**: 1–3; 6–8; 16–18; 40; 62–64; 71; 98–99; 105–106 **Serpent column** **Naqs-e Rustam inscription** No.1 and 2 (No. 48 and 103) **Xerxes' inscription** (No. 63)
B: Greece in conflict 479–446 BC 1. The consequences of victory for the Greek states, especially relations between Sparta and Athens 2. The growth of Athenian power in the Delian League 3. Sparta's concerns 4. The consequences for relations between Sparta and Athens and their respective allies of the earthquake and helot revolt 465–464 BC; 5. The events of the First Peloponnesian War 461–446 BC that involved changing relationships between Greek states: Megara's defection from the Peloponnesian League 6. Corinth's relations with Megara, Sparta and Athens 7. The Battle of Tanagra 8. Continued conflict with the Persians followed by the cessation of hostilities in 449 BC 9. The Spartan invasion of Attica 446 BC.	**Aristotle** *Politics* 1284a38 (No. 84) **Diodorus** 11.46-47 (No. 19); 11.50 (No. 28); 12.2.1–2 (No. 52); 12 4.4–6; (No. 53); 12.38.2 (No. 113) **Harpokration** s.v. *Attikois grammasin* (No. 54) **Herodotus**, *Histories* Book 7.151 **Plutarch**, *Aristeides* 23 (No. 10); 24.1–5 (No. 20) **Plutarch**, *Cimon* 11–12.4 (No. 33); 13.4–5 (No. 51) **Plutarch**, *Pericles* 23.1–2 (No. 71) **Thucydides**, *The History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.89-118 5.16 **Chalkis Decree** (No. 78)
C: Peace and Conflict 446–431 BC 1. The Peace of 446 BC; the balance of power outlined in the Peace of 446 BC and the relations between Athens and Sparta 2. The role of Corinth and Sparta in the revolt of Samos 3. The events leading up to, and the causes of, the outbreak of war in 431 BC.	**Aristophanes**, *Acharnians* 61–71 (No. 58); 524–539 (No. 99) **Plutarch**, *Pericles* 23.1–2 (No. 71); 28.1-3; 30-31 **Thucydides**, *The History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.23; 1.33; 1.35; 1.40–41; 1.44; 1.55–58; 1.60–61; 1.66–69; 1.75–77; 1.86–1.88; 1.103; 1.115–1.118; 1.121–122; 1.139–140 5.14; 7.18 **Chalkis Decree** (No. 78)
D: The Archidamian War 431–420 BC 1. Athenian and Spartan strategies in the Archidamian War 431–421 BC 2. The invasions of Attica and their effects on the states, including the plague in Athens 3. The course of the Archidamian War: Pylos and Sphacteria, and its effects on Spartan war effort and reputation, Brasidas in Thrace 4. Differences within Athens and Sparta on the relations between the states and the move towards a peace settlement 5. The Peace of Nicias – the main terms and the aftermath: the failures of the peace and the refusals of allies of both Athens and Sparta to support the Peace 6. Spartan-Athenian alliance.	**Aristophanes**, *Peace* 619–622 (No. 110); 639–648 (No. 202) **Herodotus**, *Histories* Book 6.108 **Thucydides**, *The History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.23; 1.96; 1.114; 1.139 2.8; 2.11; 2.13; 2.63; 2.65 4.19–20; 4.40–41; 4.80–81; 4.108; 4.117 5.13–18; 5.25–26 6.31 7.18; 7.28 **Thoudippos decree** (No. 138)
E: The end of the Peloponnesian War and its aftermath 419–404 BC 1. The breakdown of relations: the alliance of Athens, Argos, Mantinea and Elis 2. The effect of the battle of Mantinea 418 BC 3. The consequences of the Sicilian Expedition 415–413 BC for Athens and Sparta 4. The occupation of Decelea 5. Sparta and Athens: relations with Persia in the final years of the war, and Persia's aims and impact on the course of the war.	**Andocides** 3.29 (No. 61) **Aristophanes**, *Acharnians* 61–71 (No. 58) **Thucydides**, *The History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.65; 4.50; 5.43 6.8; 6.12–13; 6.15; 6.24; 6.31; 6.82–83; 6.89–91 7.18; 7.27–28 8.2; 8.6; 8.9; 8.17–18; 8.29; 8.37; 8.52; 8.87 **Xenophon**, *History of My Times* 1.4.1–7; 1.5.1–3; 1.6.6–11; 2.1.7–14; 2.1.20–32

Relations between Greek states and between Greek and non-Greek states, 492-404BC

Part A The challenge of the Persian Empire 492–479BC



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A: The challenge of the Persian Empire 492–479

1. Mardonius' expedition of 492 BC
2. Persian approaches to the Greek states
3. The Battle of Marathon
4. Greek and Persian strategy
5. The threat of Greek medizing
6. Sparta's response
7. Persian aims and intentions in 480s: Darius' and Xerxes' policies towards the Greek states
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Sources:

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Book 6: 42–49; 94–117; 120–124

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Serpent column

Naqs-e Rustam inscription No.1 and 2 (No. 48 and 103)

Xerxes' inscription (No. 63)

The Kings of Persia	
Cyrus the Great	559-530BC
Cambyses	530-522BC
Smerdis/Bardiya	522BC
Darius I	**522-486BC**
Xerxes I	**486-465BC**
Artaxerxes I	**465-424BC**
Xerxes II + Sogdianus	424-3BC
Darius II	**423-402BC**

PERSIA before 492BC:

The Lydians,' says Herodotus (i. 94), 'were the first people we know of to strike coins of gold and of silver'

546BC Fall of Sardis to **Cyrus the Great**
Croesus calls on Solon's name (Her. I.86)

525BC Cambyses' conquest of Egypt (Her. III.12)

522BC Accession **of King Darius I** (Her. III.88)
Debate of forms of government Her III.80-82
(Democracy (Otanes), Oligarchy (Megabyzus), Monarchy (Darius))

Darius I 522-486BC

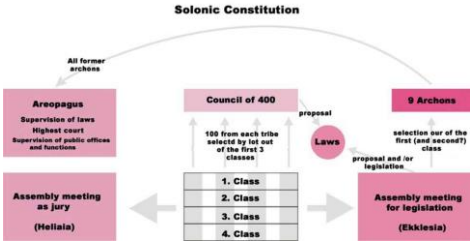
Murder of the Magi
Darius and Gobryas

Book of Daniel

Mardonius, son of **Gobryas** (Her. III.78)
Closely related to Darius by marriage ties.

GREECE before 492BC:

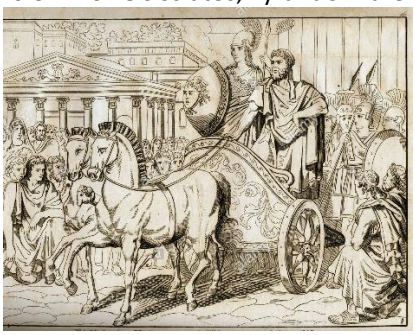
594BC Reforms of **Solon**



(Plutarch, *Life of Solon 15, 18, 19 etc.*)

c.590BC Alcmaeon enriched by Croesus

546-527BC **Peisistratos**, Tyrant of Athens

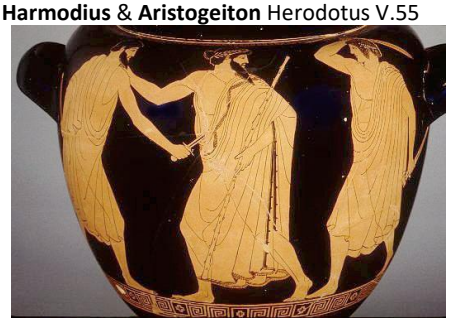


Miltiades snr. a powerful rival in Chersonese (Her.VI.34)

Death of Peisistratus 527BC

Hippias, son of Peisistratus (and brother Hipparchus) rule from 527-510BC

514BC Murder of **Hipparchus**,
by **Harmodius** & **Aristogeiton** Herodotus V.55



Stamnos c.470BC

510BC **Cleomenes, King of Sparta,** drives out Hippias (Her. V.65) who goes to Sigeum (V.91).

509BC Democratic reforms of **Cleisthenes** e.g. Increased tribes from 4-10 etc. (Her. V.69)
Cleomenes expels 700 'cursed families' and attacks the Acropolis. (Her.V.72)

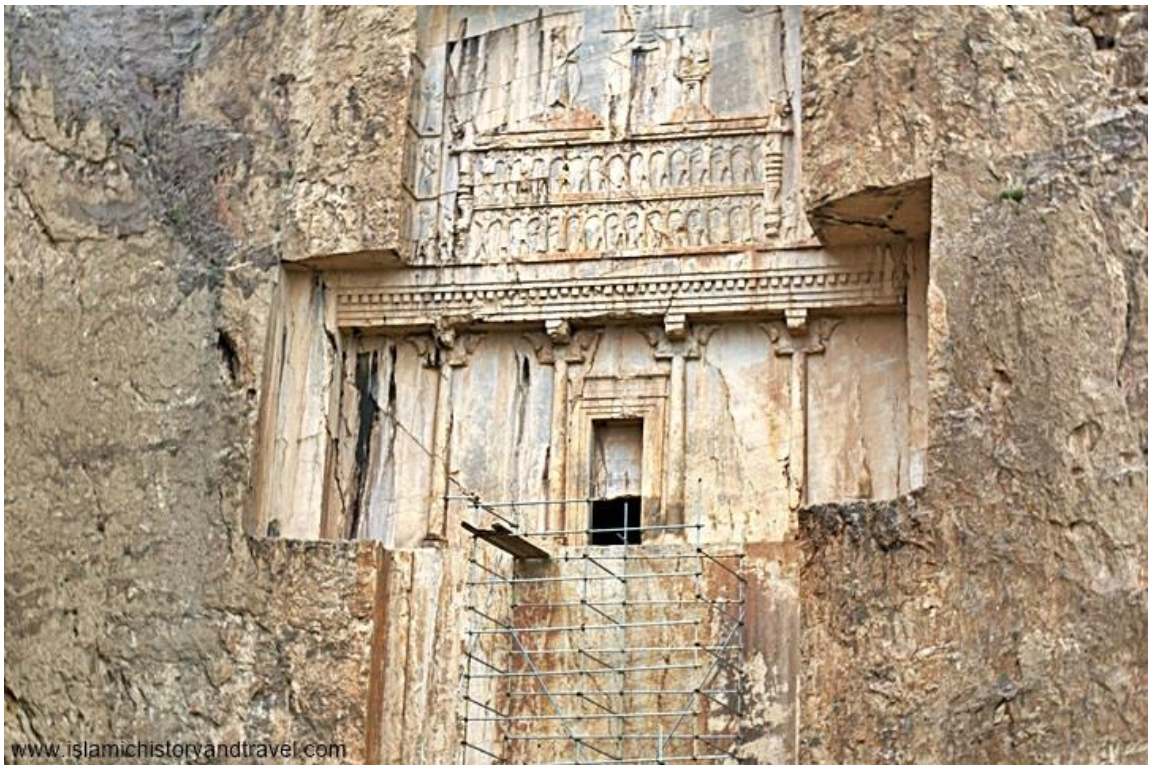
507BC Athenian ambassadors seeking an alliance against Sparta with Persia '**give earth and water'**. (Her. V.72-3).

499BC **Aristagoras** visits **Cleomenes** of Sparta and the **Athenian Assembly** seeking support for the Ionian revolt (Her V. 49-50

493BC **Miltiades**, leaves Thracian Chersonese + arrives in Athens with 4 triremes (Her. VI.41)

Themistocles 'earlier' (483BC?) advises the Athenians to use Laurion silver for ships (Her. VII.144)

Naqs-e Rustam inscription No.1 (LACTOR 16, *The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I,* No. 48 [DNa])



Naqš-e Rustam, about 6km north of Persepolis, is the burial site of the Achaemenid kings, where four cross-shaped tombs were cut into the rock face of the Hosein Kuh. The tombs are those of Darius I, Xerxes, Artaxerxes I and Darius II, and their facades are all identical, with a relief cut in the top part of the cross shape. Each relief depicts the king in front of a fire altar and an incense burner. This scene is placed on a huge throne or platform, which is carried by human figures, each one individually carved and representing one of the lands of the empire. Only the tomb of Darius I bears any inscriptions. No 48 (DNa) is inscribed behind the figure of the king, No 103 (DNb) is inscribed on both sides of the door in the centre of the cross beam; both are written in Elamite, Babylonian and Old Persian.

§1-3 are identical to an inscription in Susa (Inscription 46 in LACTOR 16). §4 emphasises the importance of the congruence of the relief and the inscription. With reference to the revolts of 522/1BC repeats the claim made in the Susa inscription, that all lands have been brought under his control and are now loyal to him.

The powerful image of the peoples of the empire bearing the throne of the Persian king symbolises the unity which Darius claims to have achieved. The statement 'the spear of a Persian man has gone far' means that the army of the Persian king has succeeded in quashing the rebellions and securing the lands for empire.

§4 Darius the king says: 'When Ahura Mazda saw this earth in commotion, he thereafter bestowed it upon me, he made me king. I am king. By the favour of Ahura Mazda I subdued it; they did what I said, as was my desire. If now you should think 'How many are the countries which Darius the king held?', look at the sculptures of those who bear the throne, then you will know. Then it will become known to you: the spear of the Persian man has gone far. Then shall it become known to you: a Persian man has given battle far indeed from Persia.'

§5 Darius the king says: 'That which has been done, all that I did by the will of Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda brought me aid until I had done the work. May Ahura Mazda protect me from harm and my royal house, and this land. This I pray of Ahura Mazda, this may Ahura Mazda give me.

§6 'O man, that which is the command of Ahura Mazda, let it not seem repugnant to you. Do not leave the right path, do not rise in rebellion!'

Naqs-e Rustam inscription No.2 (LACTOR 16, *The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I,* No. 103 [DNb])

Persian Cliff Tombs at Naqsh-e Rostam

The second inscription on the tomb façade of Darius' tomb at Naqš-e Rustam is a testament of Darius, as well as a charter of Achaemenid kingship. Darius describes the values which define Persian kingship, within the dualities of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, loyalty and rebellion. Thus he recognises the values of the Right, or the Truth, the moral values which determine the religion of Ahura Mazda. The king himself is the first man to act according to righteousness, truth and justice, because he reigns with the support of Ahura Mazda. The Persian king, though not a divine being himself, is a ruler through whom Ahura Mazda expresses divine values. Through Ahura Mazda, the king's deeds and decisions achieve moral weight, while at the same time the king is the first to be judged by these values.

Darius describes himself as a Persian, who is a good commander and horseman, a good bowman and spearman. He wants to be regarded as the first man in the empire, that is, the first to contribute those abilities which are valued highest in Persian social life, as they ensure the defence and preservation of the empire. The king as the 'model ruler' and 'model Persian' are the two images Darius wants to convey in his inscription. The values expressed here are echoed in Herodotus.

§1 Ahura Mazda is a great god, who created this excellent work which is seen, who created happiness for man, who bestowed wisdom and courage upon Darius the king.

§2 Darius the king says: 'By the favour of Ahura Mazda I am of such a kind that I am a friend of the Right, and not a friend of the Wrong; it is not my desire that the weak man should suffer injustice at the hands of the strong, it is not my desire that the strong man should suffer injustice from the weak.

§3 'I desire what is right. I am not a friend of the man who follows the Lie. I am not hot-tempered; the things that develop in me during a dispute I hold firmly under control through my mind, I am firmly in control of myself.

§4 'I reward the man who seeks to contribute according to his efforts; I punish him who does harm, according to the harm done; I do not wish that man would do harm; nor do I wish that, if he should do harm, he should not be punished.

§5 'What a man says against a man, does not convince me, until I hear the testimony of both.

§6 'I am content with what a man does or brings *(as a tribute for me)* according to his abilities, my pleasure is great and I am well-disposed towards him.

§7 'Of such a kind is my understanding and my judgement: when you shall see or hear of what I have done in the palace and on the battle-field, this is the will power which I possess over my mind and my understanding.

§8 ‘This indeed is my courage as far as my body possesses the strength; as a commander I am a good commander; immediately, the right decision is taken according to my understanding when I meet a rebel, and when I meet *(someone who is)* not a rebel, at this moment, due to my understanding and judgement, I know that I am above panic when I see a rebel as well as when I meet *(someone who is)* not a rebel.

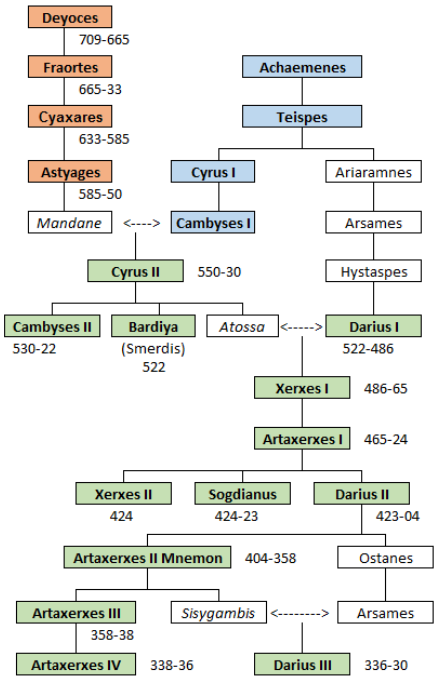
§9 ‘I am trained in my hands and in my feet; as a horseman, I am a good horseman; as a bowman, I am a good bowman, both on foot and on horseback; as a spearman, I am a good spearman, both on foot and on horseback.

§10 ‘These are the skills which Ahura Mazda has bestowed upon me, and which I have been strong enough to exercise. By the favour of Ahura Mazda, what I have done, I have achieved with the skills that Ahura Mazda has bestowed upon me.

§11 ‘O man, proclaim loud and clear of what kind you are, and of what sort your abilities are, and of what kind your loyalty is. Let that which has been heard by your ears not seem false to you; hear that which has been said to you!

§12 ‘O man, let that which I have done not seem to you to be false; observe what the weak man has done. O man, see what I have done … [ ] … not to overstep … [ ] … and do not be ill-disposed towards happiness … [ ] ….

East stairway, Apādana, Persepolis (Fars, Iran), c. 520-465 B.C.E.



Xerxes' inscription (LACTOR 16 No 63)

Darius and Xerxes receiving tribute.

Rock relief of Xerxes at his tomb in Naqsh-e Rustam.

The trilingual inscription is written in four copies on the inner walls of the Gate of All Lands or Gate of All Nations, on the royal terrace in Persepolis. Xerxes' inscriptions follow the formula known from the inscriptions of Darius I. Xerxes presents himself in every respect as the successor of Darius, continuing his building work on the terrace of Persepolis, and following his father in tone and sentiments in the royal inscriptions. This continuity creates an image of kingship in which the preservation of a tradition established by Darius outweighs the need for individual expression. This adherence to the image of kingship persists throughout Achaemenid rule.

§1 Ahura Mazda is a great god, who created this earth, who created that sky, who created man, who created happiness for man, who made Xerxes king, one king of many, one lord of many.

§2 I am Xerxes, the Great King, king of kings, king of lands containing many men, king of this great earth far and wide, son of Darius the king, an Achaemenid.

§3 Xerxes the king says: 'By the favour of Ahura Mazda I built this Gate of All Lands. Much other good (construction) was built within this (city of) Parsa, which I built and which my father built. Whatever good construction is seen, we built all that by the grace of Ahura Mazda.'

§4 Xerxes the king says: 'May Ahura Mazda protect me and my kingdom and what was built by me, and what was built by my father, that also may Ahura Mazda protect.' XPa

Herodotus, *Histories* 6.42–49 (Penguin Classics p. 373-376)
Aubrey de Sélincourt with notes by John Marincola. ISBN-13: 978-0140449082)

In 499-494BC the Ionian cities and Greek islands off Asia Minor revolted against Persian rule and were put down.

Her.VI 42. During the course of this year 493BC no further hostile measures were undertaken by the Persians against Ionia; on the contrary, something was done greatly to its advantage. Artaphernes, governor of Sardis, sent for representatives from all the Ionian states and forced them to bind themselves by oath to settle their differences by arbitration, instead of raiding. In addition to this, he had their territories surveyed and measured in parasangs (the Persian equivalent of 30 furlongs), and settled the tax which each state was to pay at a figure which has remained unaltered down to my time.[1] The amount was, moreover, much the same as it had previously been.

492BC Persian Expedition to Greece under Mardonius

Her.VI 43. These measures were conducive to peace. Then, in the following spring, Darius superseded all his other generals and sent **Mardonius, the son of Gobryas**, down to the coast in command of a very large force, both military and naval. Mardonius was still a young man and had recently married Darius' daughter Artozostra. Reaching Cilicia with his army, he took ship and continued along the coast in company with the fleet, leaving other officers to conduct the troops to the Hellespont. When in the course of this voyage along the Asiatic coast he reached Ionia, he did something that will come as a great marvel to those Greeks who cannot believe that Otanes declared to the seven conspirators that Persia should have a democratic government: he suppressed the tyrants in all the Ionian states and set up democratic institutions in their place.[2] He then hurried on towards the Hellespont. Having got together a formidable fleet and army, he ferried troops across the straits and began his march through Europe, with Eretria and Athens as his main objectives.

Her.VI 44. At any rate, these two places were the professed object of the expedition, though in fact the Persians intended to subjugate as many Greek towns as they could. Their fleet subdued Thasos without resistance, and the troops on land added the Macedonians to the list of Darius' subjects. All the peoples on the hither side of Macedonia were subjects already.

From Thasos the fleet stood across to the mainland and proceeded along the coast to Acanthus, and from there attempted to double Athos; but before they were around this promontory, they were caught by a violent northerly gale, which proved too much for the ships to cope with. A great many of them were driven ashore and wrecked on Athos – indeed, report says that something like three hundred were lost with over twenty thousand men. The sea in the neighbourhood of Athos is full of monsters, so that those of the ships' companies which were not dashed to pieces on the rocks, were seized and devoured. Others, unable to swim, were drowned; others again died of cold.

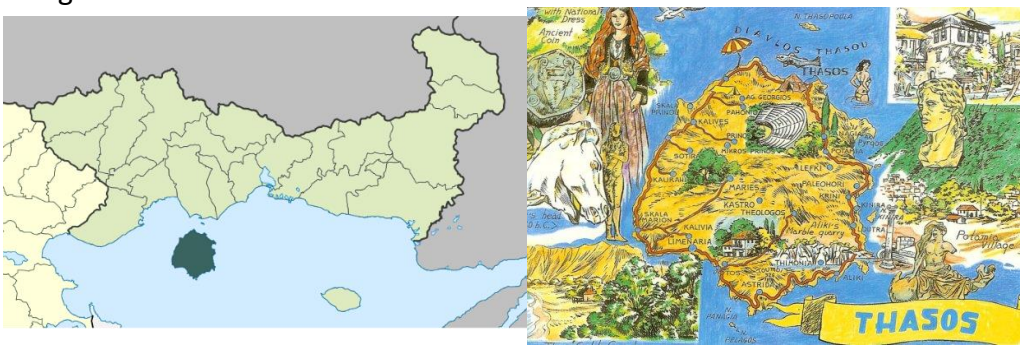
Her.VI 45. While this disaster was overtaking the fleet, on land Mardonius and his army in Macedonia were attacked in camp one night by the Byrgi, a Thracian tribe. The Persian losses were heavy, and Mardonius himself was wounded. But even so the Byrgi did not escape subjection; for Mardonius did not leave the country until he had subdued them.

However the casualties he had suffered by the attack of the Byrgi, and the fearful losses of the fleet at Athos, now induced Mardonius to begin his retreat. **The whole force, therefore, returned to Asia in disgrace.**

[1] Since the Ionian cities in Herodotus' time paid tribute to Athens, not Persia, the statement is surprising. (Marincola)
[2] On the conference of the seven conspirators see III.80 and note on the famous 'Constitutional Debate' (p.648 n.29). Mardonius actions here in the spring of 492 can be seen as an attempt to pacify Ionia and keep it friendly in the rear as he advanced towards the Hellespont and thence against Athens and Eretria. On dissatisfaction with Persian-supported tyrants see V.28 and note on Herodotus' account of the Ionian Revolt (p.656 n.14).

Her.VI 46. Next year 491BC Darius, on the strength of a tale put about by their neighbours that the people of Thrace were planning a revolt, sent them an order to dismantle their defences and bring their fleet across to Abdera. The islanders of Thasos after they had been blockaded by Histiaeus of Miletus had determined to apply their ample resources to building warships and stronger fortifications. The island's revenue was derived partly from property on the mainland and partly from mines: the gold mines at Scapte Hyle yielded in all eighty talents a year, those in the island itself rather less, but a good sum all the same, so that the islanders, without raising any tax on their own produce, enjoyed, from the mines and the mainland, a revenue of two hundred talents – and, in a particularly good year, of as much as three hundred.

Her.VI 47. I have seen these mines myself; much the most remarkable are those discovered by the Phoenicians who came with Thasus the son of Phoenix to colonise the island, which has since borne his name. These Phoenician mines lie between Coenyra and a place called Aenyra, on the south-eastern side of Thasos, facing Samothrace. A whole mountain has been turned upside down in the search for gold.



Her.VI 48. In spite of all this, however, the islanders obeyed Darius' order, pulled down their fortifications and sent their whole fleet over to Abdera.

Darius now began to test the attitude of the Greeks, and to find out whether they were likely to resist or surrender. He sent heralds to the various Greek states to demand earth and water for the king, and at the same time he sent orders to the Asiatic coast towns, which were already tributary, for the provision of warships and transport vessels to carry cavalry.

Her.VI 49. While these were being prepared, the heralds in Greece obtained what they asked from many of the towns on the mainland and from all the islanders whom they visited with their request. Amongst the islanders, moreover, who gave signs of submission, were the Aeginetans.

Aegina is credited with being the first Greek state to mint its own coinage; 6th Century BC Aeginetan coins have been found in Egypt and Phoenicia. After the Peloponnesian War ended in 404BC, Aegina changed its image from sea-turtle to land tortoise.

This act on the part of Aegina produced an immediate reaction from the Athenians, who supposed that the Aeginetans had submitted out of enmity to themselves and intended to join the Persian attack upon them; at once, therefore (and they were not sorry to have the excuse), they entered into correspondence with Sparta and accused the Aeginetans of being traitors to Greece.

Herodotus, *Histories* 6.94-117 (Penguin Classic p.394-403)

Her.VI 94. While Athens and Aegina were at each other's throats, the king of Persia continued to mature his plans. His servant never failed to repeat to him the words 'Remember the Athenians'; the Pisistradae, with their slanderous attacks on the Athenians, were still with him, and besides, he himself was anxious to have an excuse to conquer all the Greek communities which refused to give earth and water. In consequence of the ill success of his previous expedition, he relieved Mardonius of his command, and appointed other generals, whom he proposed to send against Eretria and Athens, Datis a Mede, and his own nephew, Artaphernes, son of the other Artaphernes, and their orders were to reduced Athens and Eretria to slavery and to bring the slaves before the king.

Her.VI 95. The new commanders left the court and with a powerful and well-equipped force made for the Aleian plain in Cilicia. Here they halted and were joined by the naval contingent – all the ships and men which the various subject communities had been ordered to supply – including the horse-transporters which Darius had requisitioned from his tributary states the year before. The horses were embarked in the transports, the troops in the ships of war, and, six hundred triremes strong, they sailed to Ionia. From there they did not follow the coast to the Hellespont and Thrace, but started from Samos and sailed across the Icarian sea and through the islands, presumably because the commanders dreaded the passage around Athos, which in the previous year had been the cause of so terrible a disaster. Another reason which constrained them to take this course was their previous failure to capture Naxos, which was now their first objective in the war.[3]

Her.VI 96. On their arrival on the island from the sea of Icaria, the Naxians offered no resistance, but fled to the hills. The Persians caught some of them, carried them off into slavery, and burnt the city, temples and all. They then put to sea again to attack the other islands.

[3] For the previous expedition around Athos see VI.44; the failure to take Naxos precipitated the Ionian Revolt.

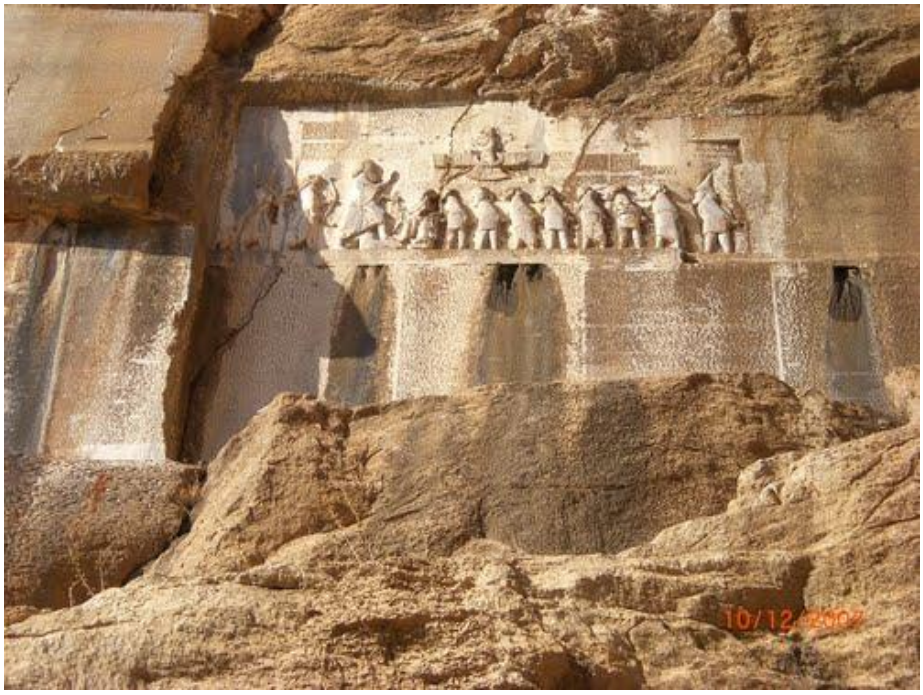
Her.VI 97. While the Persians were thus employed, the inhabitants of Delos left their island and fled to Tenos; and as the Persian fleet was coming in from seaward, Datis sailed on in advance and issued an order to the ships to come and anchor not at Delos, but at Rhenea, opposite. He then ascertained where the Delians were, and sent them a message in the following words: 'Reverend sirs, what strange opinion have you conceived of me, thus to disappear? I surely have sense enough – even without the king's orders – to spare the island in which Apollo and Artemis were born, and to do no harm to either its soil or its people. I beg you therefore to return to your homes, in the island which belongs to you.'[4] Datis followed the message by piling three hundred talents-weight of frankincense upon the altar, and burning it as an offering.

Her.VI 98. He then left Delos and sailed with his army for Eretria, taking with him both Ionians and Aeolians.

The Delians declare that after his departure the island was shaken by an earthquake – the first and the last shock ever experienced there up to my time. It may well be that the shock was an act of God to warn men of the troubles that were on the way; for indeed, during the three generations comprising the reigns of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, and of his son Xerxes and his grandson Artaxerxes, Greece suffered more evils than in the twenty generations before Darius was born – partly from the Persian wars, partly from her own internal struggles for supremacy. In view of this, it is not surprising that there should have been an earthquake in Delos, where there had never been an earthquake before.[5] Besides, there was an oracle, which contained the words,

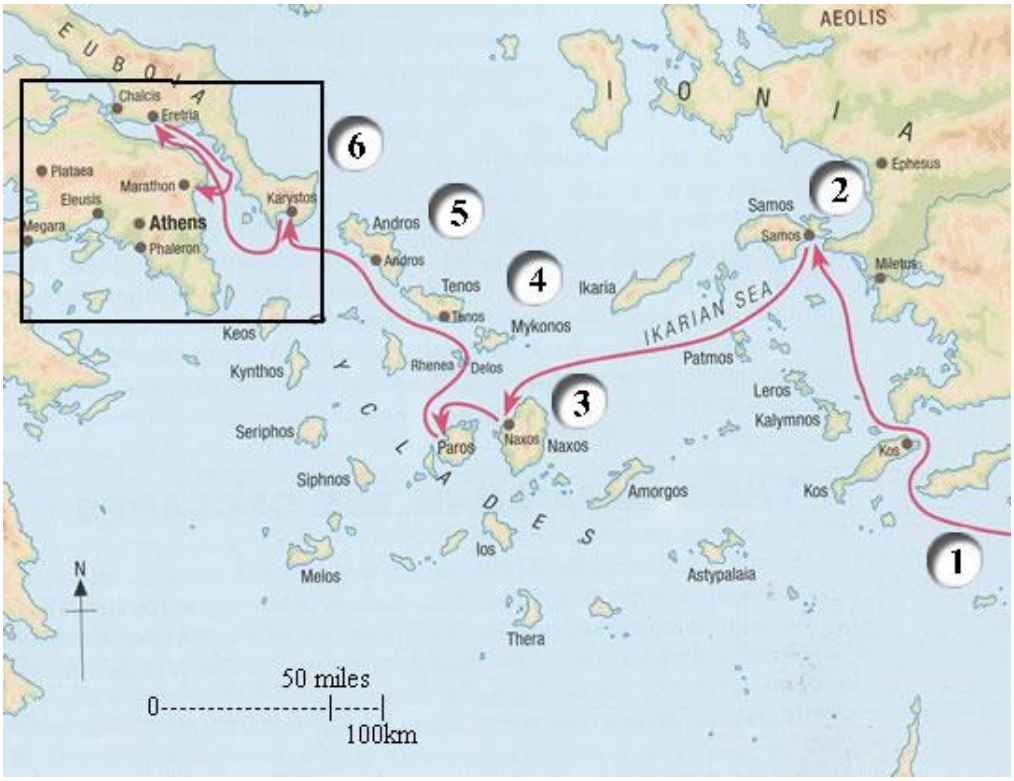
Delos too I will shake, though it has never been shaken.

Her.VI 99. Darius is equivalent to 'Worker' in Greek; Xerxes means 'Warrior', and Artaxerxes means 'Great Warrior'.



[4] Persian tolerance towards native religions was an important aspect of their rule (see Cook 148-9). In *Isiah 45.1*, Cyrus is called 'the Lord's annointed' because he gives orders to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple after he conquered Babylon in 539BC; and Darius' protection of Apollo is well documented in a letter (Fornara 35) to one of his governors chastising him for taxing land sacred to Apollo, adding that the governor is '*ignorant of my ancestors' attitude to the god, who spoke all truth to the Persians*.'

[5] Thucydides II.8 claims that the sole earthquake at Delos occurred a little before the Peloponnesian War. Each historian's insistence on the uniqueness of 'his' earthquake makes the accounts irreconcilable.



Sailing from Delos the Persians proceeded to make the rounds of the other islands, touching at each, pressing troops for service, and taking the islanders' children as hostages. They also visited Carystus and, when the people of the place refused to give hostages or supply men to fight against neighbours – by which they mean Athens and Eretria – they laid siege to the town and destroyed the crops in the surrounding country, until the Carystians were forced to do what the Persians demanded.

The Persian attack on Eretria.

Her.VI 100. In Eretria at the news of the Persian approach the people at once called for Athens for help and the call was not refused, for the Athenians sent to their assistance four thousand men whom they had previously settled on the estates of the wealthier Chaldcidaeans.[6] Nevertheless, in spite of the appeals to Athens, things at Eretria were not in a healthy state; there was no firm resolve, and counsels were divided; one party proposed abandoning the town and taking refuge in the Euboean hills, another – having an eye to some gain from the Persians – was preparing to betray the city. When Aeschines the son of Nothon, one of the leading men of Eretria, came to know of what was afoot, he at once proceeded to act: he disclosed the whole situation to those of the Athenians who had already arrived, and urged them to go home again before they were involved in the catastrophe which was bound to come.

Her.VI 101. They took Aeschines' advice, and got safe away by crossing to Oropus.

Meanwhile the Persian fleet brought up at Tamynae, Choreae, and Aegilia – all three places in Eretrian territory. The horses were immediately put ashore, and preparations for an assault began. The Eretrians had no intention of leaving their defences to meet the coming attack in the open; their one concern (the proposals not to abandon the town having been carried) was to defend their walls – if they could.

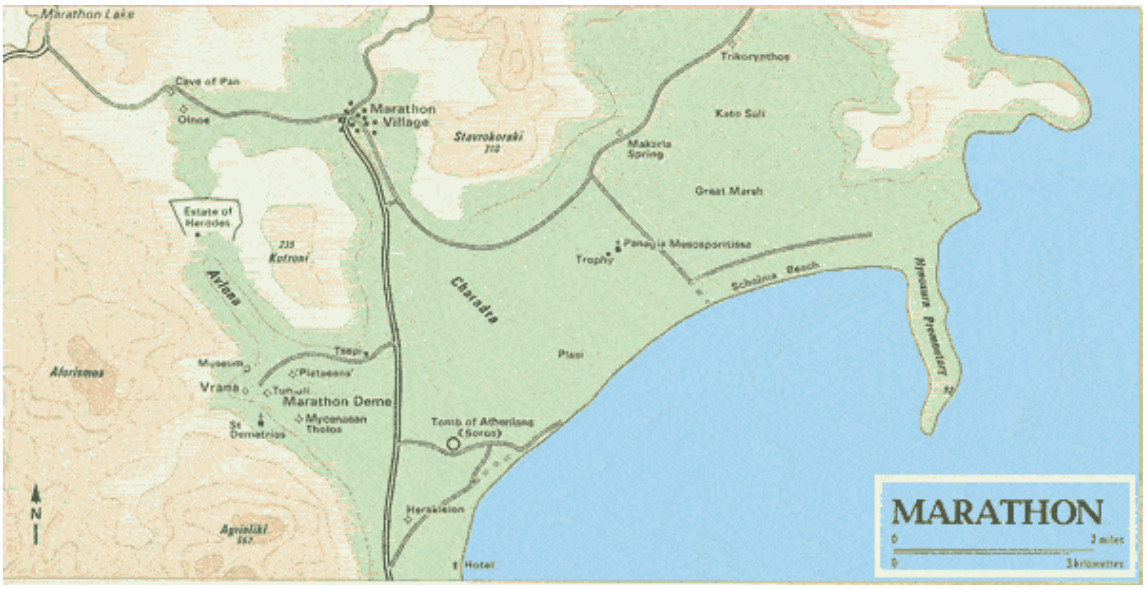
The assault soon came, and there was weight behind it. For six days fighting continued with many killed on both sides; then, on the seventh, two well-known Eretrians, Euphorbus the son of Alcimachus and Philagrus the son of Cyneas, betrayed the town to the enemy. The Persians entered, and stripped the temples bare and burnt them in revenge for the burnt temples of Sardis, and, in accordance with Darius' orders, carried off all the inhabitants as slaves.

Her.VI 102. Having mastered Eretria the Persians waited a few days and then sailed for Attica, flushed with victory and confident that they would treat Athens in the same way.

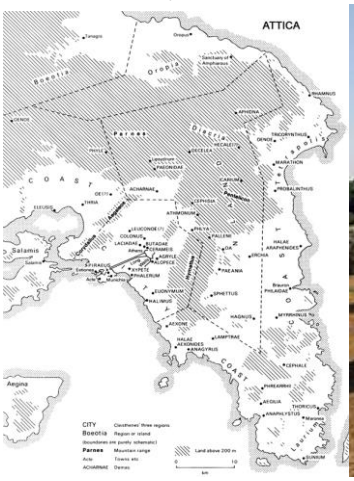
[6] On these 4,000 see V.77.

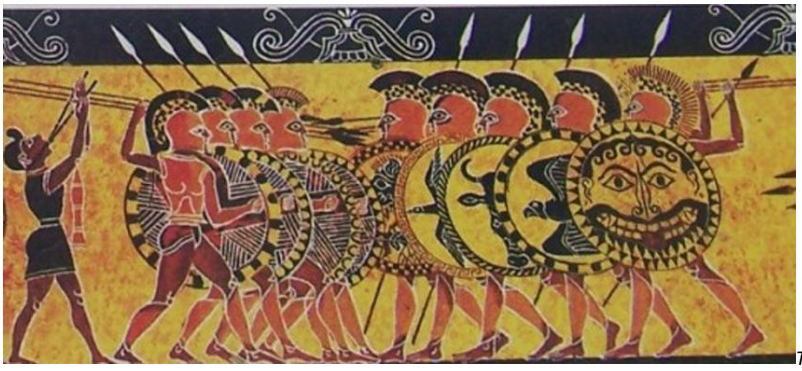
The Persians attack Attica

The part of Attic territory nearest Eretria – and also the best ground for cavalry to manoeuvre in – was at Marathon.



Her.VI 103 To Marathon, therefore, Hippias the son of Pisistratus directed the invading army, and the Athenians, as soon as the news arrived, hurried to meet it.[7]





The Chigi Vase early 6th century BC

[7] Marathon, one of the most distant demes of Attica, is c.26 miles from Athens. For a good map of the environs see Burn 244. On the campaign, which retains its romantic glow even today, see Burn 236-56; Hignett (1963) 55-74; Lazenby 45-80.

The Athenian troops were commanded by ten generals, of whom the tenth was Miltiades.

Background to Cimon, father of Miltiades

Miltiades father, Cimon the son of Stesagoras, had been banished from Athens by Pisistratus, the son of Hippocrates. While in exile he had the good fortune to win the chariot race at Olympia, thereby gaining the same distinction as his half-brother Miltiades. At the next games he won the prize again with the same team of mares, but this time waived his victory in favour of Pisistratus, and for allowing the latter to be proclaimed the winner was given leave to return to Athens. At a later Olympic festival he won a third time, still with the same four mares. Soon after, Pisistratus having died, he was murdered by Pisistratus' sons, who sent some men to waylay him one night near the Council House. He was buried outside Athens, beyond what is called the Sunk Road, and opposite his grave were buried the mares which had thrice won the chariot race.

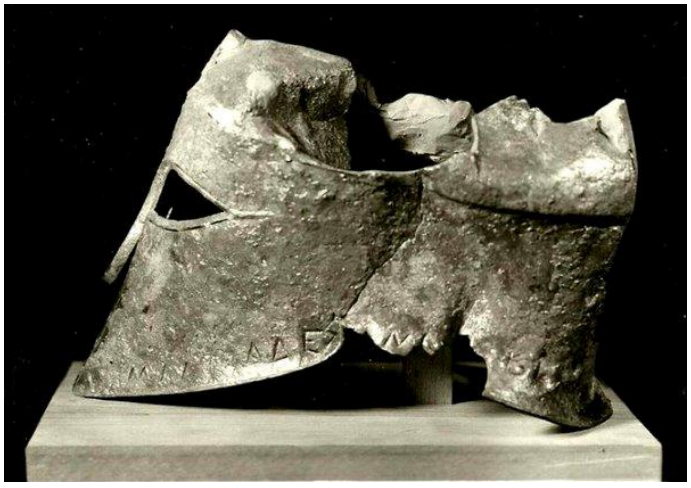
The only precedent for an Olympic triple victory in the chariot race was by a Spartan.

This triple victory had once before been achieved by a single team, that of Euagoras the Laconian; but there are no other instances of it.

Background to Miltiades

At the time of Cimon's death, Stesagoras, the elder of his two sons, was living in the Chersonese with Miltiades his uncle, and the younger son, who was called Miltiades after the founder of the settlement in the Chersonese, was with his father in Athens.[8]

Her.VI 104. It was this Miltiades who was now an Athenian general. He had recently escaped from the Chersonese and twice nearly lost his life – once when the Phoenicians chased him as far as Imbros in their anxiety to catch him and take him to Darius, and again when, after escaping that danger and getting home to what looked like safety, he found his enemies waiting for him and was prosecuted in the courts for his tyranny in the Chersonese. But he escaped this too, and after the trial was elected general by the people.[9]

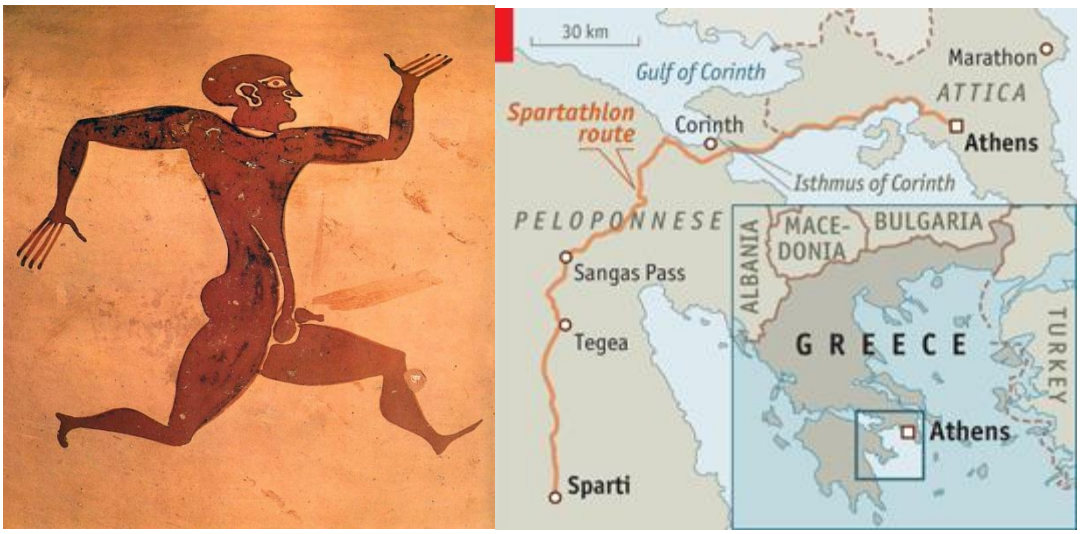


The helmet of Miltiades dedicated to Zeus at Olympia. His name is inscribed on the lower left rim. c.490BC. Olympia Museum

[8] On the elder Miltiades (uncle of the younger and founder of the Chersonese settlement) see chs. 34-8.

[9] For the pursuit of Miltiades see VI.40-41. Whether the Athenians were truly affronted by Miltiades' tyranny in the Chersonese or whether this was simply a pretext for his political opponents is uncertain.

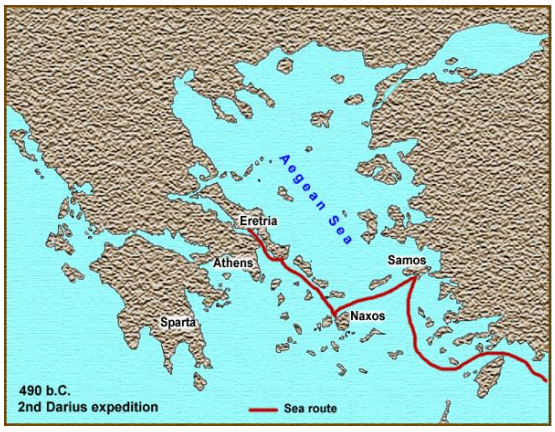
Her.VI 105. Before they left the city, the Athenian generals sent off a message to Sparta. The messenger was an Athenian named Pheidippides, a professional long-distance runner. According to the account he gave the Athenians on his return, Pheidippides met the god Pan on Mt. Parthenium, above Tegea. Pan, he said, called him by name and told him to ask the Athenians why they paid him no attention, in spite of his friendliness towards them and the fact that he had often been useful to them in the past, and would be so again in the future. The Athenians believed Pheidippides' story, and when their affairs were once more in a prosperous state, they built a shrine to Pan under the Acropolis, and from the time his message was received they have held an annual ceremony, with a torch-race and sacrifices, to court his protection.



Her.VI 106. On the occasion of which I speak – when Pheidippides, that is, was sent on his mission by the Athenian commanders and said that he saw Pan – he reached Sparta the day after he left Athens and delivered his message to the Spartan government.[10]

'Men of Sparta' (the message ran), 'the Athenians ask you to help them, and not to stand by while the most ancient city of Greece is crushed and enslaved by a foreign invader; for even now Eretria has been enslaved, and Greece is the weaker by the loss of one fine city.'

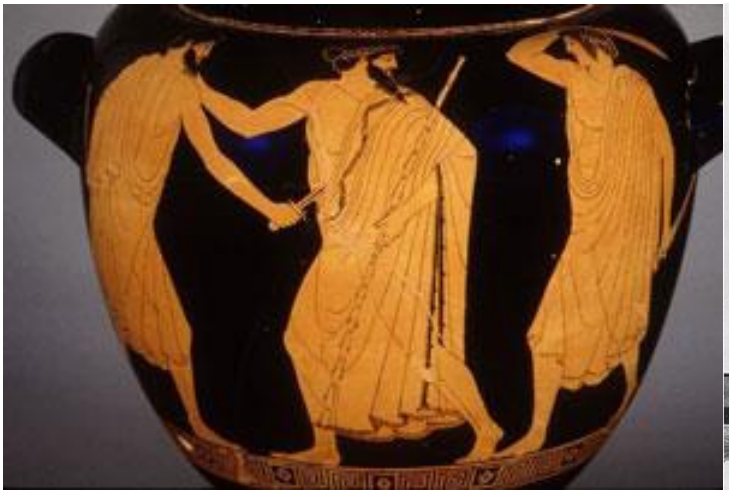
The Spartans, though moved by the appeal, and willing to send help to Athens, were unable to send it promptly because they did not wish to break their law. It was the ninth day of the month, and they said they could not take to the field until the moon was full.[11]



[10] The name of the runner is also given as 'Philippides'. From Sparta to Athens is c.140 miles, so the distance covered in two days was quite great. According to later tradition Pheidippides was also supposed to have run the 26 miles from Marathon to Athens to announce the Athenian victory; this is the supposed origin of the modern marathon race, but see F.J. Frost, 'The Dubious Origin of the 'Marathon''. *American Journal of Ancient History* 4 (1979) 159-163.

[11] Sparta was celebrating the Carneia, during which time the Dorians abstained from warfare; see Burkert 234-6.

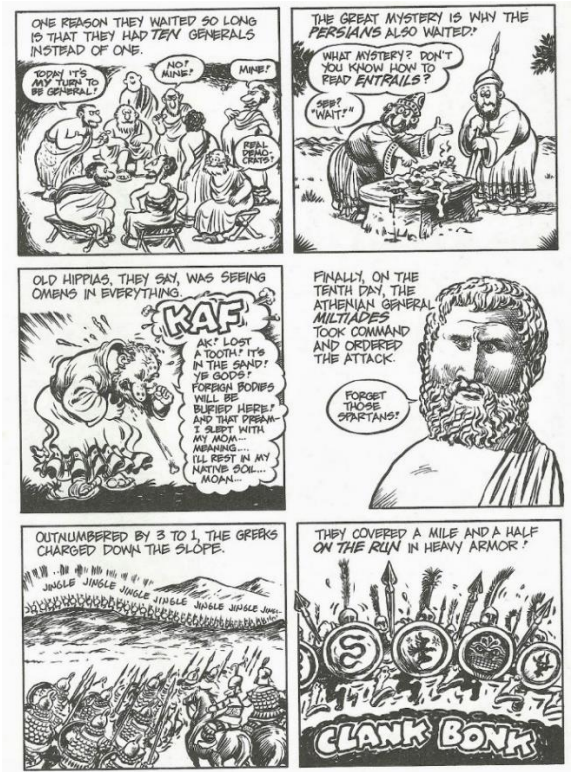
Her.VI 107. So they waited for the full moon, and meanwhile Hippias, the son of Pisistratus, guided the Persians to Marathon.



The murder of Hipparchus, brother of Hippias.

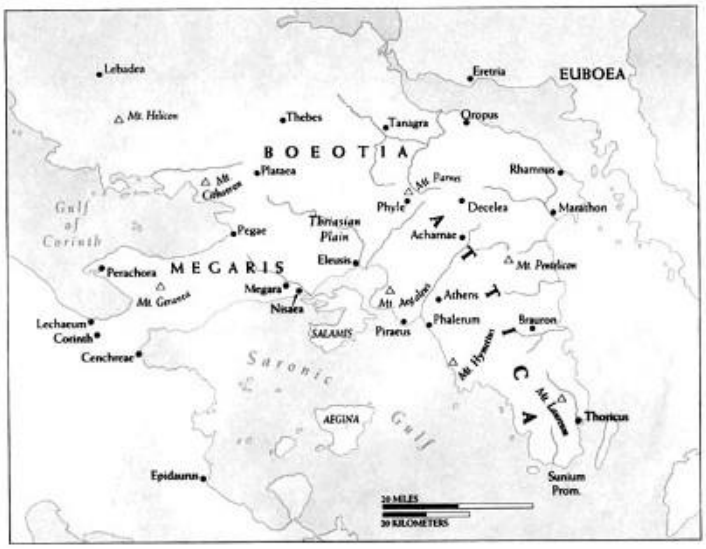
The Tyrannicides

The previous night Hippias had dreamed that he was sleeping with his mother, and he supposed that the dream meant that he would return to Athens, recover his power, and die peacefully at home in old age. So much for his interpretation. On the following day when he was acting as guide to the invaders, he put the prisoners from Eretria ashore on Aegilia, an island belonging to the town of Styra, led the fleet to its anchorage at Marathon, and got the troops into position when they had disembarked. While he was busy with all this, he happened to be seized by an unusually violent fit of sneezing and coughing, and, as he was an oldish man, and most of his teeth were loose, he coughed one of them right out of his mouth. It fell somewhere in the sand, and though he searched and searched in his efforts to find it, it was nowhere to be seen. Hippias then turned to his companions, and said with a deep groan: 'This land is not ours; we shall never be able to conquer it. The only part I ever had in it my tooth possesses.' Her.VI 108. So the meaning of the dream was now clear to him.



Her.VI 108 The Athenian troops were drawn up on a piece of ground sacred to Heracles, when they were joined by the Plataeans, who came to support them with every available man.

How the Plataeans came to join the Athenians at Marathon



Some time before this the Plataeans had surrendered their independence to the Athenians who had, in their turn, already rendered service to Plataea on many occasions and in difficult circumstances. The way it happened was this: Plataea was being hard pressed by Thebes, and as Cleomenes the son of Anaxandrides happened to be in the neighbourhood with a Spartan army, the Plataeans first thought of putting themselves into Spartan hands. The Spartans, however, refused the offer. 'We live too far apart and an alliance with us would be but cold comfort to you; you might be carried off into slavery several times over before any of us even heard of it. Our advice is that you make your surrender to Athens – Athens is your neighbour, and Athenian help is by no means to be despised.' This advice did not proceed from goodwill towards Plataea, but merely from the Spartans' desire to embroil Athens in quarrels with the Boeotians. Nevertheless the advice was taken: representatives from Plataea, while the Athenians were engaged in offering sacrifices to the Twelve Gods, came and sat by the altar, to make their solemn request, and the act of surrender was completed.

When the Thebans heard what the Plataeans had done, they at once sent an army against them. The Athenians hurried to their defence, and a fight was on the point of beginning when the Corinthians intervened. They came up, and as both sides submitted the dispute to their arbitration, they fixed the boundary between the two countries, with the condition that there should be no interference from Thebes with any Boeotians who did not want to belong to the Boeotian state. The Corinthians after making this decision left for home, and the Athenians had also started on their return march, when they were set upon by the Boeotians. In the fight which ensued the Athenians were victorious, and they followed up their victory by crossing the borderline which the Corinthians had fixed for Plataea, and making the river Asopus the frontier between the territory of Thebes on the one side, and of Plataea and Hysiae on the other. These were the circumstances under which the people of Plataea had put themselves into Athenian hands, and which led to their coming to the support of Athens at Marathon.[12]

[12] According to Thuc. III.68 the incidents here occurred 92 years before the destruction of Plataea in 427BC, thus 519/8BC. Some scholars think the date should be 509/8 to fit better with Cleomenes' presence in central Greece during his interference in Athenian politics following the expulsion of the Pisistratids (V.70-76), but the two incidents may be unrelated.

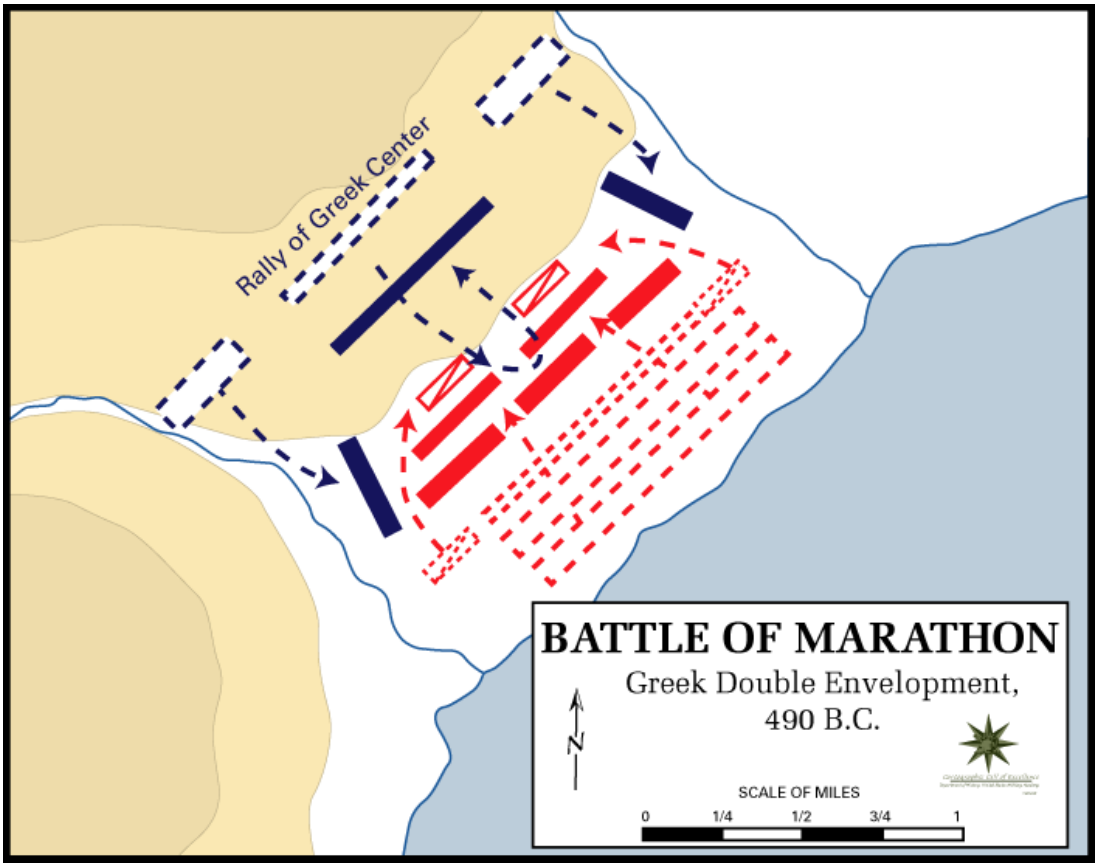
Her.VI 109. Amongst the Athenian commanders opinion was divided: some were against risking a battle, on the ground that the Athenian force was too small to stand a chance of success; others – and amongst them Miltiades – urged it. It seemed for a time as if the more faint-hearted policy would be adopted – and so it would have been but for the action of Miltiades.
In addition to the ten generals, there was another person entitled to vote, namely the polemarch or War Archon, appointed by lot. This office (which formerly carried an equal vote in military decisions with the generals) was held at this time by Callimachus of the deme Aphidnae.[13] To Callimachus, therefore, Miltiades turned.
'It is now in your hands, Callimachus,' he said, 'either to enslave Athens, or make her free and to leave behind you for all future generations a memory more glorious than even Harmodius and Aristogeiton left. Never in our history have we Athenians been in such peril as now. If we submit to the Persians, Hippias will be restored to power – and there is little doubt what misery must then ensue: but if we fight and win, then this city of ours may well grow to pre-eminence amongst all the cities of Greece. If you ask me how this can be, and how the decision rests with you, I will tell you: we commanders are ten in number, and we are not agreed upon what action to take; half of us are for a battle, half against it. If we refuse to fight, I have little doubt that the result will be bitter dissension; our purpose will be shaken, and we shall submit to Persia. But if we fight before the rot can show itself in any of us, then, if god gives us fair play, we can not only fight, but win. Yours is the decision; all hangs upon you; vote on my side, and our country will be free – yes, and the first city of Greece. But if you support those who have voted against the fighting, that happiness will be denied you – you will get the opposite.'

Her.VI 110. Miltiades' words prevailed, and by the vote of Callimachus the War Archon the decision to fight was made.
The generals held the presiding position in succession, each for a day; and those of them who had voted with Miltiades, offered, when their turn for the day came, to surrender it to him. Miltiades accepted the offer, but would not fight until the day came for when he would in any case have presided.[14]

Her.VI 111. When it did come, the Athenian army moved into position for the coming struggle. The right wing was commanded by Callimachus – for it was the regular practice at that time in Athens that the War Archon should lead the right wing; then followed the tribes, in their regular order; and finally, on the left wing, were the Plataeans. Ever since the battle of Marathon, when the Athenians offer sacrifice at their quadrennial festival, the herald links the names of Athens and Plataea in the prayer for God's blessing.
One result of the disposition of Athenian troops before the battle was the weakening of their centre by the effort to extend the line sufficiently to cover the whole Persian front; the two wings were strong, but the line in the centre was only a few ranks deep.

[13] The polemarch in Herodotus' own time had lost all military function, so Herodotus must explain his presence here. Burn (246) accuses Herodotus of anachronism, stating that the polemarch was commander-in-chief until 487BC. But Rhodes in his commentary on the *Ath. Pol.* (cf. (CAH^2 IV 516n.1)
follows Herodotus' account; on this reconstruction Herodotus is correct that there was a daily rotating 'presidency' of the ten generals (ch.110). Callimachus was depicted on the painting of the Battle of Marathon in the Painted Stoa in Athens (Pausanias I.15.3-4; for this painting as a source for Herodotus see E. Francis and M. Vickers, 'The Oenoe Painting in the Stoa Poikile and Herodotus' account of Marathon.' *Annual of the British School at Athens* 80 (1985) 99-113) and the remains of a dedication by Callimachus have been found (Fornara 49).
[14] It is clear that there is a tradition that the Athenians waited before attacking the Persians at Marathon. Herodotus has Miltiades wait for the command, but the Athenians were probably waiting for the Lacedaemonians (Lazenby 57-9). Why they eventually attacked is variously interpreted. One idea holds that the Persians were embarking their cavalry on to the ships for a surprise attack on Athens, and while the cavalry was off the scene, the Athenians and Plataeans attacked (so Burn 247, but this is based on the Suda, a late source (text at Burn and Fornara 48), and has little to recommend it; Lazenby 59). Alternatively, the decision is seen as more politically than militarily based, because there was a danger that some of the Athenians might collude with the Persians, which would explain the divided counsels of the generals and the 'rot' referred to by Miltiades in ch.109, and which necessitated prompt action (so Sealey 191). Finally, there is the possibility that the *Persians* attacked and the Athenians were thus compelled to fight (Lazenby 61).

Her.VI 112. The dispositions made, and the preliminary sacrifice promising success, the word was given to move, and the Athenians advanced at a run towards the enemy, not less than a mile away.[15] The Persians, seeing the attack developing at the double, prepared to meet it, thinking it suicidal madness for the Athenians to risk an assault with so small a force – rushing in with no support from either cavalry or archers. Well, that was what they imagined; nevertheless, the Athenians came on, closed with the enemy along all the line, and fought in a way not to be forgotten; they were the first Greeks, so far as we know, to charge at a run, and the first who dared to look without flinching at Persian dress and the men who wore it; for until that day came, no Greek could even hear the word Persian without terror.



Her.VI 113. The struggle at Marathon was long drawn out. In the centre, held by the Persians themselves and the Sacae, the advantage was with the foreigners, who were so far successful as to break the Greek line and pursue the fugitives inland from the sea; but the Athenians on one wing and the Plataeans on the other were both victorious. Having got the upper hand, they left the defeated enemy to make their escape, and then, drawing the two wings together into a single unit, they turned their attention to the Persians who had broken through in the centre. Here again they were triumphant, chasing the routed enemy, and cutting them down until they came to the sea, and men were calling for fire and taking hold of the ships.

[15] It is difficult to believe that any army could maintain formation for one mile on the run; the Athenians must have advanced briskly and then, at about 200 yards, charged at full speed (so HW ii.122). The reason for their haste was to get under the range of the Persian archers (Lazenby 67).

Her.VI 114. It was in this phase of the struggle that the War Archon Callimachus was killed, fighting bravely, and also Stesilaus, the son of Thrasylaus, one of the generals; Cynegirus, too, the son of Euphorion,[16] had his hand cut off with an axe as he was getting hold of a ship's stern, and so lost his life, together with many other well-known Athenians.

Her.VI 115. The Athenians secured in this way seven ships; but the rest got off, and the Persians aboard them, after picking up the Eretrian prisoners whom they had left of Aegilia, laid a course round Sounion for Athens, which they hoped to reach in advance of the Athenian army. In Athens the Alcmaeonidae were accused of suggesting this move; they had, it was said, an understanding with the Persians, and raised a shield as a signal to them when they were already on board.

Her.VI 116. While the Persian fleet was on its way round Sounion, the Athenians hurried back with all possible speed to save their city, and succeeded in reaching it before the arrival of the Persians.[17] Just as at Marathon the Athenian camp had been a plot of ground sacred to Heracles, so now they fixed their camp on another, also sacred to the same god, at Cynosarges. When the Persian fleet appeared, it lay at anchor for a while off Phalerum (at that time the chief harbour of Athens) and then sailed back to Asia.

Her.VI 117. In the battle of Marathon some 6,400 Persians were killed; the losses of the Athenians were 192.[18] During the action a marvellous thing happened: Epizelus, the son of Cuphagoras, an Athenian soldier, was fighting bravely when he suddenly lost the sight of both eyes, though nothing had touched him anywhere, neither sword, spear, not missile. From that moment he continued blind as long as he lived. I have heard that in speaking about what happened to him he used to say that he thought he was opposed by a man of great stature in heavy armour, whose beard overshadowed his shield; but the phantom passed him by, and killed the man at his side.[19]

[16] Another son of Euphorion, **the tragedian Aeschylus, also fought at Marathon**, and recorded this in his epitaph (Pausanias I.21-2)

[17] The Athenians had probably marched out to Marathon using two different routes, one of 35km, the other of 40km (CAH^2 IV 507), and presumably they would have hurried back to the city by these same routes. Given the distance, however, even of the shorter of the two routes it has been doubted that an army, after a long battle, could have made such a journey on the same day. More likely they arrived on the following day. The Persian ships needed to traverse c.70 miles from Marathon to Phalerum (Athens' main harbour until the building of Piraeus in the 470s), which should also take about a day.

[18] More trust should be put in the number of Athenian dead than of the Persians, since the Athenian names were recorded in an inscription on the burial mound on the site (Pausanias 1.32.3). The number of Persians killed has been calculated (by Herodotus or the tradition before him) as **100 for every 3 Athenians (192 ÷ 3 = 64 x 100 = 6,400)**, as demonstrated by H. Avery, *Historia* 22 (1973) 757 and W.F.Wyatt, ibid. 25 (1976) 843-4.

[19] According to Aelian, *Varia Historia* vii.38, Epizelus was also on the painting in the Painted Stoa, and he must therefore have been a well-known figure even before Herodotus.

Herodotus, *Histories* 6. 120–124 (Penguin Classics p. 403-404)

Her.VI 120. After the full moon, two thousand Spartans set off for Athens. They were so anxious not to be late that they were in Attica on the third day after leaving Sparta.[20] They had, of course, missed the battle, but such was their passion to see the Persians, that they went to Marathon to have a look at the bodies. That done, they praised the Athenians on their good work, and returned home.

Her.VI 121. The tale of the Alcmaeonidae treacherously signalling to the Persians with a shield is, to me, quite extraordinary, and I cannot accept it. Is it likely that these men, who were obviously greater tyrant-haters even than Callias the son of Phaenippus and father of Hipponicus, should have wished to see Athens ruled by Hippias under foreign control? Callias was the only man in Athens who at the expulsion of Pisitratus dared to buy any of his property when it was put up for public sale, besides showing the most violent hostility to him in other ways.[21]

Her.VI 123. Not even Callias, I repeat, could surpass the Alcmaeonidae in hatred of absolute government, so the charge that they could have been guilty of the treacherous signal is mere slander, and I confess it surprises me. They were men who remained in exile throughout the period of absolute government in Athens[22] - and it was they who thought of the plan which deprived the Pisistratidae of their power. Indeed, in my judgement it was the Alcmaeonidae much more than Harmodius and Aristogeiton who liberated Athens; for the two latter by their murder of Hipparchus merely exasperated the remaining members of the clan, without in any way checking their despotism, while the Alcmaeonidae did, in plain fact, actually bring about the liberation – provided that what I said further back is true, namely that it was the Alcmaeonidae who bribed the Delphic priestess to keep on telling the Spartans that they must set Athens free.[23]

Her.VI 124. Perhaps it might be argued that they betrayed their country because of some grudge they bore the Athenian commons; but they were better thought of and more respected than anybody else in Athens. It is unreasonable, therefore, to suppose that they gave the signal for any reason of that sort. A shield *was* held up; that is a fact and cannot be denied; but as to who did it, I can add nothing to what I have already said.

[20] As the distance between Athens and Sparta is 140 miles, the feat of the Spartans is amazing.
[21] Chapter 122 has been left out of the translation; most editors consider it an interpolation.
[22] The fragment of an Athenian archon list (Fornara 23) has shown this to be untrue, for in the year 525/4 Claeisthenes, an Alcmaeonid (perhaps the democratic reformer), was archon; this confirms *Ath. Pol.* 16.9, which says that the Pisistratids solidified their rule by winning over the leading families of Athens. There is no reason to doubt, however, that the Alcmaeonids later played a leading part in expelling the tyrants.
[23] On the liberation of Athens see V.63; Thucydides 6.59 agrees that it was the Lacedaemonians and the Alcmaeonids who ended the tyranny at Athens.

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.1 (Penguin Classics p. 413)
Aubrey de Sélincourt with notes by John Marincola. ISBN-13: 978-0140449082)

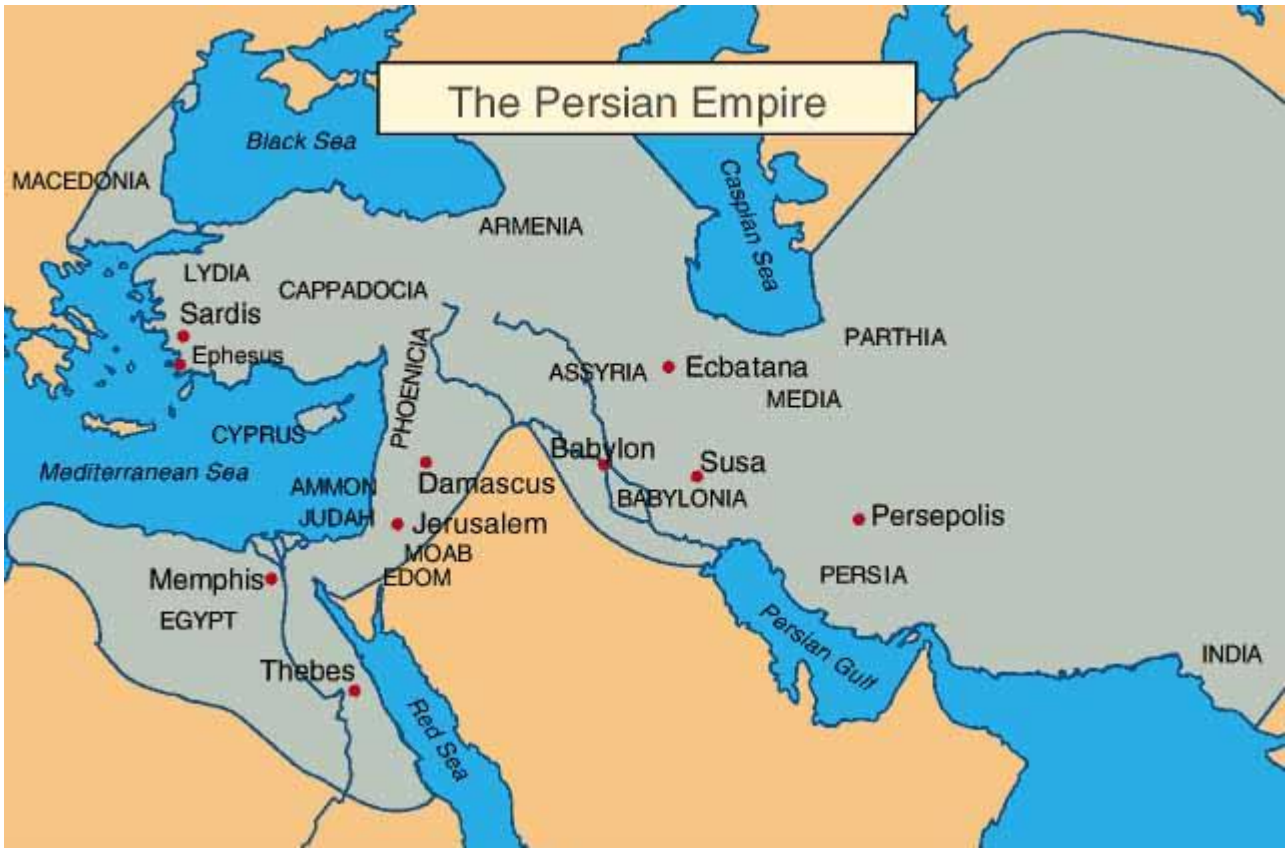
Her.VII 1 When the news about the battle of Marathon reached Darius, son of Hystaspes and king of Persia, his anger against Athens, already great enough on account of the assault on Sardis, was even greater, and he was more than ever determined to make war on Greece. Without loss of time he dispatched couriers to the various states under his dominion with orders to raise an army much larger than before; and also warships, transports, horses, and grain. So the royal command went round; and all Asia was in uproar for three years, with the best men being enrolled in the army for the invasion of Greece, and with the preparations. In the year after that, a rebellion in Egypt, which had been conquered by Cambyses, served only to harden Darius' resolve to go to war, not only against Greece but against Egypt too.[24]

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.5–10h. (Penguin Classics p. 414-420)
Her.VII 5 Xerxes at first was not at all interested in invading Greece but began his reign by building up an army for a campaign in Egypt. But Mardonius[25] – the son of Gobryas and Darius' sister and thus cousin to the king – who was present in court and had more influence with Xerxes than anyone else in the country, used constantly to talk to him on the subject. 'Master,' he would say, 'the Athenians have done us great injury, and it is only right that they should be punished for their crimes. By all means finish the task you already have in hand; but when you have tamed the arrogance of Egypt, then lead an army against Athens. Do that, and your name will be held in honour all over the world, and people will think twice in future before they invade your country.' And to the argument for revenge he would add that Europe was a very beautiful place; it produced every kind of garden tree; the land there was everything that land should be – it was, in short, too good for any mortal except the Persian king.[26]

Her.VII 6 Mardonius' motive for urging the campaign was love of mischief and adventure and the hope of becoming governor of Greece himself; after much persistence he persuaded Xerxes to make the attempt. Certain other occurrences came to his aid.
In the first place, messengers arrived from the Aleuadae in Thessaly (the Aleuadae were the Thessalian reigning family) with an invitation to Xerxes, promising zealous assistance;
at the same time the Pisistratidae in Susa spoke to the same purpose and worked upon him even more through the agency of an Athenian named Onomacritus, a collector of oracles, who had arranged and edited the oracles of Musaeus. The Pisistratidae had made up their quarrel with him before coming to Susa. He had been expelled from Athens by Hipparchus for inserting in the verses of Musaeus a prophecy that the islands off Lemnos would disappear underwater – Lasus of Hermione had caught him in the very act of the forgery. Before his banishment he had been a close friend of Hipparchus. Anyway, he went to Susa; and now, whenever he found himself in the king's presence, the Pisistratidae would talk big about his wonderful powers, and would recite selections from his oracles. Any prophecy which implied a setback to the Persian cause he would carefully omit, choosing for quotation only those which promised the brightest triumphs, describing to Xerxes how it was fore-ordained that the Hellespont should be bridged by a Persian, and how the army would march from Asia into Greece. Subjected, therefore, to this double pressure, from Onomacritus' oracles on one side, and the advice of the Pisistratidae and Aleuadae on the other, Xerxes gave in and allowed himself to be persuaded to undertake the invasion of Greece.

[24] The battle of Marathon was in autumn 490, so Darius' preparations took from 490-487BC. The revolt in Egypt occurred in 486 and was put down in 485BC.
[25] See 6.43; On Demaratus see VI.61-72.
[26] On revenge as a motivating force in Herodotus, see Introduction §4. In Mardonius' description of Europe as a beautiful place we are perhaps to see a clever lie, since Herodotus elsewhere contrasts Persian opulence with European poverty (IX.82).

Her.VII 7 First, however, in the year after Darius' death, he sent an army against the Egyptian rebels and decisively crushed them; then, having reduced the country to a condition of worse servitude than it had ever been in the previous reign, he turned it over to his brother Achaemenes, who long afterwards, while he was still governor, was killed by Inarus, the son of Psammetichus, a Libyan.



Her.VII 8 After the conquest of Egypt, when he was on the point of taking in hand the expedition against Athens, Xerxes called a conference of the leading men in the country, to find out their attitude towards the war and explain to them his own wishes.

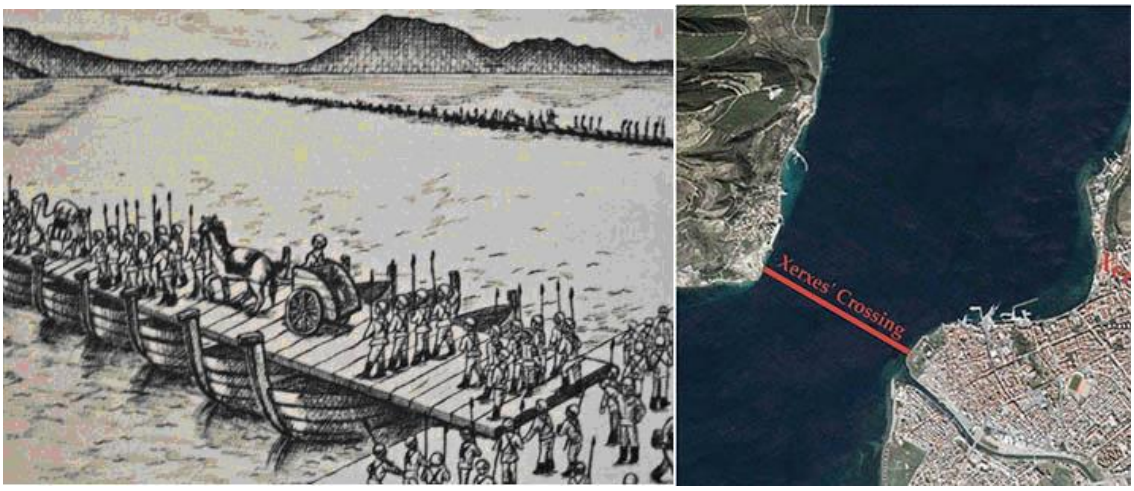
Her.VII 8a When they met, he addressed them as follows:

The speech of Xerxes to the leading men of Persia

'Do not suppose, men of Persia, that I am departing from precedent in the course of action I intend to take. We Persians have a way of living, which I have inherited from my predecessors and propose to follow. I have learned from my elders that ever since Cyrus deposed Astyages and we took over from the Medes the sovereign power we now possess, we have never yet remained inactive. This is God's guidance, and it is by following it that we have gained our great prosperity.

'Of our past history you need no reminder; for you know well enough the famous deeds of Cyrus, Cambyses, and my father Darius, and their additions to our empire. Now I myself, ever since my accession, have been thinking how not to fall short of the kings who have sat upon this throne before me, and how to add as much power as they did to the Persian empire.[27] And now at last I have found a way to win for Persia not glory only, but a country as large and as rich as our own – indeed richer than our own – and at the same time to get satisfaction and revenge. That, then, is the object of this meeting – that I may disclose to you what it is that I intend to do.

[27] Xerxes' speech is an excellent illustration of the compulsion exerted by *nomos* (custom), on which see III.38 and note. His remarks on Persian expansion mirror well the imperialistic tone of many Persian inscriptions; they have also been interpreted as an allusion to Athens' own imperialism during Herodotus's time (see K. Raaflaub, 'Herodotus, Political Thought and the Meaning of History', *Arethusa* 20 (1987) 221-48).



Her.VII 8b 'I will bridge the Hellespont and march an army through Europe into Greece, and punish the Athenians for the outrage they committee upon my father and upon us. As you saw, Darius himself was making his preparations for war against these men; but death prevented him from carrying out his purpose. I therefore on his behalf, and for the benefit of all my subjects, will not rest until I have taken Athens and burnt it to the ground, in revenge for the injury which the Athenians without provocation once did to me and my father. These men, you remember, came to Sardis with Aristagoras the Milesian, a slave of ours, and burnt the temples and sacred groves; and you know all too well how they treated our troops under Datis and Artaphernes, when they landed upon Greek soil.

Her.VII 8c 'For these reasons I have now prepared to make war upon them, and, when I consider the matter, I find several advantages in the venture; if we crush the Athenians and their neighbours who dwell in the land of Pelops the Phrygian, we shall so extend the empire of Persia that its bounds will be God's own sky, so that the sun will not look down upon any land beyond the boundaries of what is ours. With your help I shall pass through Europe from end to end and make it all one country. For if what I am told is true, there is not one city or nation in the world which will be able to withstand us, once these are out of the way. Thus the guilty and the innocent alike shall bear the yoke of servitude.

Her.VII 8d 'If, then, you wish to gain my favour, each one of you must present himself willingly and in good heart on the day which I shall name; whoever brings with him the bet equipped body of troops, I will reward with those marks of distinction held in greatest value by our countrymen. That is what you must do; but so that I shall not appear to consult only my own whim, I will throw the whole matter into open debate, and ask any of you who may wish to do so, to express his views.'

<u>The 'debate' is thrown open; Mardonius is first to respond.</u>

Her.VII 9 The first to speak after the king was Mardonius. 'Of all Persians who have ever lived,' he began, 'and of all who are yet to be born, you, my lord, are the greatest. Every word you have spoken is true and excellent, and you will not allow the wretched Ionians in Europe to make fools of us. It would indeed be a fearsome thing if we who have defeated and enslaved the Sacae, Indians, Ethiopians, Assyrians, and many other great nations, who did us no injury, but merely to extend the boundaries of our empire, should fail now to punish the Greeks who have been guilty of injuring us without provocation. Have we anything to fear from them? The size of their army? Their wealth?

Her.VII 9a 'The question is absurd; we know how they fight; we know how slender their resources are. People of their race we have already reduced to subjection – I mean the Greeks of Asia, Ionians, Aeolians and Dorians. I myself before now have had some experience of these men, when under orders from your father I invaded their country; and I got as far as Macedonia – indeed almost to Athens itself – without a single soldier daring to oppose me.[28]

Her.VII 9b 'Yet, from what I hear, the Greeks are pugnacious enough, and start fights on the spur of the moment without sense or judgement to justify them. When they declare war on each other, they go off to the smoothest and levellest bit of ground they can find, and have their battle on it - with the result that even the victors never get off without heavy losses, and as for the losers – well, they're wiped out. Now surely, as they all talk the same language, they ought to be able to find a better way of settling their differences: by negotiation, for instance, or an interchange of views – indeed by anything rather than by fighting. Or if it is really impossible to avoid coming to blows, they might at least employ the elements of strategy and look for a strong position to fight from. In any case, the Greeks, with their absurd notions of warfare, never even thought of opposing me when I led my army to Macedonia.

Her.VII 9c 'Well then, my lord, who is likely to resist you when you march against them with millions of Asians at your back, and the whole of the Persian fleet? Believe me, it is not in the Greek character to take so desperate a risk. But should I be wrong and they be so foolish as to do battle with us, then they will learn that we are the best soldiers in the world. Nevertheless, let us take this business seriously and spare no pains; success is never automatic in this world – nothing is achieved without trying.'

Her.VII 10 Xerxes' proposals were made to seem plausible by these words of Mardonius, and when he stopped speaking there was a silence. For a while nobody dared to put forward the opposite view, until Artabanus, taking courage from the fact of his relationship to the king – he was a son of Hystaspes and therefore Xerxes' uncle – rose to speak.[29]

Artabanus advises against the expedition

Her.VII 10a 'My lord,' he said, 'without a debate in which both sides of a question are expressed, it is not possible to choose the better course. All one can do is to accept whatever it is that has been proposed. But grant a debate, and there is a fair choice to be made. We cannot assess the purity of gold merely by looking at it: we test it by rubbing it on other gold – then we can tell which is the purer. I warned your father – Darius my own brother – not to attack the Scythians, those wanderers who live in a cityless land. But he would not listen to me. Confident in his power to subdue them he invaded their country, and before he came home again many fine soldiers who marched with him were dead. But you, my lord, mean to attack a nation greatly superior to the Scythians: a nation with the highest reputation for valour both on land and at sea. It is my duty to tell you what you have to fear from them:

Her.VII 10b 'You have said you mean to bridge the Hellespont and march through Europe to Greece. Now suppose – and it is not impossible – that you were to suffer a reverse by sea or land, or even both. These Greeks are said to be great fighters – and indeed one might well judge as much from the fact that the Athenians alone destroyed the great army we sent to attack them under Datis and Artaphernes. Or, if you will, suppose they were to succeed upon one element only – suppose they fell

[28] Mardonius' earlier expedition is narrated at VI.43ff.

[29] Artabanus here assumes the role of 'wise adviser' (Introduction §4); C. Pelling, 'Thucydides' Archidamus and Herodotus' Artabanus', in *Georgica Studies ... George Cawkwell* ed. M. Flower and M. Toher (London 1991) 120-142.

upon our fleet and defeated it, and then sailed to the Hellespont and destroyed the bridge: then, my lord, you would indeed be in peril.

Her.VII 10c 'It is no special wisdom of my own that makes me argue as I do; but just such a disaster as I have suggested did, in fact, very nearly overtake us when your father bridged the Thracian Bosphorus and the Danube to take his army into Scythia. You will remember how on that occasion the Scythians went to all lengths in their efforts to induce the Ionian guard to break the Danube bridge, and how Histiaeus, the tyrant of Miletus, merely by following the advice of the other Ionian tyrants instead of rejecting it, as he did, had it in his power to ruin Persia. Surely it is a dreadful thing even to hear said, that the fortunes of the king once wholly depended upon one single man.[30]

Her.VII 10d 'I urge you, therefore, to abandon this plan; take my advice and do not run any such terrible risk when there is no necessity to do so. Break up this conference; turn the matter over quietly by yourself, and then, when you think fir, announce your decision. Nothing is more valuable to a man than to lay his plans carefully and well.; even if things go against him, and forces he cannot control bring his enterprise to nothing, he still has the satisfaction of knowing that he was defeated by chance – the plans were all laid; if, on the other hand, he leaps headlong into danger and succeeds by luck – well, that's a bit of luck indeed, but he still has the shame of knowing that he was ill-prepared.

Her.VII 10e 'You know, my lord, that amongst living creatures it is the great ones that God smites with his thunder, nor does he allow them to show off. The little ones do not vex him. It is always the great buildings and tall trees which are struck by lightning. It is God's way to bring the lofty low. Often a great army is destroyed by a little one, when God in his envy puts fear into the men's hearts, or sends a thunderstorm, and they are cut to pieces in a way they do not deserve. For God tolerates pride in none but Himself.

Her.VII 10f 'Haste is the mother of failure – and for failure we always pay a heavy price; it is in delay our profit lies – perhaps it may not immediately be apparent, but we shall find it, sure enough, as time goes on.

Her.VII 10g 'This, my lord, is the advice I offer you. And as for you, Mardonius son of Gobryas, I warn you that the Greeks in no way deserve disparagement; so say no more silly things about them. By slandering the Greeks you increase the king's eagerness to make war on them, and, as far as I can see, this is the very thing you yourself most passionately desire. Heaven forbid it should happen! Slander is a wicked thing; in a case of slander two parties do wrong and one suffers by it. The slanderer is guilty in that he speaks ill of a man behind his back; and the man who listens to him is guilty in that he takes his word without troubling to find out the truth. The slandered person suffers doubly – from the disparaging words of the one and from the belief of the other that he deserves disparagement.

Her.VII 10h 'Nevertheless, if there is no avoiding this campaign in Greece, I have one final proposal to make. Let the king stay here in Persia; and you and I will then stake our children upon the issue, and you can start the venture with the men you want and as big an army as you please. And if the king propsers, as you say he will, then I consent that my sons should be killed, and myself with them; if my own prediction is fulfilled, let *your* sons forfeit their lives – and you too – if ever you get home.
'Maybe you will refuse this wager, and still persist in leading an army to Greece. In that case I venture a prophecy: the day will come when many a man left at home will hear the news that Mardonius has brought disaster upon Persia, and that his body lies a prey to dogs and birds, somewhere in the

[30] For the conference at the Danube see IV.136-142.

country of the Athenians or the Spartans – if not upon the road thither.[31] For that is the way you will find out the quality of the people against whom you are urging the king to make war.'

[The reaction of Xerxes to Artabanus' speech is fury. He condemns Artabanus to stay in Persia with the women and children; later that night Xerxes reconsiders Artabanus' advice, but a dream tells him to invade. VII.12]

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.49-50 (Penguin Classics p.434-435)

[Xerxes reviews his army and is delighted with it, but weeps for the brevity of human life: '*not one will be alive in 100 years' time'*. He asks Artabanus for his opinion on its size and chances of success, or whether he should recruit even more men and ships.]

Her.VII 49 'No man of sense, my lord,' Artabanus replied, 'could find any fault with the size of your army or the number of your ships. If you increase your forces, the two powers I have in mind will be even worse enemies to you than they are now. I will tell you what they are – the land and the sea. So far as I know there is not a harbour big enough to receive this fleet of our and give it protection in the event of storms: and indeed there would have to be not merely one such harbour, but many – all along the coast by which you will sail. But there is not a single one; so I would have you realise, my lord, that men are at the mercy of circumstance, and not their master.
'Now let me tell you of your other great enemy, the land. If you meet with no opposition, the land will itself become more and more hostile to you the further you advance, drawn on and on; for men are never satisfied by success. What I mean is this – if nobody stops your advance, the land itself – the mere distance growing greater and greater as the days go by – will ultimately starve you.[32] No: the best man, in my belief, is he who lays his plans warily, with an eye for every disaster which might occur, and then, when the time comes, acts boldly.'

Her.VII 50 'There is good sense,' Xerxes answered, 'in everything you have said; nevertheless you ought not to be so timid always, or to think of every accident which might possibly overtake us. If upon the proposal of a plan you were always to weight equally all the possible chances, you would never do anything. I would much rather take a risk and run into trouble half the time than keep out of trouble through being afraid of everything.
'If you dispute whatever is said to you, but can never prove your objections, you are as likely to be wrong as the other man – indeed there is nothing to choose between you. And as for the proof – how can a man ever be certain? Certainty, surely, is beyond human grasp. But however that may be, the usual thing is that profit comes to those who are willing to act, not to the overcautious and hesitant.
'Just think how the power of Persia has grown: if my predecessors had felt as you do – or even if they had not, but had taken the advice of men who did – you would never have seen our country in its present glory. No indeed: it was by taking risks that my ancestors brought us to where we stand today. Only by great risks can great results be achieved. We, therefore, are following in the footsteps of our fathers; we are marching to war at the best season of the year; we shall conquer all Europe, and –

[31] The failure to be buried is a Greek horror; according to I.140, mutilation by dogs and birds was part of Persian burial practice. This is the first prophecy of Mardonius' ultimate fate; a second appears at VIII.114.
[32] Cf. Aeschylus *Persians 792-4; '**Darius:** For the land itself is the Greeks' ally. **Chorus:** What do you mean 'their ally'? **Darius:** It destroys excessive numbers by starvation.'*

without being starved to death anywhere or having any other unpleasant experience – we shall return home in triumph. For one thing, we are carrying ample stores with us; for another, we will have the grain belonging to any country we may enter, no matter who lives there. Our enemies, remember, are not nomad tribes[33] – they are agricultural peoples.'

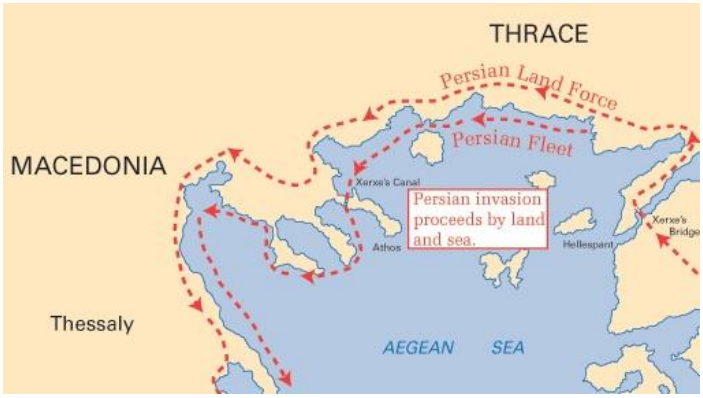
Herodotus, *Histories* 7.102 (Penguin Classics p.448-9)

[Xerxes is again seeking the opinion of a subject. This time he speaks to a former Spartan King, Demaratus son of Ariston, who is in exile. Demaratus asks Xerxes if he wants to hear the truth, or to hear pleasant news; Xerxes asks for the truth.]

Her.VII 102 Encouraged by this Demaratus continued: 'My lord, you bid me speak nothing but the truth, to say nothing which might later be proved a lie. Very well then; this is my answer: poverty is Greece's inheritance from of old, but valour she won for herself by wisdom and the strength of law. By her valour Greece now keeps both poverty and despotism at bay.

'I think highly of all Greeks of the Dorian lands, but what I am about to say will apply not to all Dorians, but to the Spartans only. First then, they will not under any circumstances accept terms from you which would mean slavery for Greece; secondly, they will fight you even if the rest of Greece submits. Moreover, there is no use in asking if there numbers are adequate to enable them to do this; suppose a thousand of them take the field – then that thousand will fight you; and so will any number, greater than this or less.'

[33] A reference to the Scythians.



Herodotus, *Histories* 7.131–133 (Penguin Classics p.458)

Medising

Her.VII 131 His stay in Pieria lasted a number of days, during which one third of his army was felling the forest through the mountains of Macedonia, making a route for his troops to follow into Perrhaebia. Meanwhile the representatives who had been sent to Greece to demand submission rejoined the army – some empty-handed, others bringing the earth and water.

Her.VII 132 Those who gave the tokens of submission were the following: the Thessalians, Dolopes, Aenianes, Perrhaebi, Locrians, Magnetes, Malians, Achaeans of Phthiotis, Thebans, and all the other Boeotians except the people of Plataea and Thespiae. Against these the Greeks who determined to resist the invader swore an oath to the effect that, once the war was fought to a successful conclusion, they would punish all men of Greek blood, who without compulsion yielded to the Persians, and dedicate a tenth part of their property to the god at Delphi.

Her.VII 133 To Athens and Sparta Xerxes sent no demand for submission because of what had happened to the messengers whom Darius had sent on a previous occasion:

at Athens they were thrown into the pit like criminals, at Sparta they were pushed into a well – and told that if they wanted earth and water for the king, to get them from there.

http://www.300spartanwarriors.com/images/944_Frank_Miller War declared.jpg

This time, therefore, Xerxes refrained from sending a request. Just what disagreeable consequences were suffered by the Athenians for this treatment of the king's messengers I am unable to say; perhaps it was the destruction of their city and the countryside around it – though I do not myself believe that this happened as a direct consequence of their crime.[34]

[34][34] Herodotus refers to the burning of Attica in 480 and 479BC (VIII.53 and IX.13).

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.138–139 (Penguin Classics p.460-461)

Her.VII 138 The purpose of Xerxes' expedition, which was directed nominally against Athens was in fact the conquest of the whole of Greece. The various Greek communities had long been aware of this, but they viewed the coming danger with very different eyes. Some had already made their submission, and were consequently in good spirits, because they were sure of getting off lightly at the invaders' hands; others, who had refused to submit, were thrown into panic partly because there were not enough ships in Greece to meet the Persians with any chance of success, and partly because most of the Greeks were unwilling to fight and all too ready to accept Persian dominion.

Her.VII 139 At this point I find myself compelled to express an opinion which I know most people will object to; nevertheless, as I believe it to be true, I will not suppress it.[35] If the Athenians, through fear of the approaching danger, had abandoned their country, or if they had stayed there and submitted to Xerxes, there would have been no attempt to resist the Persians by sea; and, in the absence of a Greek fleet, it is easy to see what would have been the course of events on land.
However many lines of fortification the Spartans had built across the Isthmus, they would have been deserted by their confederates; not that their allies would have willingly deserted them, but they could not have helped doing so, because one by one they would have fallen victims to the Persian naval power. Thus the Spartans would have been left alone – to perform great deeds and to die nobly. Or, on the other hand, it is possible that before things came to the ultimate test, the sight of the rest of Greece submitting to Persia might have driven them to make terms with Xerxes. In either case the Persian conquest of Greece would have been assured; for I cannot myself see what possible use there could have been in fortifying the Isthmus if the Persians had command of the sea.
In view of this, therefore, one is surely right in saying that Greece was saved by the Athenians. It was the Athenians who held the balance: whichever side they joined was sure to prevail. It was the Athenians, too, who, having chosen that Greece should live and preserve her freedom, roused to battle the other Greek states which had not yet submitted. It was the Athenians who – after the gods – drove back the Persian king. Not even the terrifying warnings of the oracle at Delphi could persuade them to abandon Greece; they stood firm and had the courage to meet the invader.[36]

[35] Writing in the early years of the Peloponnesian War, Herodotus knows that defence of Athens will be disliked because Athens had become 'the tyrant city', ruling with an iron fist the empire of Greek states. Although this is indeed a strong defence of Athens, it will also have carried a string of reproval, since contemporaries cannot have failed to notice the change that scarcely two generations had wrought: Greece's great saviour was in the present her great enslaver; see also VIII.144. On the whole topic see Fornara (1971) 45-6, 84-6; for a study of the argumentation of the passage, N. Demand, 'Herodotus' Encomium of Athens: Science or Rhetoric?' *AJP* 108 (1987) 746-58. We should not overlook, however, the obvious conclusion to be drawn from Herodotus' remarks: that most people thought that the Spartans had saved Greece in the Persian Wars. (I owe this 'obvious' point, which is often overlooked, to Michael Flower).

[36] The mention of the oracles now leads Herodotus to his account of them here. But when did Athens consult them, and did they establish a policy before or in the light of them? See VIII.14 note

54. The Acropolis as it would have appeared in 480 B.C., with the old temple of Athena (ca. 510–500 B.C.) on the left and the half-finished older Parthenon (started ca. 490 B.C.) on the right. (Watercolor b Peter Connolly)

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.141–145 (Penguin Classics p.462-464)

[On consulting the Delphic oracle the Athenians hear from the priestess Aristonice that Athens is doomed; they should fly and 'bow their hearts to grief']

Her.VII 141 The Athenian envoys heard these words with dismay; indeed they were about to abandon themselves to despair at the dreadful fate which was prophesied, when Timon, the son of Androbulus and one of the most distinguished men in Delphi, suggested that they should take branches of olive in their hands and, in the guise of suppliants, approach the oracle a second time. The Athenians acted upon this suggestion. 'Lord Apollo,' they said, 'can you not, in consideration of these olive boughs which we have brought you, give us some better prophecy about our country? Otherwise we will never leave the holy place but stay here till we die.'

Thereupon the priestess uttered a second prophecy, which ran as follows:

Not wholly can Pallas win the heart of Olympian Zeus,
Though she prays him with many prayers and all her subtlety;
Yet will I speak to you this other word, as firm as adamant:
Though all else shall be taken within the bound of Cecrops
And the fastness of the holy mount of Cithaeron,
Yet Zeus the all-seeing grants to Athene's prayer
That the wooden wall only shall not fall, but help you and your children.
But await not the host of horse and foot coming from Asia,
Nor be still, but turn your back and withdraw from the foe.
Truly a day will come when you will meet him face to face.
Divine Salamis, you will bring death to women's sons
When the corn is scattered, or the harvest gathered in.

Her.VII 142 This second answer seemed to be, as indeed it was, less menacing than the first; so the envoys wrote it down and returned to Athens. When it was made public on their arrival in the city, and the attempt to explain it began, amongst the various opinions which were expressed there were two mutually exclusive interpretations. Some of the older men supposed that the prophecy meant that the acropolis would escape destruction, on the grounds that the acropolis was fenced in the old days with a thorn-hedge, and that this was the 'wooden wall' of the oracle; but others thought that by this expression the god indicated the ships, and they urged in consequence that everything should be abandoned in favour of the immediate preparation of the fleet. There was, however, for those who believed 'wooden wall' to mean ships, one disturbing thing – namely the last two lines of the Priestess' prophecy:

Divine Salamis, you will bring death to women's sons
When the corn is scattered, or the harvest gathered in.

This was a very awkward statement and caused profound disturbance amongst all who took the wooden wall to signify ships; for the professional interpreters understood the lines to mean that they would be beaten at Salamis in a fight at sea.

Her.VII 143 There was, however, a man in Athens who had recently come into prominence – Themistocles called Neocles' son; he now came forward and declared that there was an important point in which the professional interpreters were mistaken.[37] If, he maintained, the disaster referred to was to strike the Athenians, it would not have been expressed in such mild language. 'Hateful Salamis' would surely have been a more likely phrase than 'divine Salamis', if the inhabitants of the country were doomed to destruction there. On the contrary, the true interpretation was that the oracle referred not to the Athenians but to their enemies. The 'wooden wall' did, indeed, mean the ships; so he advised his countrymen to prepare at once to meet the invader at sea.
The Athenians found Themistocles' explanation of the oracle preferable to that of the professional interpreters, who had not only tried to dissuade them from preparing to fight at sea but had been against offering opposition of any sort. The only thing to do was, according to them, to abandon Attica altogether and seek a home elsewhere.

Her.VII 144 Once on a previous occasion Themistocles had succeeded in getting his views accepted, to the great benefit of his country. The Athenians had amassed a large sum of money from the produce of the mines at Laurium, which they proposed to share out amongst themselves at the rate of ten drachmas a man; Themistocles, however, persuaded them to give up this idea and, instead of distributing the money, to spend it on the construction of two hundred warships for use in the war with Aegina.[38]

The outbreak of this war at that moment saved Greece by forcing Athens to become a maritime power. In point of fact the two hundred ships were not employed for the purpose for which they were built, but were available for Greece in her hour of need. The Athenians found it necessary to expand this existing fleet by laying down new ships, and they determined in debate after the discussion on the oracle, to take the god's advice and meet the invader at sea with all the force they possessed, and with any other Greeks who were willing to join them.

[37] Themistocles had been archon in 493, and some have seen a slight in Herodotus' use of 'recently' here in the year 480; but see Fornara (1971) 68. That Themistocles was the architect of Greek victory in the campaign of 480 could not be doubted, even by the usually jealous and suspicious Greeks: see VIII.123-5.

[38] *Ath. Pol.* 22.7 dates this to 483/2; the mines at Laurium in southern Attica were farmed out by the Athenian state for an annual percentage of the revenues. In the present or perhaps preceding year the discovery of a rich vein of silver meant a windfall for the Athenian state. On the mines see R.J. Hopper, 'The mines and Miners of Ancient Athens', *Greece and Rome* 8 (1961) 138-151. On the long-standing conflict between Aegina and Athens see *CAH IV*^{2}, 339-340.

Her.VII 145 At a conference of the Greek states who were loyal to the general cause guarantees were exchanged, and the decision was reached that the first thing to be done was to patch up their own quarrels and stop any fighting which happened to be going on amongst members of the confederacy.[39] There were a number of such disputes at the time, the most serious being the quarrel between Athens and Aegina. Having learned that Xerxes and his army had reached Sardis, they next resolved to send spies into Asia to get information about the Persian forces; at the same time, in the hope of uniting, if it were possible, the whole Greek world and of bringing all the various communities to undertake joint action in the face of the common danger, they decided to send an embassy to Argos to conclude an alliance, another to Gelon, the son of Deinomenes, in Sicily, and others, again, to Corcyra and Crete. Gelon was said to be very powerful – far more powerful than anyone else of Greek nationality.

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.151–152 (Penguin Classics p. 467-468)

[Xerxes has sent messengers to Argos claiming common descent with the Persians through Perseus (son of Andromeda); he suggests that Argos would be rewarded for staying neutral; there is a story that Argos engineered staying out of the war by claiming a share in the leadership of the Greek army, knowing Sparta would refuse.]

Her.VII 151 There are people in Greece who say that this account is borne out by a remark made long afterwards by Artaxerxes. Callias son of Hipponicus and a number of other Athenians were in Susa, the city of Memnon, on different business,[40] and it so happened that their visit coincided with that of some representatives from Argos, who had been sent to ask Xerxes' son Artaxerxes if the friendly relations, which the Argives had established with his father, still held good, or if they were now considered by Persia as enemies. 'They do indeed hold good,' Artaxerxes is said to have replied; 'there is no city which I believe to be a better friend to me than Argos.'

Her.VII 152 For my own part I cannot positively state that Xerxes either did, or did not, send the messenger to Argos; nor can I guarantee the story of the Argives going to Susa and asking Artaxerxes about their relationship with Persia. I express no opinion on this matter other than that of the Argives themselves. One thing, however, I am very sure of: and that is, that if all mankind agreed to meet, and everyone brought his own sufferings along with him for the purpose of exchanging them for somebody else's, there is not a man who, after taking a good look at his neighbour's sufferings, would not be only too happy to return home with his own. So the Argives were not the worst offenders.
My business is to record what people say, but I am by no means bound to believe it – and that may be taken to apply to this book as a whole. There is yet another story about the Argives: it was they, according to some, who invited the Persians to invade Greece because their war with Sparta was going badly and they felt that anything would be better than their present plight.

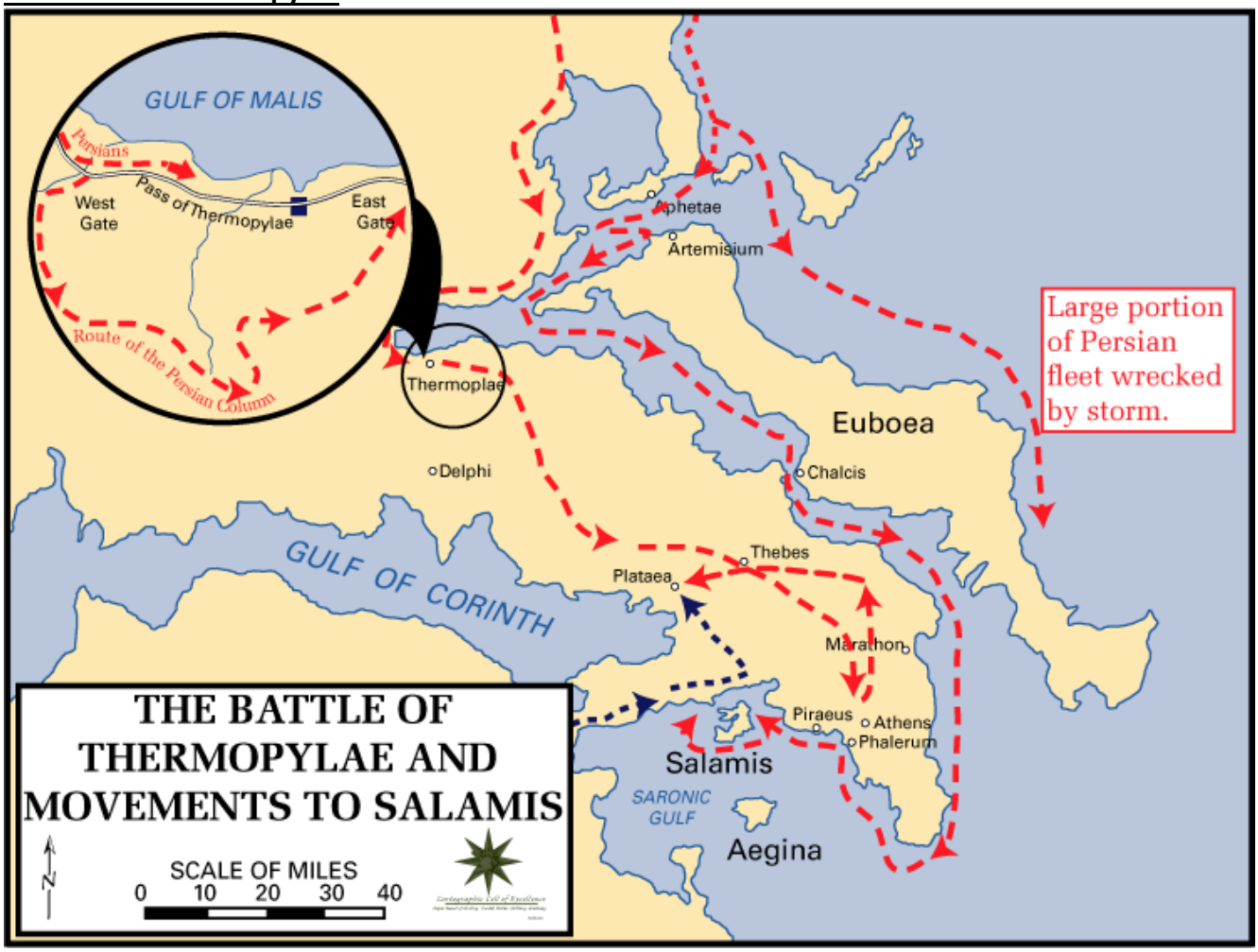
[39] The modern name given to this group of states is the Hellenic League of 481. Its purpose, of course, was to resist the Persians, probably for as long as necessary. The leading states of Sparta and Athens would have been the prime movers, although Sparta, as the greatest power, was given the supreme command by land and sea. The members of the confederacy can be known from the **Serpent Column** dedicated at the end of the wars (see IX.81 with note), although at the outset the League will also have included city-states that later during the actual campaign switched to the Persian side. See P.A. Brunt, 'The Hellenic League against Persia', *Studies in Greek History and Thought* (Oxford 1993) 47-83.

[40] Callias was in Susa, it is thought, in order to negotiate a formal peace between Athens and Persia in 449. The 'Peace of Callias' is an endlessly debated topic in Greek history, but it belongs to Greco-Persian relations after the period treated in Herodotus' history. See Sealey 278-282.

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.174–175 (Penguin Classics p. 477-478)

Her.VII 174 The Greeks, then, re-embarked and returned to the Isthmus. Such were the circumstances of the expedition to Thessaly – it took place while Xerxes was at Adybos, just before he crossed the strait from Asia into Europe. The result of it was that the Thessalians, finding themselves without support, no longer hesitated but whole-heartedly worked in the Persian interest, so that in the course of the war they proved of the greatest use to Xerxes.

The Battle of Thermopylae



Her.VII 175 The Greeks on their return to the Isthmus then discussed, in consideration of the warning they had received from Alexander, where they should make a stand. The proposal which found most favour was to guard the pass of Thermopylae, on the grounds that it was narrower than the pass into Thessaly and at the same time nearer home. They knew nothing as yet about the mountain track by means of which the men who fell at Thermopylae were taken in the rear, and only learned of its existence from the people of Trachis after their arrival.[41]

[41] For the topography of Thermopylae see HW ii.207-9; Burn 409-11; map at Burn 408; Lazenby 133. Like Marathon, Thermopylae retains its romantic glow, in this case because of the selfless devotion of Leonidas and the 300 Spartans. For modern treatments of the battle see Burn 406-422 (with good remarks on Herodotus' presentation); Hignett (1963) 105-48; Lazenby 117-150.

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.207 (Penguin Classics p. 488)

Her.VII 207 The Persian army was now close to the pass, and the Greeks, suddenly doubting their power to resist, held a conference to consider the advisability of retreat. It was proposed by the Peloponnesians generally that the army should fall back upon the Peloponnese and hold the Isthmus; but when the Phocians and Locrians expressed their indignation at this suggestion, Leonidas gave his vote for staying where they were and sending, at the same time, an appeal for reinforcements to the various states of the confederacy, as their numbers were inadequate to cope with the Persians.[42]

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.219–222 (Penguin Classics p. 492-3)

Her.VII 219 The Greeks at Thermopylae had their first warning of the death that was coming with the dawn from the seer Megistias, who read their doom in the victims of sacrifice; deserters, too, came in during the night with news of the Persian flank movement, and lastly, just as day was breaking, the look-out men came running from the hills. In council of war their opinions were divided, some urging that they must not abandon their post, others the opposite. The result was that the army split: some dispersed, contingents returning to their various cities, while others made ready to stand by Leonidas.

Her.VII 220 It is said that Leonidas himself dismissed them, to spare their lives, but thought it unbecoming for the Spartans under his command to desert the post which they had originally come to guard.[43] I myself am inclined to think that he dismissed them when he realized that they had no heart for the fight and were unwilling to take their share of the danger; at the same time honour forbade that he himself should go. And indeed by remaining at his post he left great glory behind him, and Sparta did not lose her prosperity, as might otherwise have happened; for right at the outset of the war the Spartans had been told by the Delphic oracle that either their city must be laid waste by the foreigner or a Spartan king be killed. The prophecy was in hexameter verse and ran as follows:

> Hear you fate, O dwellers in Sparta of the wide spaces;
> Either your famed, great town must be sacked by Perseus' sons,
> Or, if that be not, the whole land of Lacedaemon
> Shall mourn the death of a king of the house of Heracles,
> For not the strength of lions or of bulls shall hold him,
> Strength against strength; for he has the power of Zeus,
> And will not be checked till one of these two he has consumed.

I believe it was the thought of this oracle, combined with his wish to lay up for the Spartans a treasure of fame in which no other city should share, that made Leonidas dismiss those troops; I do not think that they deserted or went off without orders, because of a difference of opinion.

Her.VII 221 Moreover, I am strongly supported in this view by the case of the seer Megistias, who was with the army – an Acarnanian, said to be of the clan of Melampus – who foretold the coming doom from his inspection of the sacrificial victims. He quite plainly received orders from Leonidas to quit Thermopylae, to save him from sharing the army's fate. He refused to go, but he sent his only son, who was serving with the forces.

Her.VII 222 Thus it was that the confederate troops, by Leonidas' orders, abandoned their posts and left the pass, all except the Thespians and the Thebans who remained with the Spartans. The Thebans were detained by Leonidas as hostages very much against their will; but the Thespians of their own

[42] Throughout Herodotus' narrative the Peloponnesians wish to fall back below the Isthmus of Corinth in order to defend the Peloponnese; such a move would leave central Greece – Phocis, Locris, Plataea and Athens – to its fate.
[43] On the Spartan prohibition against leaving their post see Demaratus' words at VII.104.

accord refused to desert Leonidas and his men, and stayed, and died with them. They were under the command of Demophilus the son of Diadromes.[44]

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.228.2 (Penguin Classics p. 495)

Her.VII 228 The dead were buried where they fell, and with them the men who had been killed before those dismissed by Leonidas left the pass. Over them is this inscription, in honour of the whole force:

Four thousand here from Pelops' land
Against three million once did stand.

The Spartans have a special epitaph; it runs:

Go tell the Spartans, you who read:
We took their orders, and here lie dead.

For the seer Megistias there is the following:

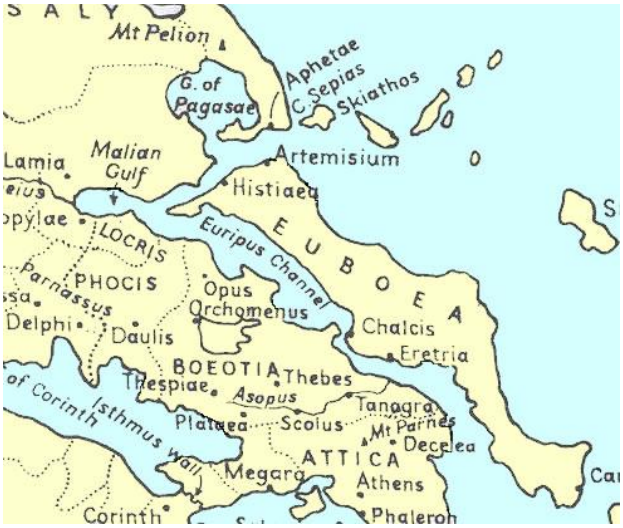
Here lies Megistias, who died
When the Mede passed Spercheius' tide.
A prophet; yet he scorned to save
Himself, but shared the Spartans' Grave.

The columns with the epitaphs inscribed on them were erected in honour of the dead by the Amphictyons – though the epitaph upon the seer Megistias was the work of Simonides, the son of Leoprepes, who put it there for friendship's sake.

[44] Plutarch (*On the Malice of Herodotus* 31), in one of the few places where he scores a hit against Herodotus, finds fault here for the treatment of the Thebans. Retaining people of doubtful loyalty in such a situation would have weakened Leonidas' position. Herodotus here has fallen for the anti-Theban propaganda that was rife in Athens before and during the Peloponnesian War. Diodorus (XI.4.7) says that the Thebans with Leonidas were members 'of the other party', i.e. the one that was opposed to Persia. For Thebes' actions in the Persian wars see Demand 20-27.

Herodotus, *Histories* 8.1-3 (Penguin Classics p. 501)

The sea battle at Artemisium



Her.VIII 1 The following is the roll of the Greek naval force: 127 ships from Athens – partly manned by the Plataeans, whose courage and patriotism led them to undertake this service in spite of their ignorance of nautical matters; 40 from Corinth, 20 from Megara, 20 more from Athens manned by crews from Chalcis, 18 from Aegina, 12 from Sicyon, 10 from Sparta, 8 from Epidaurus, 7 from Eretria, 5 from Troezen, 2 from Styra, and 2 – together with 2 penteconters – from Ceos. Lastly, the Locrians of Opus joined with 7 penteconters.

Her.VIII 2 These, then, were the states which sent ships to Artemisium, and I have given the number which each contributed. The total strength of the fleet, excluding the penteconters, was thus 271 ships of war. The general officer in command, Eurybiades, the son of Eurycleides, was provided by Sparta; for the other members of the confederacy had stipulated for a Lacedaemonian commander, declaring that rather than serve under an Athenian[45] they would break up the intended expedition altogether.

Her.VIII 3 From the first, even before Sicily was asked to join the alliance, there had been talk of the advisability of giving Athens command of the fleet; but the proposal had not been well received by the allied states, and the Athenians waived their claim in the interest of national survival, knowing that a quarrel about the command would certainly mean the destruction of Greece.[46] They were, indeed, perfectly right; for the evil of internal strife is worse than united war in the same proportion as war itself is worse than peace. It was their realization of the danger attendant upon lack of unity which made them waive their claim, and they continued to do so as long as Greece desperately needed their help.

This was made plain enough by their subsequent action; for when the Persians had been driven from Greece and the war had been carried into Persian territory, the Athenians made the insufferable behaviour of Pausanias their excuse for depriving the Lacedaemonians of their command.[47]

[45] 'This section introduces the theme of Athenian selflessness, which will include the sacrifice of their city and provide the climax to the book (VIII.143-4), and of the fragile nature of the Greek alliance. Problems of leadership and precedence beset the Greek alliance generally (e.g. VII.145 – Argives; VII.153-162 Gelon's demands; IX.26-8 Athens and Tegeans). This disunity, immediately revealed, contrasts with the unity implied by the catalogue.' (Bowie)

[46] Since Sparta was the great power in Greece at the time of the Persian Wars, it was only to be expected that she would provide the commander-in-chief. Athens indeed may have wanted the naval command, but Herodotus is here misled by later Athenian naval greatness to assume (anachronistically) that she was the obvious choice in 480. It was, in fact, the Persian Wars and their aftermath that saw the rise of Athens to command of the seas.

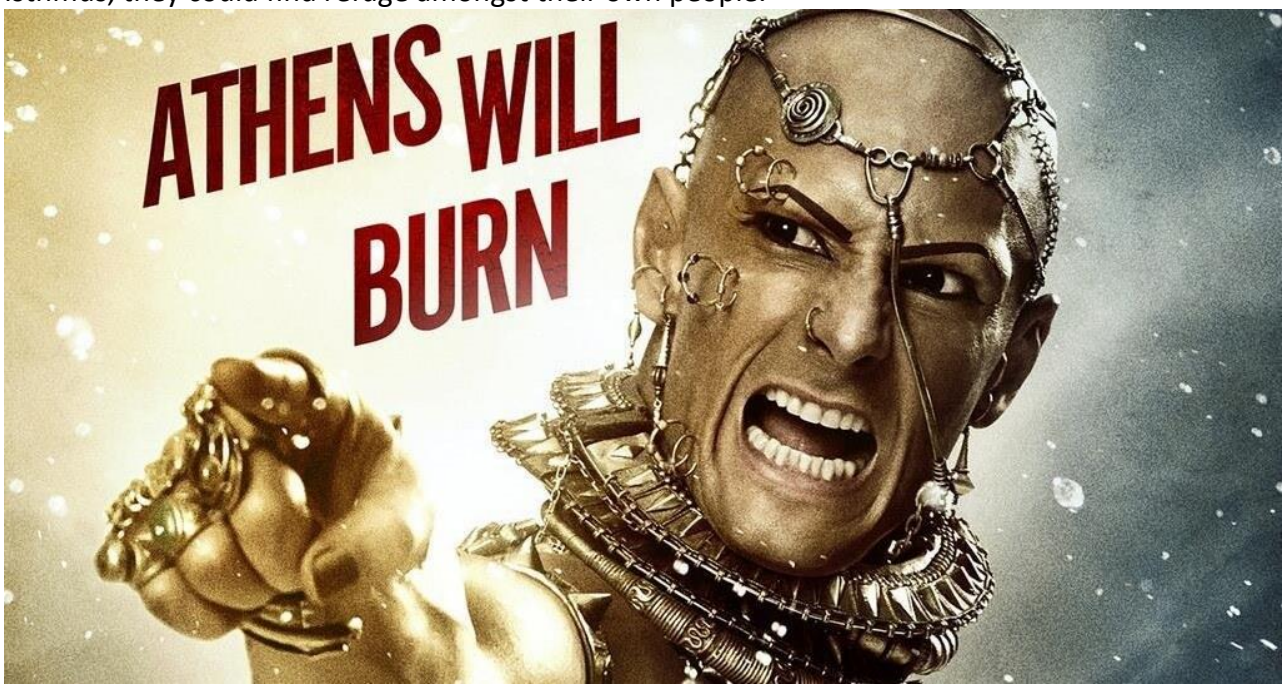
[47] For this incident, which belongs in the immediate aftermath of the Persian Wars, see Thuc I.95. Herodotus' expression here suggests that he, like Thucydides, saw the deprival as a way for the Athenians to achieve a goal long in the planning.

Herodotus, *Histories* 8.49–50 (Penguin Classics p. 516)

The sea battle at Salamis 480BC

Her.VIII 49 When the commanders of the various contingents I have mentioned met at Salamis, a council of war was held, and Eurybiades called for suggestions, from anyone who wished to speak, on the most suitable place for engaging the enemy fleet in the territory still under their control – Attica was exclude, as it had already been given up.

The general feeling of the council was in favour of sailing to the Isthmus and fighting in defence of the Peloponnese, on the grounds that if they were beaten at Salamis they would find themselves blocked up in an island, where no help could reach them, whereas if disaster overtook them at the Isthmus, they could find refuge amongst their own people.



Her.VIII 50 This was the view of the Peloponnesian officers. While the discussion was still going on, a man arrived from Athens with news that the Persians had entered Attica and were firing the whole country.

This was the work of the division of the army under Xerxes which had taken the route through Boeotia; they had burnt Thespiae after the inhabitants had escaped to the Peloponnese, and at Plataea too, and then entered Attica, where they were causing wholesale devastation. The Thebans had told them that Thespiae and Plataea had refused to submit to Persian domination: hence their destruction.

[Herodotus tells us that the crossing of the Hellespont had taken one month and the march from the Hellespont to Attica a further three months]

Herodotus, *Histories* 8.56–63 (Penguin Classics p. 518-522)

Her.VIII 56 Meanwhile at Salamis the effect of the news of what had happened to the Acropolis at Athens was so disturbing, that some of the naval commanders did not even wait for the subject under discussion to be decided, but hurried on board and began hoisting sail for immediate flight. Some, however, stayed; and by these a resolution was passed to fight in defence of the Isthmus.

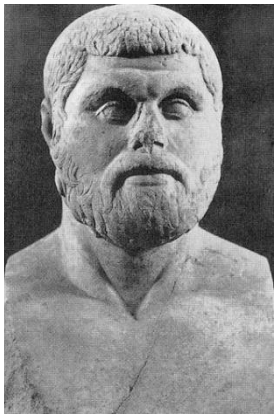
Her.VIII 57 During the night, when the various commanders had returned to their ships after the break-up of the conference, an Athenian named Mnesiphilus made his way to Themistocles' ship and asked him what plan it had been decided to adopt.[48] On learning that they had resolved to sail to the Isthmus and to fight there in defence of the Peloponnese, 'No, no,' he exclaimed,; 'once the fleet leaves Salamis, it will no longer be one country that you'll be fighting for. Everyone will go home, and neither Eurybiades not anybody else will be able to prevent the total dissolution of our forces. The plan is absurd and will be the ruin of Greece. Now listen to me: try, if you possibly can, to upset the decision of the conference – it may be that you will be able to persuade Eurybiades to change his mind and remain at Salamis.'

Her.VIII 58 Themistocles highly approved of this suggestion, and without saying a word he went to the ship of the commander-in-chief and told him that he had something of public importance to discuss. Eurybiades invited him aboard and gave him permission to speak his mind, whereupon Themistocles, taking a seat beside him, repeated Mnesiphilus' arguments as if they were his own, with plenty of new ones added, until he convinced him by the sheer urgency of his appeal, that the only thing to do was to go ashore and call the officers to another conference.

Her.VIII 59 The conference met, and then, before Eurybiades even had time to announce its purpose, Themistocles, unable to restrain his eagerness, broke into a passionate speech. He was interrupted by Adeimantus, the son of Ocytus, commander of the Corinthian contingent. 'Themistocles,' he observed, 'in the races, the man who starts before the signal is whipped.' 'Yes,' was Themistocles' retort, 'but those who start too late win no prizes.'

Her.VIII 60 It was a mild retort – for the moment. To Eurybiades he used none of his previous arguments about the danger of the force breaking up if they left Salamis; for it would have been unbecoming to accuse any of the confederates actually to their faces. The line he took was quite different.
60a 'It is now in your power,' he said, 'to save Greece, if you take my advice and engage the enemy's fleet here in Salamis, instead of withdrawing to the Isthmus as these other people suggest. Let me put the two plans before you, and you can weigh them up and see which is the better. Take the Isthmus first: if you fight there, it will have to be in the open sea, and that will be greatly to our disadvantage, with our smaller numbers and slower ships. Moreover, even if everything else goes well, you will lose Salamis, Megara, and Aegina. Again, if the enemy fleet comes south, the army will follow it; so you will yourself be responsible for drawing it to the Peloponnese, thus putting the whole of Greece in peril.

[48] Not much is known about Mnesiphilus: his name has turned up on pot sherds used for ostracism, and Plutarch (*Themistocles 2*) makes him Themistocles' teacher in politics (an inference from this passage?) and a student of Solon's. Although Fornara (1971) 72 n.19 sees his introduction as 'calculated to give dramatic emphasis to the crucial moment at Salamis, not to deprive Themistocles of credit', most scholars would agree with Hignett (1963) 204 that is it 'manifestly a spiteful invention to deprive Themistocles of the credit for his originality and insight'. In any case the story is unhistorical and should be rejected; note that Themistocles does not even use these arguments at ch.60.



How far Herodotus has accurately recounted the part played by Themistocles is debated by scholars. The so-called 'Themistocles Decree, an inscription discovered at Troezen in 1960, suggests that some of the crucial decision were agreed upon at an earlier stage. See M. Henderson 'The Decree of Themistocles' *Acta Classica 20 (1977)* 85-103.

Later in his career Themistocles was ostracised and fled to Persia Thuc 1.135-8.

60b 'Now for my plan: it will bring, if you adopt it, the following advantages: first, we shall be fighting in narrow waters, and there, with our inferior numbers, we shall win, provided things go as we may reasonably expect. Fighting in a confined space favours us but the open sea favours the enemy. Secondly, Salamis, where we have put our women and children, will be preserved; and thirdly – for you the most important point of all – you will be fighting in defence of the Peloponnese by remaining here just as much as by withdrawing to the Isthmus. – nor, if you have the sense to follow my advice, will you draw the Persian army to the Peloponnese.

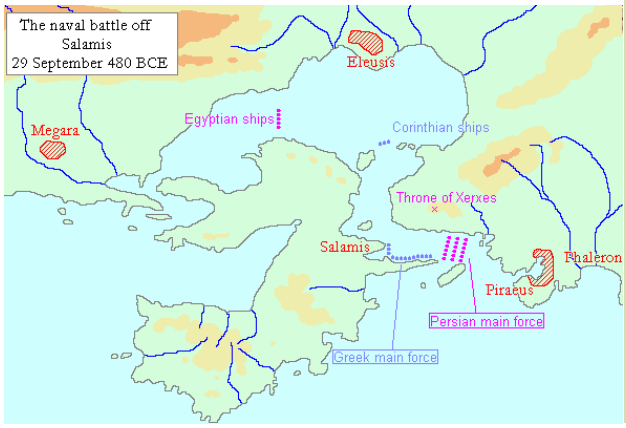
60c 'If we beat them at sea, as I expect we shall, they will not advance to attack you on the Isthmus, or come further than Attica; they will retreat in disorder, and we shall gain by the preservation of Megara, Aegina and Salamis – where an oracle has already foretold our victory. Let a man lay his plans with due regard to common sense, and he will usually succeed; otherwise he will find that God is unlikely to favour human designs.'

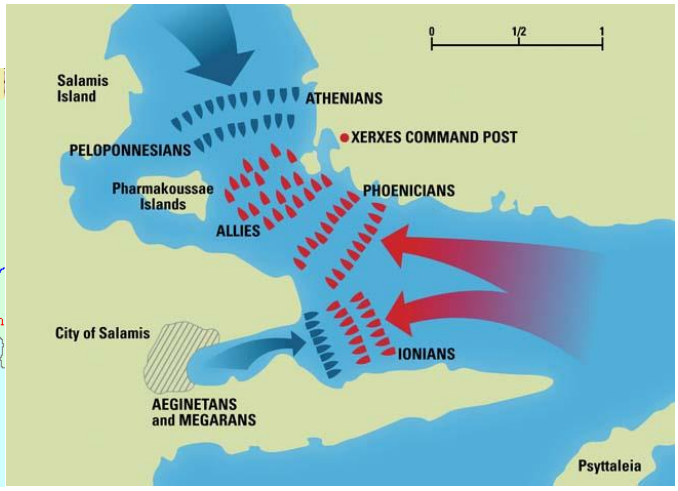
Her.VIII 61 During this speech Themistocles was again attacked by the Corinthian Adeimantus, who told him to hold his tongue because he was a man without a country, and tried to prevent Eurybiades from putting any question to the vote at the instance of a mere refugee. Let Themistocles, he cried, provide himself with a country before he offered his advice. The point of the jibe was, of course, the fact that Athens had fallen and was in Persian hands. This time Themistocles' retort was by no means mild; he heartily abused both Adeimantus and the Corinthians, and made it quite plain that as long as Athens had two hundred warships in commission, she had both a city and a country much stronger than theirs – for there was not a single Greek state capable of repelling them, should they choose to attack.

Her.VIII 62 With this he turned to Eurybiades again, and, speaking more vehemently than ever, 'As for you,' he cried, 'if you stay here and play the man – well and good; go, and you'll be the ruin of Greece. In this war everything depends upon the fleet. I beg you to take my advice; if you refuse, we will immediately put our families aboard and sail for Siris in Italy – it has long been ours, and the oracles have foretold that Athenians must live there some day. Where will you be without the Athenian fleet? When you have lost it you will remember my words.'[49]

Her.VIII 63 This was enough to make Eurybiades change his mind; and I think that his chief motive was apprehension of losing Athenian support, if he withdrew to the Isthmus; for without the Athenian contingent his strength would not have been adequate to offer battle. So he took the decision to stay where they were and fight it out in Salamis.

[49] Siris is located on the River Siris (modern Sinni) between Sybaris and Tarentum on the 'instep' of Italy.


The naval battle off
Salamis
29 September 480 BCE
Eleusis
Megara
Egyptian ships
Corinthian ships
Throne of Xerxes
Salamis
Phaleron
Piraeus
Persian main force
Greek main force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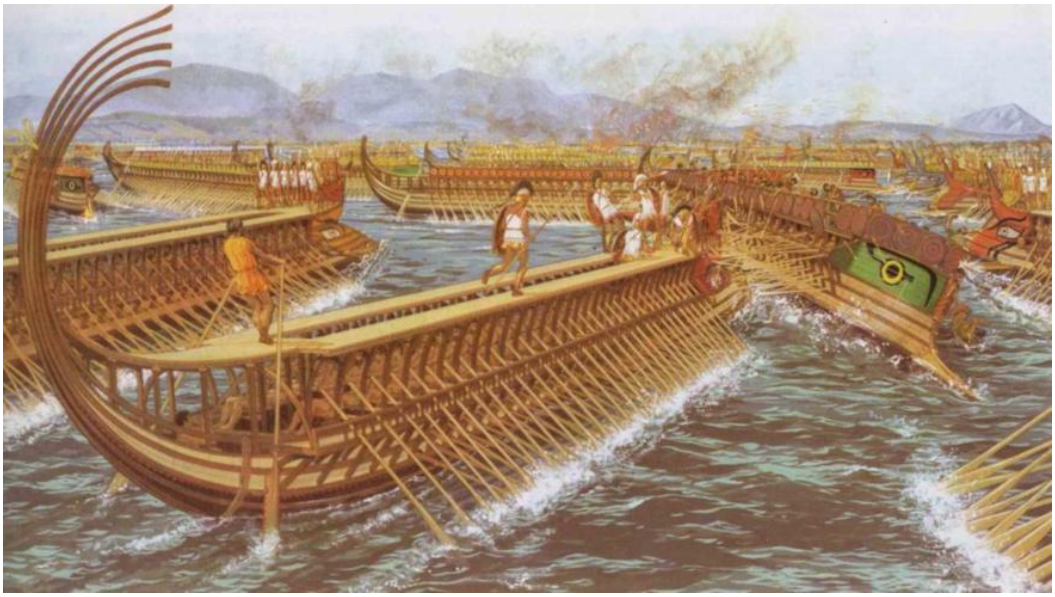
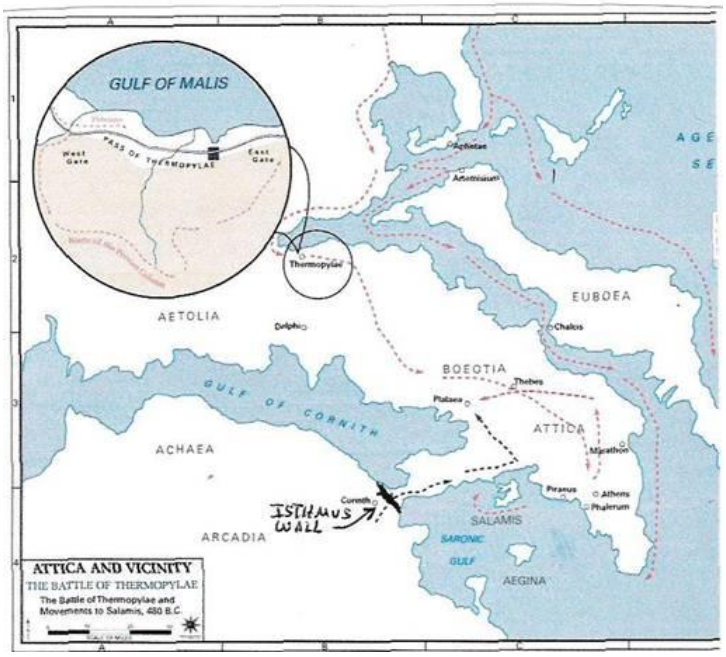
Salamis
Island
ATHENIANS
XERXES COMMAND POST
PELOPONNESIANS
Pharmakoussae
Islands
PHOENICIANS
ALLIES
City of Salamis
IONIANS
AEGINETANS
and MEGARANS
Psyttaleia


Eleusis
BAY OF ELEUSIS
Megara
Corinthians' 'flight' to the north
Megarian
Channel
Paloukia
Paloukia Bay
(Athenians and
Corinthians)
Xerxes
Mole
PERAMA
Pharmakoussae
PERSIAN FLEET
Salamis
City
Cynosura
Ambelaki Bay
(Peloponnesians
Aeginetans
Megarians)
Psyttaleia
Phaleron
4 km
EGYPTIAN SQUADRON
S A L A M I S
Saronic
Gulf
0
2
4
6 km





Herodotus, *Histories* 8.74 (Penguin Classics p.525)

Her.VIII 74 The Greeks at the Isthmus, convinced that all they possessed was now at stake and not expecting any notable success at sea, continued to grapple with their task of fortification. The news of how they were employed nevertheless caused great concern at Salamis; for it brought home to everyone there not so much his own peril as the imminent threat to the Peloponnese. At first there was whispered criticism of the incredible folly of Eurybiades; then the smothered feeling broke out into open resentment, and another meeting was held. All the old ground was gone over again, one side urging that it was useless to stay and fight for a country which was already in enemy hands, and that the fleet should sail and risk an action in defence of the Peloponnese, while the Athenians, Aeginetans, and Megarians still maintained that they should stay and fight at Salamis.

Herodotus, *Histories* 8.94 (Penguin Classics p. 532)

Her.VIII 94 The Athenians say that right at the beginning of the action the Corinthian commander Adeimantus got sail on his ship and fled in panic. Seeing the commander making off, the rest of the squadron followed; but when they were off that part of the coast of Salamis where the temple of Athene Sciras stands, they were met by a strange boat. It was all very mysterious, because nobody, apparently, had sent it, and the Corinthians, when it met them, knew nothing of how things were going with the rest of the fleet. From what happened next they were forced to the conclusion that the hand of God was in the matter; for when the boat was lose to them, the people on board called out, 'Adeimantus, while you are playing the traitor by running away with your squadron, the prayers of Greece are being answered, and she is victorious over her enemies.' Adeimantus would not believe what they said, so told them that he might take them with him as hostages, and kill them if the Greeks were not found to have won the battle. On this, he and the rest of the squadron put about, and rejoined the fleet after the action was over. This, as I said, is the Athenian story, and the Corinthians do not admit the truth of it: on the contrary, they believe that their ships played a most distinguished part in the battle – and the rest of Greece gives evidence in their favour.[50]

[50] The story of the Corinthian flight is almost certainly an invention of a later time when Athens and Corinth were enemies. Plutarch (in *On the Malice of Herdotous)* cites numerous inscriptions attesting Corinthian presence, but even without these there is little to recommend Herodotus' report of hearsay. It may be that the son of Adeimantus, Aristeus, one of Athens' bitterest enemies in the Peloponnesian War (Thuc I.60,65) retroactively besmirched his father's heroic activities (HW ii.267 note).

Herodotus, *Histories* 8.100–103 (Penguin Classics p. 534-536)

Her.VIII 100 The demonstrations, moreover, continued without a break until Xerxes himself came home.[51]
Mardonius could see that Xerxes took the defeat at Salamis very hard, and guessed that he had determined to get out of Athens. In these circumstances, reckoning that he was sure to be punished for having persuaded the king to undertake the expedition, he felt it would be better to renew the struggle in order either to bring Greece into subjection or, failing that, to die nobly in a great cause – though he expected the former alternative. Accordingly, he approached Xerxes with a proposal.
'My lord,' he said, 'I beg you not to take recent events too deeply to heart. What are a few planks and timbers? The decisive struggle will not depend upon them, but upon men and horses. Not one of all these people who now imagine that their work is done, will dare leave his ship in order to oppose you, nor will the mainland Greeks – those who have done so already have paid the price. I suggest, therefore, an immediate attack upon the Peloponnese. Or wait a while, if you prefer. In any case do not lose heart; for the Greeks cannot possibly escape ultimate subjection. They will be brought to account for the injuries they have done you, now and in the past. That is your best policy; nevertheless I have another plan to offer, should you be determined to withdraw your army from Greece. My lord, do not give the Greeks the chance to laugh at us. None of the reverses we have suffered have been due to us – you cannot say that we Persians have on any occasion fought like cowards. Why should we care if the Egyptians and Phoenicians and Cyprians and Cilicians have disgraced themselves? Persia is not involved in their disgrace. No; it is not we who are responsible for that has occurred. Listen, then, to what I have to propose; if you have made up your mind not to stay here, then go home together with the greater part of the army, and I will make it my duty, with 300,000 picked troops, to deliver Greece to you in chains.'

Her.VIII 101 The proposal was welcome to Xerxes in his dejection; he was highly delighted, and told Mardonius that he would consider the two alternatives and let him know which he preferred to adopt. Accordingly, he summoned a conference, and during the debate it occurred to him that it would be just as well to send for Artemisia to take part in the discussion, as she on a previous occasion had been the only one to give sound advice. When she presented herself, Xerxes dismissed his Persian advisers, and all the guards, and addressed her in these words:

[51] Cf. Aeschylus *Persians* 532ff

‘Mardonius urges me to stay in Greece and attack the Peloponnese. According to him, my army and my Persian troops, who have not been responsible for any of our recent disasters, are anxious to prove their worth. His advice, therefore, is either that I should undertake this campaign, or allow him to choose 300,000 men from the army and lead the expedition himself, while I return home with the remainder of my troops. With that force he promises to deliver Greece into my hands. You gave me good advice when you tried to dissuade me from risking the battle we have just fought at sea; so I would ask you to advise me now. Which of these two courses should I be wise to follow?’

Her.VIII 102 ‘My lord,’ Artemisia answered, ‘it is not easy to give you the best advice; nevertheless, circumstances being as they are, I think that you should yourself quit this country and leave Mardonius behind with the forces he asks for, if that is what he wants, and if he really undertakes to do as he has said. If his design prospers and success attends his arms, it will be *your* work, master – for your slaves performed it. And even if things go wrong with him, it will be no great matter, so long as you yourself are safe and no danger threatens anything that concerns your house. While you and yours survive, the Greeks will have to run a painful race for their lives and land; but who cares if Mardonius comes to grief? He is only your slave, and the Greeks will have but a poor triumph if they kill him. As for yourself, you will be going home with the object of your campaign accomplished – for you have burnt Athens.’

Her.VIII 103 Artemisia’s advice was most agreeable to Xerxes, for it was the expression of his own thoughts. Personally, I do not think he would have stayed in Greece, had all his counsellors, men and women alike, urged him to do so – he was much too badly frightened. As it was, he complimented Artemisia and sent her off to Ephesus with his sons – some of his bastards which had accompanied him on the expedition.

Herodotus, *Histories* 8.143–144 (Penguin Classics p. 552-553)

[Mardonius sends Alexander (a Macedonian connected by marriage to Persia, but a friend of Athens) to Athens. Mardonius thought that he 'would be most likely to bring Athens over to the Persian interest' (VI.136). The Spartans also send envoys to warn the Athenians against Alexander: 'Do not let Alexander's smooth-sounding version of Mardonius' proposals seduce you;… a despot himself, of course he collaborates with a despot.' (VI.142)]

Her.VIII 143 The Athenians then gave Alexander their answer. 'We know,' it ran, 'as well as you do that the Persian strength is many times greater than our own: that, at least, is a fact which you do not need to rub in. Nevertheless, such is our love of freedom, that we will defend ourselves in whatever way we can. As for making terms with Persia, it is useless to try to persuade us; for we shall never consent. And now tell Mardonius, that so long as the sun keeps his present course in the sky, we Athenians will never make peace with Xerxes. On the contrary, we shall oppose him unremittingly, putting our trust in the help of the gods and heroes whom he despised, whose temples and statues he destroyed with fire. Never come to us again with a proposal like this, and never think you are doing us good service when you urge us to a course which is outrageous – for it would be a pity of you were to suffer some hurt at the hands of the Athenians, when you are our friend and benefactor.'

Her.VIII 144 So much for the Athenians' answer to Alexander. To the Spartan envoys they said: 'No doubt it was natural that the Lacedaemonians should dread the possibility of our making terms with Persia; none the less it shows a poor estimate of the spirit of Athens. There is not so much gold in the world nor land so fair that we would take it for pay to join the common enemy and bring Greece into subjection. There are many compelling reasons against our doing so, even if we wished: the first and greatest is the burning of the temples and images of our gods – now ashes and rubble. It is our bounden duty to avenge their desecration with all our might – not to clasp the hand that wrought it. **Again, there is the Greek nation – the community of blood and language, temples and ritual, and our common customs**; if Athens were to betray all this, it would not be well done. We would have you know, therefore, if you did not know it already, that so long as a single Athenian remains alive we will make no peace with Xerxes. We are deeply moved, however, by your kindness and thoughtfulness, and the offer you made to provide for our families in this time of distress. Nothing could be more generous; nevertheless, we prefer to carry on as best we can, without being a burden to you. That being our resolve, get your army into the field with the least possible delay; for unless we are much mistaken, it will not be long before the enemy invades Attica – he will do it the instant he gets the news that we refuse his requests. Now, therefore, before he can appear in Attica, it is time for us to meet him in Boeotia.'[52]

Athens had given her answer; and the Spartan envoys left for home.

End of Book VIII

[52] The Athenian speeches both to Alexander and to the Lacedaemonians have a great nobility, and have been adduced by some as yet further proof of Herodotus' pro-Athenian bias. But as Fornara (1971) 56-7 points out, the words are heavily ironic in the early years of the Peloponnesian War (when Herodotus was reciting and writing his history) because the Athenians at that time ruled as empire of fellow Greeks and had not hesitated, despite the 'community of blood and language' to enslave or destroy whole communities (see e.g. Thuc. 1.98 (enslavement of Scyros); 114 (expulsion of Histiaeans) – not to mention that at the start of the war both Sparta and Athens, in their search for allies, looked to Persia (Thuc 2.7).

Herodotus, *Histories* 9.1–3 (Penguin Classics p. 554)

Her.IX 1 When Alexander returned with the Athenians' answer, Mardonius left Thessaly and marched with all speed for Athens, levying troops on the way from all the places through which he passed. The leading families of Thessaly continued to maintain their previous attitude; indeed they urged the Persians to the attack more vigorously than ever. Thorax of Larissa even escorted Xerxes on his retreat, and now openly encouraged Mardonius in his assault upon Greece.

Her.IX 2 In Boeotia an attempt was made by the Thebans to persuade them to halt. **There was no better place, they said, to encamp, and their advice was that he should proceed no further, but, with Boeotia as his base, take measures for the conquest of Greece** without striking a blow. If the former confederacy of Greek states continued to hold together, the whole world would have a hard task to defeat them; 'But **if,' the Thebans added, you do as we suggest, you will put an end to all their schemes with no trouble at all. Send money to the leading men in the various towns – by doing that you will easily destroy the unity of the country**, after which you will easily be able, with the help of those who take your part, to crush those who still oppose you.'

The second destruction of Athens

Her.IX 3 Mardonius did not act upon this suggestion. His whole heart was set upon taking Athens again – partly, no doubt, through mere obstinacy, and partly because he wished to signal his capture of the town to the king in Sardis by a chain of beacons through the islands[53]. When he reached Attica, once again **there were no Athenians to be found**; for nearly all of them, as he learnt, were either with the fleet or at Salamis. So he captured a deserted town – ten months after its previous capture by Xerxes.[54]

Herodotus, *Histories* 9.6–8 (Penguin Classics p. 555-557)

Her.IX 6 The circumstances in which the Athenians had crossed into Salamis were these: so long as they expected an army from the Peloponnese to come to their assistance, they remained in Attica; but when they found that their Peloponnesian allies kept hanging about and were unwilling to move, and word came that the Persians were advancing and had actually got as far as Boeotia, they waited no longer, but crossed to Salamis with all their movable property, and at the same time sent a message to Lacedaemon to reproach the Spartans for allowing the enemy to invade Attica instead of marching with them to meet him in Boeotia, and to remind them, besides, of the offers they had received from Persia in the event of their deserting the Greek confederacy – not to mention the obvious fact that, if they got no help from Sparta, they would have to find some means of helping themselves.[55]

Her.IX 7 Just then it was the time of the Hyacinthia in Sparta; the people thought it most important to give the god his due.[56] It also happened that the wall they were building across the Isthmus was almost finished and about to have battlements put on it.

The Athenian messengers, accompanied by representatives from Megara and Plataea, reached Sparta and came before the Ephors. This is what they said:

[53] Did this inspire Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*?

[54] Xerxes' capture of Athens occurred in September 480BC, Mardonius' nine months later in June 479BC.

[55] Plutarch (*Aristides* 10) says that the embassy was Aristides' idea and the envoys sent were Cimon, Xanthippus and Myronides, but these details are of questionable value (Burns 505 note 49).

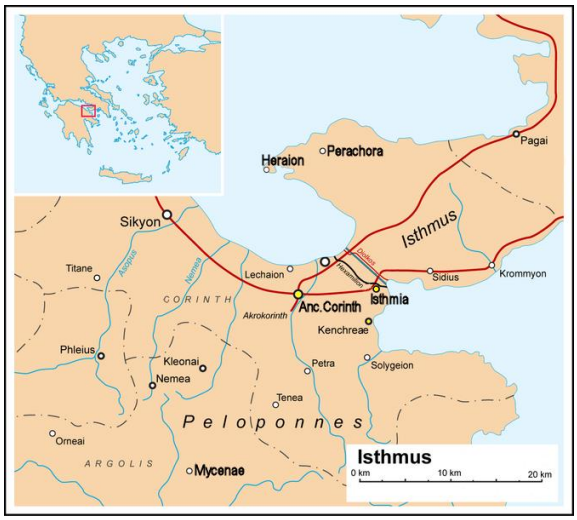
[56] The Hyacinthia was celebrated in honour of Apollo and the beautiful youth Hyacinthus, whom Apollo had accidentally killed. The ceremony, described by Pausanias III.19.3, usually took place in early summer.

The Athenians make a final appeal to Sparta for support

7a 'The Athenians have sent us to tell you that the Persian king has offered both to restore our country to us, and at the same time, not only to make an alliance with us on fair and equal terms, openly and honestly, but also to give us any other territory we like to annex. We, however, from our reverence of Zeus whom all Greece worships, and our revulsion from the very thought of treachery, peremptorily refused the offer, in spite of the fact that we ourselves have been treated unjustly and basely betrayed by our own confederates, and are well aware that we should gain more by an agreement with Persia than by prolonging the war. Nonetheless, we shall never willingly make terms with the enemy.

7b 'Thus **we, at any rate, pay our debts to Greece with no counterfeit coin**; but you, who were in terror lest we should make peace with Persia – now that you know our spirit without doubt, and that we shall never be traitors to Greece – and now, too, that your fortification of the Isthmus is almost complete – take no account of Athens. You agreed with us to oppose the invader in Boeotia, but you broke your word and allowed him to invade Attica. This conduct on your part has roused the anger of Athens; it was unworthy of the hour and of yourselves. However, your immediate duty is to accede to our present request: put your army in the field, that you and we together may meet Mardonius in Attica. Now that Boeotia is lost to us, the best place to engage him, within our own territory, is the plain of Thria.'

Her.IX 8 The Ephors undertook to give their answer on the following day; but when it came, they made a further postponement till the day after, and then till the day after that; in fact they kept putting it off from one day to the next for nearly a fortnight. Meanwhile the Peloponnesians in a body were working hard at the wall across the Isthmus, which was now nearing completion.
Why was it that, when Alexander visited Athens, the Spartans were desperately anxious lest the Athenians should go over to Persia, whereas now they did not seem to care a jot? The only explanation I can give is, that the fortifications of the Isthmus were now complete, and they therefore felt that Athenian help was no longer necessary. At the time of Alexander's visit, the wall was not complete – they were still working at it, in great fear of the Persians.



Herodotus, *Histories* 9.16–18 (Penguin Classics p. 559-561)

Her.IX 16 What I am about to relate, I heard from Thersander, a man greatly respected in his native town Orchomenus. Thersander told me that he himself had an invitation from Attaginus, and that there were, besides the Persians, fifty Thebans. At table, the two nationalities, Greek and Persian, were not kept separate, but on each couch **there sat a Persian and a Theban, side by side**.

During the drinking which followed the banquet, the Persian who shared Thersander's couch asked him, in Greek, what town he came from. 'Orchomenus,' was the answer. 'Since you and I,' the Persian said, 'have eaten together at the same table and poured a libation from the same cup, I should like to leave you something by which you may remember the soundness of my judgement; thus you will be forewarned and able to take proper measure for your own safety. You see these Persians at their dinner – and the army we left in camp over there by the river? In a short time from now you will see but a few of all these men left alive.' The Persian, as he spoke, wept copiously, and Thersander, greatly marvelling at what he had said, answered: 'Are not Mardonius and the other high Persian officials under him the proper people to be told a thing like that?' 'My friend,' rejoined the other, 'what God has ordained no man can by any means prevent. Many of us know that what I have said is true; yet, because we are constrained by necessity, we continue to take orders from our commander. No one would believe us, however true our warnings. This is the worst pain a man can have: to know much and have no power to act.'

This tale, as I have said, I heard from Thersander of Orchomenus; he also told me that he repeated it soon after to various people before the battle of Plataea.[57]

[57] Herodotus rarely names individuals whom he has met (II.55, III.55, IV.76 are the only examples), and he perhaps does it here because of the extraordinary nature of the conversation related and its aura of prognostication. The speech itself sums up many of Herodotus' themes throughout the Histories: divine ordinance; failure to believe warnings; and the contrast between freedom and subjection to the will of others. It makes a striking prelude to the battle – in Herodotus' eyes the most glorious ever: see ch.64 – that finally drove the Persians from Greece. On Attaginus' later fate, see ch.86-8.

Phocian loyalty

Her.IX 17 While Mardonius was in Boeotia, all the Greeks in that part of the country who had gone over to Persia sent troops to join his army, and also took part in his attack on Athens – all, that is, except the Phocians. The Phocians had, indeed, warmly embraced the Persian interest, but under compulsion and not of their own free choice.[58] A few days after Mardonius' arrival at Thebes, he was joined by a force of Phocian cavalry, a thousand strong, under the command of Harmocydes, one of their most distinguished men. On their arrival, Mardonius sent them an order to take up position in open ground, apart from the rest of the army. The order was no sooner obeyed than the Persian cavalry made their appearance in full force. On this, a rumour went around the Greek contingents serving with the Persians that Mardonius meant to attack the Phocians and shoot them down. The same idea ran through the Phocians, too. Their commander Harmocydes then urged them to fight. 'Fellow countrymen,' he cried, 'you can't fail to see that these fellows have deliberately planned to murder us – I suppose because of some lie the Thessalians have told about us. Come then; show what you are made of, every one of you. It is better to die actively defending ourselves than just to give up and be butchered – that disgrace, at least, we can avoid. **Let us show them that the men they have plotted to murder are Greeks – and they themselves are barbarians.**'

Her.IX 18 The Persian cavalry then surrounded them, and began to close in with weapons poised, as though to make an end of them. A few spears were actually let fly; but the Phocians stood firm, drawing close together and packing their ranks tight, whereupon the Persians wheeled about and retired. Possibly the Thessalians had asked them to commit the crime, but, on seeing their victims prepared to defend themselves, they were afraid of being roughly handled and withdrew, according to Mardonius' orders; it may be, on the other hand, that Mardonius merely wanted the to test their courage. I cannot say for certain which explanation is the true one. In any case, after the cavalry had retired, Mardonius sent a message to the Phocians, telling them not to be alarmed: 'You have proved yourselves brave men,' he said, 'quite contrary to the report I had of you. Your duty now is to play your part in the war. As for benefits, you will not outdo either me or the king.' That was the end of this incident.

[58] On Phocian and Thessalian enmity see VIII.30.

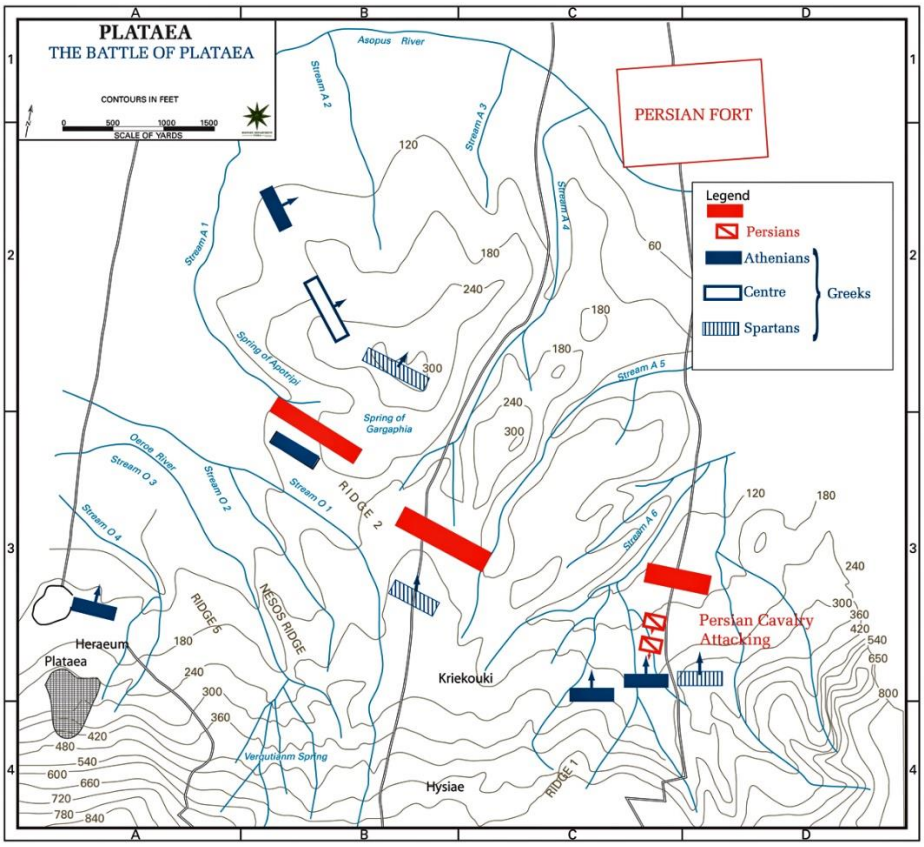
The Battle of Plataea:

Herodotus, *Histories* 9.40 (Penguin Classics p. 571)

Her.IX 40 Two more days went by, and no further action took place. Neither side was willing to begin the general engagement. The Persians provoked the Greek forces to attack by advancing right up to the river, but neither of them ventured actually to cross. Nevertheless Mardonius' cavalry harassed the Greeks continually: this was due to **the Thebans – Persia's firm friends**; their hearts were in the war, and again and again they led the cavalry to within striking distance, when the Persians and Medes took over, and proceeded to show what stuff they were made of.

Herodotus, *Histories* 9.62–64 (Penguin Classics p. 580-581)

Her.IX 62 Then, while the words were still upon his lips, the Tegeans sprang forward to lead the attack, and a moment later the sacrificial victims promised success. At this, the Spartans, too, at last moved forward against the enemy, who stopped shooting their arrows and prepared to meet them face to face.[59]
First there was a struggle at the barricade of shields; then, the barricade down, there was a bitter and protracted fight, hand to hand, close by the temple of Demeter, for the Persians would lay hold of the Spartan spears and break them; **in courage and strength they were as good as their adversaries, but they were deficient in armour, untrained, and greatly inferior in skill**. Sometimes singly, sometimes in groups of ten men – perhaps fewer, perhaps more – they fell upon the Spartan line and were cut down.



[59] Pausanias' delay may have been militarily motivated by his desire to engage the Persian infantry fully for battle at close quarters; by doing this he would neutralize the Persian superiority in cavalry: HW ii.314; Hignett (1963) 336; Burn 530, 538; Lazenby 241 sees no strategy at work and accepts the story in Herodotus that Pausanias was waiting for favourable omens.

Her.IX 63 They pressed hardest at the point where Mardonius fought in person – riding his white charger, and surrounded by his thousand Persian troops, the flower of the army. While Mardonius was alive, they continued to resist and to defend themselves, and struck down many of the Lacedaemonians; but after his death, and the destruction of his personal guard – the finest of the Persian troops – the remainder yielded to the Lacedaemonians and took to flight. **The chief cause of their discomfiture was their lack of armour, fighting without it against hoplites**.

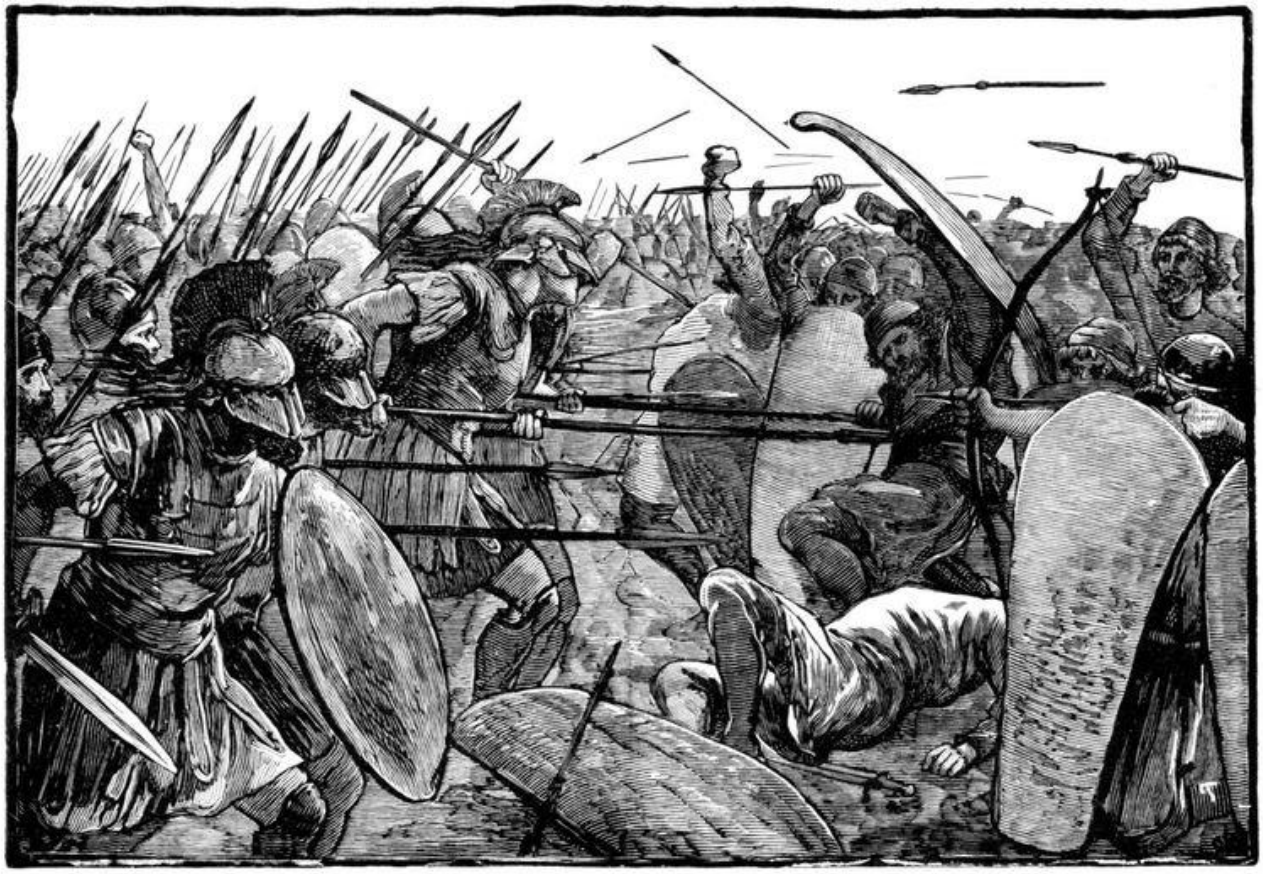
Her.IX 64 Thus the prophecy of the oracle was fulfilled,[60] and Mardonius rendered satisfaction to the Spartans for the killing of Leonidas; and thus, too, Pausanias, son of Cleombrotus and grandson of Anaxandrides, won the most splendid victory of all those we know. (I have given Pausanias' ancestors before Anaxandrides where I gave the genealogy of Leonidas.) Mardonius was killed by Aeimnestus, a distinguished Spartan, who some time after the Persian wars met his own death, together with the three hundred men under his command, at Stenyclerus fighting against the entire force of the Messenians.[61]

[60] On the oracle see VIII.114.

[61] Aeimnestus probably died in the helot revolt at Ithome: The battle at Ithome against the Messenians is described in Thucydides 1.101-3 (cf Fornara 67), and dates to c.465-460.

Herodotus, *Histories* 9.71 (Penguin Classics p. 583-4)

Her.IX 71 Of the enemy's infantry, the Persian contingent fought best; of the cavalry, the Sacae; of the individuals Mardonius himself is said to have been as good as any. On the Greek side, the troops from Tegea and Athens were conspicuous in the fighting, but were surpassed by the Lacedaemonians: the only evidence I can offer to support this statement (for all three were victorious in their own section of the line) is the fact that the Lacedaemonians had the hardest task. They were matched against the best troops of the enemy - and beat them.



SPARTANS AT PLATÆA.

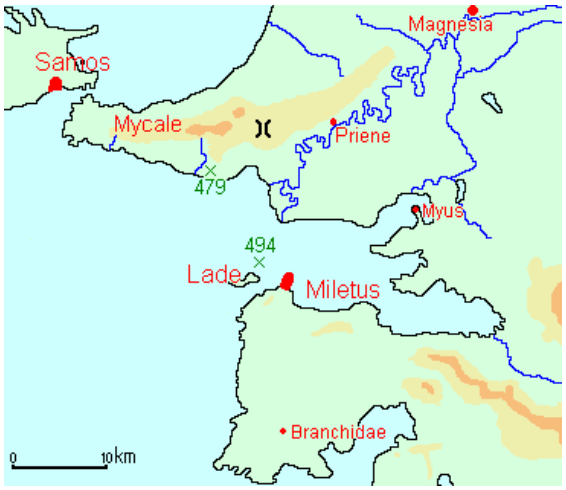
Much the greatest courage was shown, in my opinion, by Aristodemus – the man who suffered the disgrace of being the sole survivor of the three-hundred at Thermopylae. After him, the greatest personal distinction was won by the three Spartans, Posidonius, Philocyon and Amompharetus. However, when, after the battle, the question of who had most distinguished himself was discussed, the Spartans present decided that Aristodemus had, indeed, performed great deeds, but that he had done so merely to retrieve his lost honour, rushing forward with the fury of a madman in his desire to be killed before his comrades' eyes; Posidonius, on the contrary, without any wish to be killed, had fought bravely, and was on that account the better man. It may, of course, have been envy which made them say this; in any case, the men I mentioned all received public honours except Aristodemus – Aristodemus got nothing, because he deliberately courted death for the reason already explained.[62]

[62] On Aristodemus at Thermopylae see VII.229-231. His 'rushing forward' would have been little appreciated by the Spartans, who prided themselves on their order and discipline.

The Battle of Mycale

Herodotus, *Histories* 9.98–99 (Penguin Classics p. 593-594)

Her.IX 98 The Greeks were very much vexed when they discovered that the Persians had given them the slip and cleared out for the mainland, and could not at once decide whether to return home of sail for the Hellespont. Finally, however, they decided to do neither, but to make for the Asiatic coast. All gear – boarding-gangways and so on – necessary for a naval engagement was put in readiness, and the fleet sailed for Mycale.



No enemy vessel was to be seen coming out to meet them as they approached the Persian position; on the contrary, they saw that all his ships had been hauled ashore within the protection of the palisade, and that a strong infantry force was drawn up along the beach. In these circumstances Leotychides took his ship as close in-shore as he could, and, as he passed along, got a crier to shout the following appeal to the Ionians who were serving with the enemy: 'Men of Ionia, listen, if you can hear me, to what I have to say. **The Persians, in any case, won't understand a word of it**. When the battle begins, let each man of you first remember Freedom – and secondly our password, *Hebe*. Anyone who can't hear me should be told what I say by those who can.'
In this he had the same intention as Themistocles had at Artemisium. Either the Persians would not know what he had said and the Ionians would be persuaded to leave them, or if his words were reported to the Persians they would mistrust their Greek subjects.[63]

Her.IX 99 Immediately after this appeal the Greeks ran their ships ashore and the troops took up position on the beach. The first act of the Persians, when they saw the Greeks preparing to fight, was to disarm the Samians, whom they suspected of sympathy with the Greek cause; for it was a fact that when certain Athenians, caught in Attica by Xerxes' men, had been brought over in Persian ships as prisoners, the Samians had released them and sent them back to Athens with provision for their journey. This – the fact of their having rescued five hundred of Xerxes' enemies – was the chief cause of their being suspect.

Next, the Persian command ordered the Milesians to guard the passes which lead up to the heights of Mycale – ostensibly because the Milesians were familiar with that part of the country, but actually to get them well out of the way.[64] Then, having taken these precautions against the Ionians who they thought might cause trouble if they got the chance, they proceeded to make their own dispositions – a defensive line protected by a barrier of interlocking shields.

[63] For Themistocles' ruse see VIII.22.
[64] According to VI.19-20, all the men who survived the Persian destruction of Miletus were settled by Darius on the Tigris; HW ii.330 point out that Herodotus must have exaggerated the destruction, since the Milesians here appear as benefactors to the Greeks.

Herodotus, *Histories* 9.105–106 (Penguin Classics p. 596-597)

Her.IX 105 The Athenian troops distinguished themselves more than any others in this battle, and the most conspicuous amongst them was Hermolycus, the son of Euthynus, a champion all-in wrestler. Some years later, when Athens was at war with Carystus, he was killed in action at Cyrnus, in Carystian territory, and was buried on Geraestus.[65] After the Athenians, the greatest distinction was won by the men from Corinth, Troezen and Sicyon.

Her.IX 106 When most of the enemy forces had been cut to pieces, either in the battle or during the rout, the Greeks burnt the Persian ships and the fort, having first removed everything of value, including a number of money-chests, to a place of safety on the beach. They then sailed for Samos, and on their arrival there they held a council upon the future of Ionia. The idea was to remove the Ionians and settle them in some part of Greece which was under their control, and to abandon Ionia itself to the Persians.[66] They did not think it was possible to be forever on the watch in order to protect Ionia, and at the same time there was little hope, failing such perpetual vigilance, of the Ionians escaping Persian vengeance for their revolt. It was accordingly proposed by the Peloponnesian leaders to turn out the Greeks who had supported Persia and settle the Ionians in their commercial centres; the Athenians, however, strongly disapproved; for they had no wish to see Ionia depopulated, quite apart from their feeling that the Peloponnesians had no right to discuss the future of Athenian colonists. They expressed their disapproval with great vigour, and the Peloponnesians gave way.

Thus they brought into the confederacy the Samians, Chians, Lesbians, and other island peoples who had fought for Greece against the foreigner; oaths were sworn, and all these communities bound themselves to be loyal to the common cause. This done, the fleet sailed for the Hellespont with the purpose of destroying the bridges, which, it was supposed, were still in position.

[65] Athens' attack on Carystus occurred c.472 (Thucydides 1.98)
[66] There had been earlier proposals to evacuate Ionia: V.106, 124; VI.22 and IX.106.

The Serpent Column

A column made of twisted bronze snakes supporting a tripod was c.8 metres high. It was set up in Delphi to commemorate victory over the Persians after the battle of Plataea (August, 479BC) in spring 478BC. It was probably made from Persian bronze weapons and armour.

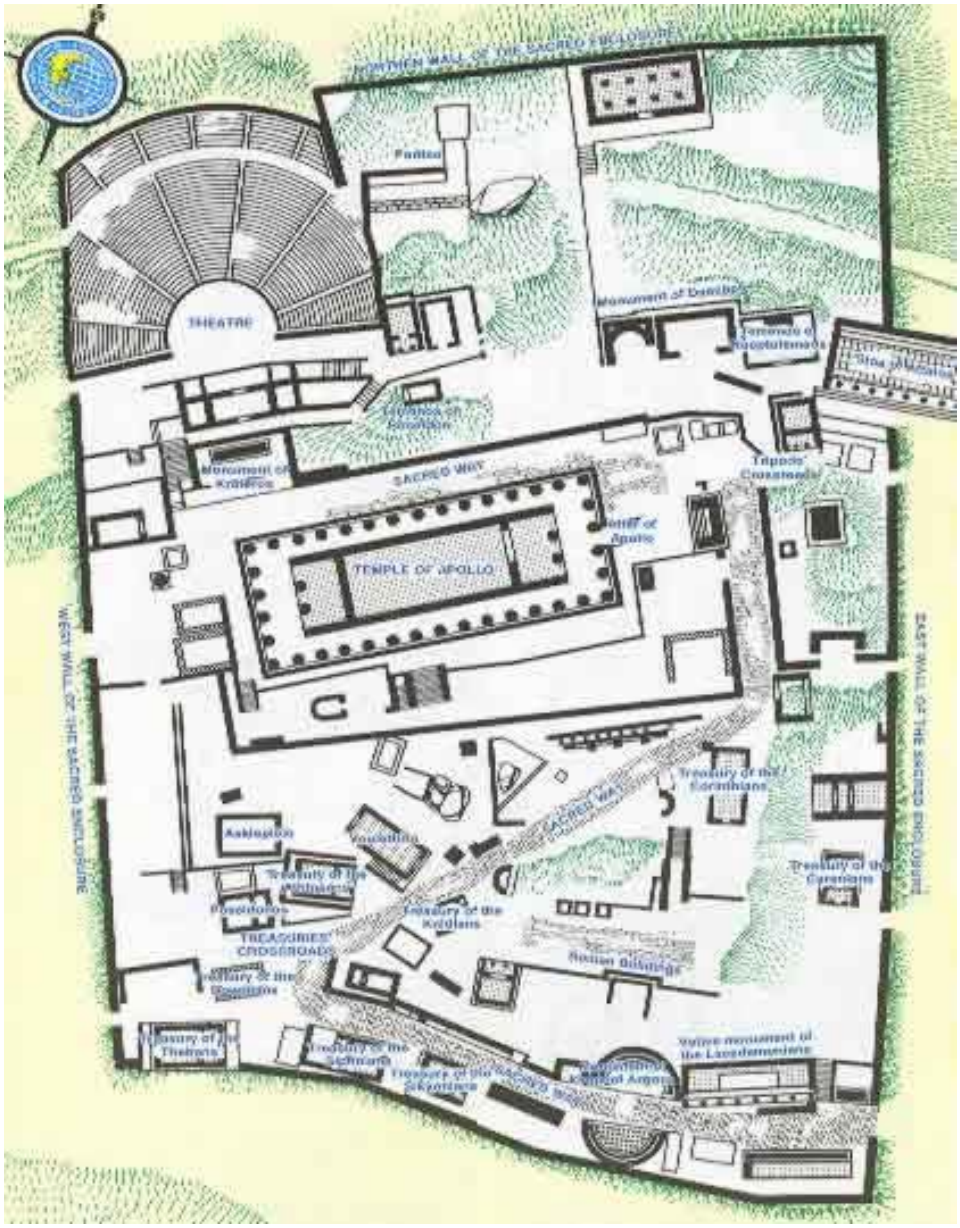
The bronze three-headed serpent supporting the cauldron was apparently intended to commemorate the whole Greek alliance against Persia and the inscription contains a list of 31 Greek States which took part in the Persian War.

The 31 city states are no longer visible on the original today due to exposure and weathering, but one visible name is Eretria.

*A tenth of the spoils from the Battle of Plataea were dedicated **as well** to Zeus at Olympia, where a bronze statue fifteen feet high stood on a base inscribed with the names of **twenty-seven** cities that had fought the Persians (Pausanias, Description of Greece, V.23.1-2). Here, the Eretrians are not mentioned.*

Afterlife:

Constantine moved this and other Delphic tripods to Constantinople in AD324, where it was placed in the Hippodrome (now Meydani, Horse Square). Mehmed II (aged 21) struck off one of the serpent's heads at the sack of the city in 1453 (Gibbon, Decline and Fall 68).


NORTHERN WALL OF THE SACRED ENCLOSURE
Painted
THEATRE
Monument of Daochos
Monument of Kratéros
SACRED WAY
TEMPLE OF APOLLO
Tripods' Crossroads
WEST WALL OF THE SACRED ENCLOSURE
EAST WALL OF THE SACRED ENCLOSURE
Treasury of the Corinthians
Asklepion
Treasury of the Cnidians
TREASURIES' CROSSROADS
Roman Buildings
Votive monument of the Lacedaemonians