

## **Herodotus, *The Histories*<sup>1</sup>**

*Herodotus was born in Halicarnassus (a Greek colony in modern day Bodrum in Western Turkey) around 470 BCE. His life's work was a history of the Persian Wars (c. 499-449 BCE) between the Greeks and the Persians. The Persians invaded the Greek peninsula in 490 BCE, but lost the Battle of Marathon to a Greek alliance and withdrew. Both sides, however, knew that the rivalry was not over. The battle of Thermopylae, described here, took place in 480 BCE.*

### **Book 7**

8. Xerxes then after the conquest of Egypt, being about to take in hand the expedition against Athens, summoned a chosen assembly of the best men among the Persians, that he might both learn their opinions and himself in the presence of all declare that which he intended to do; and when they were assembled, Xerxes spoke to them as follows: ... (b) I design to yoke the Hellespont with a bridge, and to march an army through Europe against Hellas<sup>2</sup>, in order that I may take vengeance on the Athenians for all the things which they have done both to the Persians and to my father...

...20. During four full years from the conquest of Egypt he [Xerxes] was preparing the army and the things that were of service for the army, and in the course of the fifth year he began his campaign with a host of great multitude. For of all the armies of which we have knowledge this proved to be by far the greatest...

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<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *The Histories* (vol. 2), transl. G. C. Macaulay (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., London: MacMillan and Co., 1914). The Project Gutenberg eBook, Herodotus, The History Of Herodotus, Volume 2 (of 2) under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org) Release Date: December 19, 2009 [eBook #2456].

<sup>2</sup> Hellas=Greece.

21. ...For what nation did Xerxes not lead out of Asia against Hellas? and what water was not exhausted, being drunk by his host, except only the great rivers? For some supplied ships, and others were appointed to serve in the land-army; to some it was appointed to furnish cavalry, and to others vessels to carry horses, while they served in the expedition themselves also; others were ordered to furnish ships of war for the bridges, and others again ships with provisions.

...33. After this he made his preparations intending to march to Abydos: and meanwhile they were bridging over the Hellespont from Asia to Europe. Now there is in the Chersonese of the Hellespont between the city of Sestos and Madytos, a broad foreland running down into the sea right opposite Abydos...

36. ... meanwhile other chief-constructors proceeded to make the bridges; and thus they made them:—They put together fifty-oared galleys and triremes, three hundred and sixty to be under the bridge towards the Euxine Sea, and three hundred and fourteen to be under the other, the vessels lying in the direction of the stream of the Hellespont (though crosswise in respect to the Pontus), to support the tension of the ropes. They placed them together thus, and let down very large anchors...

Having thus done, they proceeded to stretch tight the ropes, straining them with wooden windlasses... When the passage was bridged over, they sawed up logs of wood, and making them equal in length to the breadth of the bridge they laid them above the stretched ropes, and having set them thus in order they again fastened them above. When this was done, they carried on brushwood, and having set the brushwood also in place, they carried on to it earth; and when they had stamped down the earth firmly,

they built a barrier along on each side, so that the baggage-animals and horses might not be frightened by looking out over the sea.

...45. And seeing all the Hellespont covered over with the ships, and all the shores and the plains of Abydos full of men, then Xerxes pronounced himself a happy man, and after that he fell to weeping.

46. Artabanos his uncle therefore perceiving him,—the same who at first boldly declared his opinion advising Xerxes not to march against Hellas,—this man, I say, having observed that Xerxes wept, asked as follows...: He answered saying: “O king, may the vision of the dream which appeared have such fulfilment as we both desire! but I am even to this moment full of apprehension and cannot contain myself, taking into account many things besides, and also seeing that two things, which are the greatest things of all, are utterly hostile to thee.”

48. To this Xerxes made answer in these words: “Thou strangest of men, of what nature are these two things which thou sayest are utterly hostile to me? Is it that the land-army is to be found fault with in the matter of numbers, and that the army of the Hellenes appears to thee likely to be many times as large as ours? or dost thou think that our fleet will fall short of theirs? or even that both of these things together will prove true? For if thou thinkest that in these respects our power is deficient, one might make gathering at once of another force.”

49. Then he made answer and said: “O king, neither with this army would any one who has understanding find fault, nor with the number of the ships; and indeed if thou shalt assemble more, the two things of which I speak will be made thereby yet more hostile: and these two things are—the land and the sea. For neither in the sea is there, as I

suppose, a harbour anywhere large enough to receive this fleet of thine, if a storm should arise, and to ensure the safety of the ships till it be over; and yet not one alone ought this harbour to be, but there should be such harbours along the whole coast of the continent by which thou sailest; and if there are not harbours to receive thy ships, know that accidents will rule men and not men the accidents. Now having told thee of one of the two things, I am about to tell thee of the other. The land, I say, becomes hostile to thee in this way: if nothing shall come to oppose thee, the land is hostile to thee by so much the more in proportion as thou shalt advance more, ever stealing on further and further, for there is no satiety of good fortune felt by men: and this I say, that with no one to stand against thee the country traversed, growing more and more as time goes on, will produce for thee famine. Man, however, will be in the best condition, if when he is taking counsel he feels fear, reckoning to suffer everything that can possibly come, but in doing the deed he is bold.”

50. Xerxes made answer in these words: “Artabanos, reasonably dost thou set forth these matters; but do not thou fear everything nor reckon equally for everything [that is, you shouldn't assume that everything that can go wrong will go wrong]...

...56. When Xerxes had crossed over into Europe, he gazed upon the army crossing under the lash; and his army crossed over in seven days and seven nights, going on continuously without any pause.

...101. Now when he had sailed through these and had disembarked from his ship, he sent for Demaratos the son of Ariston, who was marching with him against Hellas; and having called him he asked as follows: “Demaratos, now it is my pleasure to ask thee somewhat which I desire to

know. Thou art ...of a city [Sparta] which is neither the least nor the feeblest of Hellas. Now therefore declare to me this, namely whether the Hellenes will endure to raise hands against me: for, as I suppose, even if all the Hellenes and the remaining nations who dwell towards the West should be gathered together, they are not strong enough in fight to endure my attack, supposing them to be my enemies...

102. When Demaratos heard this, he spoke as follows:

“...[Regarding all the Hellenes, but especially the Lacedemonians<sup>3</sup>] it is not possible that they will ever accept thy terms, which carry with them servitude for Hellas; and next I say that they will stand against thee in fight, even if all the other Hellenes shall be of thy party: and as for numbers, ask now how many they are, that they are able to do this; for whether it chances that a thousand of them have come out into the field, these will fight with thee, or if there be less than this, or again if there be more.”

103. Xerxes hearing this laughed, and said: “Demaratos, what a speech is this which thou hast uttered, saying that a thousand men will fight with this vast army!” ...

...133. Xerxes however had not sent to Athens or to Sparta heralds to demand the gift of earth, and for this reason, namely because at the former time when Dareios had sent for this very purpose, the one people threw the men who made the demand into the pit and the others into a well, and bade them take from thence earth and water and bear them to the king. For this reason Xerxes did not send men to make this demand.

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<sup>3</sup> Lacedemonians=Spartans

...146. When [the Athenians had resolved to fight the Persians rather than abandoning Athens], they reconciled their enmities and then sent first three men as spies to Asia. These having come to Sardis and having got knowledge about the king's army, were discovered, and after having been examined by the generals of the land-army were being led off to die. For these men, I say, death had been determined; but Xerxes, being informed of this, found fault with the decision of the generals and sent some of the spearmen of his guard, enjoining them, if they should find the spies yet alive, to bring them to his presence. So having found them yet surviving they brought them into the presence of the king; and upon that Xerxes, being informed for what purpose they had come, commanded the spearmen to lead them round and to show them the whole army both foot and horse, and when they should have had their fill of looking at these things, to let them go unhurt to whatsoever land they desired.

147. Such was the command which he gave, adding at the same time this saying, namely that if the spies had been put to death, the Hellenes would not have been informed beforehand of his power, how far beyond description it was; while on the other hand by putting to death three men they would not very greatly have damaged the enemy; but when these returned back to Hellas, he thought it likely that the Hellenes, hearing of his power, would deliver up their freedom to him themselves, before the expedition took place which was being set in motion; and thus there would be no need for them to have the labour of marching an army against them...

173. ...the Hellenes upon this resolved to send to Thessaly<sup>4</sup> by sea an army of men on foot to guard the pass: and when the army was assembled

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<sup>4</sup> Thessaly: A region of central Greece.

it set sail through Euripos, and having come to Alos in the Achaian land, it disembarked there and marched into Thessaly leaving the ships behind at Alos, and arrived at Tempe, the pass which leads from lower Macedonia into Thessaly by the river Peneios, going between the mountains of Olympos and Ossa. There the Hellenes encamped, being assembled to the number of about ten thousand hoplites, and to them was added the cavalry of the Thessalians; and the commander of the Lacedemonians was Euainetos the son of Carenos, who had been chosen from the polemarchs, not being of the royal house, and of the Athenians Themistocles the son of Neocles. They remained however but few days here, for envoys came from Alexander the son of Amyntas the Macedonian, who advised them to depart thence and not to remain in the pass and be trodden under foot by the invading host...So the Hellenes went down to their ships again and made their way back to the Isthmus.

...175. When the Hellenes had returned to the Isthmus, they deliberated, having regard to that which had been said by Alexander, where and in what regions they should set the war on foot: and the opinion which prevailed was to guard the pass at **Thermopylai**; for it was seen to be narrower than that leading into Thessaly, and at the same time it was single, and nearer also to their own land; and as for the path by means of which were taken those of the Hellenes who were taken by the enemy at Thermopylai, they did not even know of its existence until they were informed by the people of Trachis after they had come to Thermopylai. This pass then they resolved to guard, and not permit the Barbarian to go by into Hellas; and they resolved that the fleet should sail to Artemision in the territory of Histiaia: for these points are near to

one another, so that each division of their forces could have information of what was happening to the other. And the places are so situated as I shall describe.

176. ... the passage into Hellas by Trechis is, where it is narrowest, but fifty feet wide: it is not here however that the narrowest part of this whole region lies, but in front of Thermopylai and also behind it, consisting of a single wheel-track only both by Alpenoi, which lies behind Thermopylai and again by the river Phoinix near the town of Anthela there is no space but a single wheel-track only: and on the West of Thermopylai there is a mountain which is impassable and precipitous, rising up to a great height and extending towards the range of Oite, while on the East of the road the sea with swampy pools succeeds at once. In this passage there are hot springs, which the natives of the place call the "Pots," and an altar of Heracles is set up near them. Moreover a wall had once been built at this pass, and in old times there was a gate set in it; which wall was built by the Phokians, who were struck with fear because the Thessalians had come ... Now the ancient wall had been built long before, and the greater part of it was by that time in ruins from lapse of time; the Hellenes however resolved to set it up again, and at this spot to repel the Barbarian from Hellas: and very near the road there is a village called Alpenoi, from which the Hellenes counted on getting supplies.

177. These places then the Hellenes perceived to be such as their purpose required; for they considered everything beforehand and calculated that the Barbarians would not be able to take advantage either of superior numbers or of cavalry, and therefore they resolved here to receive the invader of Hellas: and when they were informed that the Persian was in

Pieria, they broke up from the Isthmus and set forth for the campaign, some going to Thermopylai by land, and others making for Artemision by sea...

184. ...This was the sea force brought by the king from Asia; and it amounted in all to 517,610 men. The number of the foot soldiers was 1,700,000; that of the horsemen 80,000; to which must be added the Arabs who rode on camels, and the Libyans who fought in chariots, whom I reckon at 20,000. The whole number, therefore, of the land and sea forces added together amounts to 2,317,610 men. Such was the force brought from Asia, without including the camp followers, or taking any account of the provision- ships and the men whom they had on board.

188. The fleet then, as I said, on leaving Therma, sailed to the Magnesian territory, and there occupied the strip of coast between the city of Casthanaea and Cape Sepias. The ships of the first row were moored to the land, while the remainder swung at anchor further off. The beach extended but a very little way, so that they had to anchor off the shore, row upon row, eight deep. In this manner they passed the night. But at dawn of day calm and stillness gave place to a raging sea, and a violent storm, which fell upon them with a strong gale from the east...Such of them as perceived the wind rising, and were so moored as to allow of it, forestalled the tempest by dragging their ships up on the beach, and in this way saved both themselves and their vessels. But the ships which the storm caught out at sea were driven ashore...There was no resisting the tempest...

190. Such as put the loss of the Persian fleet in this storm at the lowest say that four hundred of their ships were destroyed, that a countless multitude of men were slain, and a vast treasure engulfed...

191. As for the number of the provision craft and other merchant ships which perished, it was beyond count...

...201. King Xerxes, I say, was encamped within the region of Trachis in the land of the Malians, and the Hellenes within the pass. This place is called by the Hellenes in general Thermopylai, but by the natives of the place and those who dwell in the country round it is called Pylai. Both sides then were encamped hereabout, and the one had command of all that lies beyond Trachis in the direction of the North Wind, and the others of that which tends towards the South Wind and the mid-day on this side of the continent.

202. These were the Hellenes who awaited the attack of the Persian in this place:—of the Spartans three hundred hoplites; of the men of Tegea and Mantinea a thousand, half from each place, from Orchomenos in Arcadia a hundred and twenty, and from the rest of Arcadia a thousand,—of the Arcadians so many; from Corinth four hundred, from Phlius two hundred, and of the men of Mykene eighty: these were they who came from the Peloponnese; and from the Boeotians seven hundred of the Thespians, and of the Thebans four hundred.

203. In addition to these the Locrians of Opus had been summoned to come in their full force, and of the Phokians a thousand:...

204. Of these troops, although there were other commanders also according to the State to which each belonged, yet he who was most held in regard and who was leader of the whole army was the Lacedemonian

Leonidas son of Anaxandrides, son of Leon...son of Heracles; who had obtained the kingdom of Sparta contrary to expectation.

205. ...He then at this time went to Thermopylai, having chosen the three hundred who were appointed by law and men who chanced to have sons; and he took with him besides, before he arrived, those Thebans whom I mentioned...

208. As they were thus deliberating, Xerxes sent a scout on horseback to see how many they were in number and what they were doing; for he had heard while he was yet in Thessaly that there had been assembled in this place a small force, and that the leaders of it were Lacedemonians together with Leonidas, who was of the race of Heracles. And when the horseman had ridden up towards their camp, he looked upon them and had a view not indeed of the whole of their army, for of those which were posted within the wall, which they had repaired and were keeping a guard, it was not possible to have a view, but he observed those who were outside, whose station was in front of the wall; and it chanced at that time that the Lacedemonians were they who were posted outside. So then he saw some of the men practising athletic exercises and some combing their long hair: and as he looked upon these things he marvelled, and at the same time he observed their number: and when he had observed all exactly, he rode back unmolested, for no one attempted to pursue him and he found himself treated with much indifference. And when he returned he reported to Xerxes all that which he had seen.

209. Hearing this Xerxes was not able to conjecture the truth about the matter, namely that they were preparing themselves to die and to deal death to the enemy so far as they might; but it seemed to him that they

were acting in a manner merely ridiculous; and therefore he sent for Demaratos the son of Ariston, who was in his camp, and when he came, Xerxes asked him of these things severally, desiring to discover what this was which the Lacedemonians were doing: and he said: "Thou didst hear from my mouth at a former time, when we were setting forth to go against Hellas, the things concerning these men; and having heard them thou madest me an object of laughter, because I told thee of these things which I perceived would come to pass; for to me it is the greatest of all ends to speak the truth continually before thee, O king. Hear then now also: these men have come to fight with us for the passage, and this is it that they are preparing to do; for they have a custom which is as follows;—whenever they are about to put their lives in peril, then they attend to the arrangement of their hair..."

210. Thus saying he did not convince Xerxes, who let four days go by, expecting always that they would take to flight; but on the fifth day, when they did not depart but remained, being obstinate, as he thought, in impudence and folly, he was enraged and sent against them the Medes and the Kissians, charging them to take the men alive and bring them into his presence. Then when the Medes moved forward and attacked the Hellenes, there fell many of them, and others kept coming up continually, and they were not driven back, though suffering great loss: and they made it evident to every man, and to the king himself not least of all, that human beings are many but men are few. This combat went on throughout the day:

211. and when the Medes were being roughly handled, then these retired from the battle, and the Persians, those namely whom the king called "Immortals," of whom Hydarnes was commander, took their place

and came to the attack, supposing that they at least would easily overcome the enemy. When however these also engaged in combat with the Hellenes, they gained no more success than the Median troops but the same as they, seeing that they were fighting in a place with a narrow passage, using shorter spears than the Hellenes, and not being able to take advantage of their superior numbers. The Lacedemonians meanwhile were fighting in a memorable fashion, and besides other things of which they made display, being men perfectly skilled in fighting opposed to men who were unskilled, they would turn their backs to the enemy and make a pretence of taking to flight; and the Barbarians, seeing them thus taking a flight, would follow after them with shouting and clashing of arms: then the Lacedemonians, when they were being caught up, turned and faced the Barbarians; and thus turning round they would slay innumerable multitudes of the Persians; and there fell also at these times a few of the Spartans themselves. So, as the Persians were not able to obtain any success by making trial of the entrance and attacking it by divisions and every way, they retired back.

212. And during these onsets it is said that the king, looking on, three times leapt up from his seat, struck with fear for his army. Thus they contended then: and on the following day the Barbarians strove with no better success; for because the men opposed to them were few in number, they engaged in battle with the expectation that they would be found to be disabled and would not be capable any longer of raising their hands against them in fight. The Hellenes however were ordered by companies as well as by nations, and they fought successively each in turn, excepting the Phokians, for these were posted upon the mountain to

guard the path. So the Persians, finding nothing different from that which they had seen on the former day, retired back from the fight.

213. Then when the king was in a strait as to what he should do in the matter before him, Epialtes the son of Eurydemos, a Malian, came to speech with him, supposing that he would win a very great reward from the king; and this man told him of the path which leads over the mountain to Thermopylai, and brought about the destruction of those Hellenes who remained in that place. Afterwards from fear of the Lacedemonians he fled to Thessaly, and when he had fled, a price was proclaimed for his life by the Deputies...

...215. Xerxes accordingly, being pleased by that which Epialtes engaged to accomplish, at once with great joy proceeded to send Hydarnes and the men of whom Hydarnes was commander; and they set forth from the camp about the time when the lamps are lit. This path of which we speak had been discovered by the Malians who dwell in that land, and having discovered it they led the Thessalians by it against the Phokians, at the time when the Phokians had fenced the pass with a wall and thus were sheltered from the attacks upon them: so long ago as this had the pass been proved by the Malians to be of no value. And this path lies as follows:—it begins from the river Asopos, which flows through the cleft, and the name of this mountain and of the path is the same, namely Anopaia; and this Anopaia stretches over the ridge of the mountain and ends by the town of Alpenos, which is the first town of the Locrians towards Malis, and by the stone called Black Buttocks and the seats of the Kercopes, where is the very narrowest part.

217. By this path thus situated the Persians after crossing over the Asopos proceeded all through the night, having on their right hand the mountains of the Oitaians and on the left those of the Trachinians: and when dawn appeared, they had reached the summit of the mountain. In this part of the mountain there were, as I have before shown, a thousand hoplites of the Phokians keeping guard, to protect their own country and to keep the path: for while the pass below was guarded by those whom I have mentioned, the path over the mountain was guarded by the Phokians, who had undertaken the business for Leonidas by their own offer.

218. While the Persians were ascending they were concealed from these, since all the mountain was covered with oak-trees; and the Phokians became aware of them after they had made the ascent as follows:—the day was calm, and not a little noise was made by the Persians, as was likely when leaves were lying spread upon the ground under their feet; upon which the Phokians started up and began to put on their arms, and by this time the Barbarians were close upon them. These, when they saw men arming themselves, fell into wonder, for they were expecting that no one would appear to oppose them, and instead of that they had met with an armed force. Then Hydarnes, seized with fear lest the Phokians should be Lacedemonians, asked Epialtes of what people the force was; and being accurately informed he set the Persians in order for battle. The Phokians however, when they were hit by the arrows of the enemy, which flew thickly, fled and got away at once to the topmost peak of the mountain, fully assured that it was against them that the enemy had designed to come, and here they were ready to meet death.

These, I say, were in this mind; but the Persians meanwhile with Epialtes and Hydarnes made no account of the Phokians, but descended the mountain with all speed.

219. To the Hellenes who were in Thermopylai first the soothsayer Megistias, after looking into the victims which were sacrificed, declared the death which was to come to them at dawn of day; and afterwards deserters brought the report of the Persians having gone round. These signified it to them while it was yet night, and thirdly came the day-watchers, who had run down from the heights when day was already dawning. Then the Hellenes deliberated, and their opinions were divided; for some urged that they should not desert their post, while others opposed this counsel. After this they departed from their assembly, and some went away and dispersed each to their several cities, while others of them were ready to remain there together with Leonidas.

220. However it is reported also that Leonidas himself sent them away, having a care that they might not perish, but thinking that it was not seemly for himself and for the Spartans who were present to leave the post to which they had come at first to keep guard there. I am inclined rather to be of this latter opinion, namely that because Leonidas perceived that the allies were out of heart and did not desire to face the danger with him to the end, he ordered them to depart...

...223. Xerxes meanwhile, having made libations at sunrise, stayed for some time, until about the hour when the market fills, and then made an advance upon them; ... The Barbarians accordingly with Xerxes were advancing to the attack; and the Hellenes with Leonidas, feeling that they were going forth to death, now advanced out much further than at first into

the broader part of the defile; for when the fence of the wall was being guarded, they on the former days fought retiring before the enemy into the narrow part of the pass; but now they engaged with them outside the narrows, and very many of the Barbarians fell: for behind them the leaders of the divisions with scourges in their hands were striking each man, ever urging them on to the front. Many of them then were driven into the sea and perished, and many more still were trodden down while yet alive by one another, and there was no reckoning of the number that perished: for knowing the death which was about to come upon them by reason of those who were going round the mountain, they displayed upon the Barbarians all the strength which they had, to its greatest extent, disregarding danger and acting as if possessed by a spirit of recklessness.

224. Now by this time the spears of the greater number of them were broken, so it chanced, in this combat, and they were slaying the Persians with their swords; and in this fighting fell Leonidas, having proved himself a very good man, and others also of the Spartans with him...

225....This conflict continued until those who had gone with Epialtes came up; and when the Hellenes learnt that these had come, from that moment the nature of the combat was changed; for they retired backwards to the narrow part of the way, and having passed by the wall they went and placed themselves upon the hillock, all in a body together except only the Thebans: now this hillock is in the entrance, where now the stone lion is placed for Leonidas. On this spot while defending themselves with daggers, that is those who still had them left, and also with hands and with teeth, they were overwhelmed by the missiles of the Barbarians, some of these having followed directly after them and

destroyed the fence of the wall, while others had come round and stood about them on all sides.

...234. Thus did the Hellenes at Thermopylai contend in fight; and Xerxes summoned Demaratos and inquired of him, having first said this: "Demaratos, thou art a good man; and this I conclude by the truth of thy words, for all that thou saidest turned out so as thou didst say. Now, however, tell me how many in number are the remaining Lacedemonians, and of them how many are like these in matters of war; or are they so even all of them?" He said: "O king, the number of all the Lacedemonians is great and their cities are many, but that which thou desirest to learn, thou shalt know. There is in Lacedemon the city of Sparta, having about eight thousand men; and these are all equal to those who fought here: the other Lacedemonians are not equal to these, but they are good men too."...

235. He made answer: "O king, if thou dost in very earnest take counsel with me, it is right that I declare to thee the best thing. What if thou shouldst send three hundred ships from thy fleet to attack the Laconian land? Now there is lying near it an island named Kythera, about which Chilon, who was a very wise man among us, said that it would be a greater gain for the Spartans that it should be sunk under the sea than that it should remain above it; for he always anticipated that something would happen from it of such a kind as I am now setting forth to thee: not that he knew of thy armament beforehand, but that he feared equally every armament of men. Let thy forces then set forth from this island and keep the Lacedemonians in fear; and while they have a war of their own close at their doors, there will be no fear for thee from them that when the remainder of Hellas is being conquered by the land-army, they will come

to the rescue there. Then after the remainder of Hellas has been reduced to subjection, from that moment the Lacedemonian power will be left alone and therefore feeble. If however thou shalt not do this, I will tell thee what thou must look for. There is a narrow isthmus leading to the Peloponnese, and in this place thou must look that other battles will be fought more severe than those which have taken place, seeing that all the Peloponnesians have sworn to a league against thee: but if thou shalt do the other thing of which I spoke, this isthmus and the cities within it will come over to thy side without a battle."

239. ...The Lacedemonians had been informed before all others that the king was preparing an expedition against Hellas...And they got this information in a strange manner; for Demaratos the son of Ariston after he had fled for refuge to the Medes...When Xerxes had resolved to make a campaign against Hellas, Demaratos, being in Susa and having been informed of this, had a desire to report it to the Lacedemonians. Now in no other way was he able to signify it, for there was danger that he should be discovered, but he contrived thus, that is to say, he took a folding tablet and scraped off the wax which was upon it, and then he wrote the design of the king upon the wood of the tablet, and having done so he melted the wax and poured it over the writing, so that the tablet (being carried without writing upon it) might not cause any trouble to be given by the keepers of the road. Then when it had arrived at Lacedemon, the Lacedemonians were not able to make conjecture of the matter; until at last, as I am informed, Gorgo, the daughter of Cleomenes and wife of Leonidas, suggested a plan of which she had herself thought, bidding them scrape the wax and they would find writing upon the wood;

and doing as she said they found the writing and read it, and after that they sent notice to the other Hellenes. These things are said to have come to pass in this manner.

## Book 9

*[After the dual battles of Thermopylai and Salamis, the Athenian population evacuated to the island of Salamis, while Mardonios with a large army, set out toward Athens. He captured the city and sent envoys asking for the Athenian population to surrender. The Athenians, instead, sent messages to Sparta, saying that they had no intention of making a treaty with the Persians but needed assistance from the Spartans. The Spartans and several other poleis sent troops who assembled on the isthmus. This battle at Plataia took place in early 479 BCE]*

12. They [the Spartans and allies] then, I say, were hastening towards the Isthmus; and the Argives<sup>5</sup> so soon as they heard that Pausanias with his army had gone forth from Sparta, sent as a herald to Attica the best whom they could find of the long-distance runners, because they had before of their own motion engaged for Mardonios that they would stop the Spartans from going forth: and the herald when he came to Athens spoke as follows: "Mardonios, the Argives sent me to tell thee that the young men have gone forth from Lacedemon, and that the Argives are not able to stop them from going forth: with regard to this therefore may it be thy fortune to take measures well."

13. He having spoken thus departed and went back; and Mardonios was by no means anxious any more to remain in Attica<sup>6</sup> when he heard this message. Before he was informed of this he had been waiting, because he desired to know the news from the Athenians as to what they were about to do; and he had not been injuring or laying waste the land

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<sup>5</sup> Argives—inhabitants of Argos, a *polis* in the Pelopponesian peninsula; apparently they had already surrendered to Mardonios.

<sup>6</sup> Attica: The region surrounding Athens.

of Attica, because he hoped always that they would make a treaty with him; but as he did not persuade them, being now informed of everything he began to retire out of the country before the force of Pausanias arrived at the Isthmus, having first set fire to Athens and cast down and destroyed whatever was left standing of the walls, houses or temples. Now he marched away for this cause, namely first because Attica was not a land where horsemen could act freely, and also because, if he should be defeated in a battle in Attica, there was no way of retreat except by a narrow pass, so that a few men could stop them. He intended therefore to retreat to Thebes, and engage battle near to a friendly city and to a country where horsemen could act freely.

14. Mardonios then was retiring out of the way, and when he was already upon a road a message came to him saying that another body of troops in advance of the rest had come to Megara, consisting of a thousand Lacedemonians. Being thus informed he took counsel with himself, desiring if possible first to capture these. Therefore he turned back and proceeded to lead his army towards Megara, and the cavalry going in advance of the rest overran the Megaran land: this was the furthest land in Europe towards the sun-setting to which this Persian army came...

...15. After this a message came to Mardonios that the Hellenes were assembled at the Isthmus; therefore he marched back by Dekeleia... Then he proceeded to cut down the trees in the lands of the Thebans, although they were on the side of the Medes, moved not at all by enmity to them, but pressed by urgent necessity both to make a defence for his camp, and also he was making it for a refuge, in case that when he engaged battle things should not turn out for him as he desired. Now the encampment of his

army extended from Erythrai along by Hysiai and reached the river Asopos: he was not however making the wall to extend so far as this, but with each face measuring somewhere about ten furlongs...

25. ...[The Hellenes] resolved to come down further towards **Plataia**; for the region of Plataia was seen to be much more convenient for them to encamp in than that of Erythrai, both for other reasons and because it is better watered...So they took up their arms and went by the lower slopes of Kithairon past Hysiai to the Plataian land; and having there arrived they posted themselves according to their several nations near the spring Gargaphia and the sacred enclosure of Androcrates the hero, over low hills or level ground.

...28. After this the Hellenes were ranged as follows, both those of them who came in continually afterwards and those who had come at the first. The right wing was held by ten thousand Lacedemonians; and of these the five thousand who were Spartans were attended by thirty-five thousand Helots serving as light-armed troops, seven of them appointed for each man. To stand next to themselves the Spartans chose the Tegeans, both to do them honour and also because of their valour; and of these there were one thousand five hundred hoplites. After these were stationed five thousand Corinthians, and they had obtained permission from Pausanias that the three hundred who were present of the men of Potidaia in Pallene should stand by their side. Next to these were stationed six hundred Arcadians of Orchomenos; and to these three thousand Sikyonians. Next after these were eight hundred Epidaurians: by the side of these were ranged a thousand Troizenians: next to the Troizenians two hundred Lepreates: next to these four hundred of the

men of Mikene and Tiryns; and then a thousand Phliasians. By the side of these stood three hundred Hermionians; and next to the Hermionians were stationed six hundred Eretrians and Styrians; next to these four hundred Chalkidians; and to these five hundred men of Amprakia. After these stood eight hundred Leucadians and Anactorians; and next to them two hundred from Pale in Kephallenia. After these were ranged five hundred Eginetans; by their side three thousand Megarians; and next to these six hundred Plataians. Last, or if you will first, were ranged the Athenians, occupying the left wing, eight thousand in number, and the commander of them was Aristeides the son of Lysimachos..

29. These all, excepting those who were appointed to attend the Spartans, seven for each man, were hoplites, being in number altogether three myriads<sup>7</sup> eight thousand and seven hundred. This was the whole number of hoplites who were assembled against the Barbarian; and the number of the light-armed was as follows:—of the Spartan division thirty-five thousand men, reckoning at the rate of seven for each man, and of these every one was equipped for fighting; and the light-armed troops of the rest of the Lacedemonians and of the other Hellenes, being about one for each man, amounted to thirty-four thousand five hundred..

30. Of the light-armed fighting men the whole number then was six myriads nine thousand and five hundred; and of the whole Hellenic force which assembled at Plataia the number (including both the hoplites and the light-armed fighting men) was eleven myriads...These then having been ranged in order were encamped on the river Asopos.

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<sup>7</sup> A myriad is 10,000.

31. Meanwhile the Barbarians with Mardonios, when they had sufficiently mourned for Masistios, being informed that the Hellenes were at Plataia came themselves also to that part of the Asopos which flows there; and having arrived there, they were ranged against the enemy by Mardonios thus:—against the Lacedemonians he stationed the Persians; and since the Persians were much superior in numbers, they were arrayed in deeper ranks than those, and notwithstanding this they extended in front of the Tegeans also: and he ranged them in this manner,—all the strongest part of that body he selected from the rest and stationed it opposite to the Lacedemonians, but the weaker part he ranged by their side opposite to the Tegeans. This he did on the information and suggestion of the Thebans. Then next to the Persians he ranged the Medes; and these extended in front of the Corinthians, Potidaians, Orchomenians and Sikyonians. Next to the Medes he ranged the Bactrians; and these extended in front of the Epidaurians, Troizenians, Lepreates, Tirynthians, Mykenians and Phliasians. After the Bactrians he stationed the Indians; and these extended in front of the Hermionians, Eretrians, Styrians and Chalkidians. Next to the Indians he ranged the Sacans, who extended in front of the men of Amprakia, the Anactorians, Leucadians, Palians and Eginetans. Next to the Sacans and opposite to the Athenians, Plataians and Megarians, he ranged the Boeotians, Locrians, Malians, Thessalians, and the thousand men of the Phokians...He ranged the Macedonians also and those who dwell about the borders of Thessaly opposite to the Athenians.

32. ...Of the Barbarians then there were thirty myriads, as has been declared before; but of the Hellenes who were allies of Mardonios no

man knows what the number was, for they were not numbered; but by conjecture I judge that these were assembled to the number of five myriads. These who were placed in array side by side were on foot; and the cavalry was ranged apart from them in a separate body.

33. When all had been drawn up by nations and by divisions, then on the next day they offered sacrifice on both sides. For the Hellenes Tisamenos the son of Antiochos was he who offered sacrifice, for he it was who accompanied this army as diviner...

36. This Tisamenos was acting now as diviner for the Hellenes in the Plataian land, being brought by the Spartans. Now to the Hellenes the sacrifices were of good omen if they defended themselves only, but not if they crossed the Asopos and began a battle;...

37. and Mardonios too, who was eager to begin a battle, found the sacrifices not favourable to this design, but they were of good omen to him also if he defended himself only; for he too used the Hellenic manner of sacrifice, having as diviner Hegesistratos an Eleian and the most famous of the Telliadai...

39. Eight days had now passed while they had been sitting opposite to one another, when he gave this counsel to Mardonios; and Mardonios, perceiving that the advice was good, sent the cavalry when night came on to the pass of Kithairon leading towards Plataia, which the Boeotians call the “Three Heads” and the Athenians the “Oak Heads.” Having been thus sent, the cavalry did not come without effect, for they caught five hundred baggage-animals coming out into the plain, which were bearing provisions from Peloponnesus to the army, and also the men who accompanied the carts: and having taken this prize the Persians proceeded to slaughter them

without sparing either beast or man; and when they were satiated with killing they surrounded the rest and drove them into the camp to Mardonios.

40. After this deed they spent two days more, neither side wishing to begin a battle; for the Barbarians advanced as far as the Asopos to make trial of the Hellenes, but neither side would cross the river. However the cavalry of Mardonios made attacks continually and did damage to the Hellenes; for the Thebans, being very strong on the side of the Medes, carried on the war with vigour, and always directed them up to the moment of fighting; and after this the Persians and Medes took up the work and were they who displayed valour in their turn.

41. For ten days then nothing more was done than this; but when the eleventh day had come, while they still sat opposite to one another at Plataia, the Hellenes having by this time grown much more numerous and Mardonios being greatly vexed at the delay of action, then Mardonios the son of Gobryas and Artabazos the son of Pharnakes, who was esteemed by Xerxes as few of the Persians were besides, came to speech with one another; and as they conferred, the opinions they expressed were these,—that of Artabazos, that they must put the whole army in motion as soon as possible and go to the walls of the Thebans, where great stores of corn had been brought in for them and fodder for their beasts; and that they should settle there quietly and get their business done as follows:—they had, he said, great quantities of gold, both coined and uncoined, and also of silver and of drinking-cups; and these he advised they should send about to the Hellenes without stint, more especially to those of the Hellenes who were leaders in their cities;

and these, he said, would speedily deliver up their freedom: and he advised that they should not run the risk of a battle.

...But the opinion of Mardonios was more vehement and more obstinate, and he was by no means disposed to yield; for he said that he thought their army far superior to that of the Hellenes, and he gave as his opinion that they should engage battle as quickly as possible and not allow them to assemble in still greater numbers than were already assembled; and as for the sacrifices of Hegesistratos, they should leave them alone and not endeavour to force a good sign, but follow the custom of the Persians and engage battle..

42. When he so expressed his judgment, none opposed him, and thus his opinion prevailed; for he and not Artabazos had the command of the army given him by the king...he next commanded to prepare everything and to set all in order, since at dawn of the next day a battle would be fought...

44. After the inquiry about the oracles and the exhortation given by Mardonios night came on and the guards were set: and when night was far advanced, and it seemed that there was quiet everywhere in the camps, and that the men were in their deepest sleep, then Alexander the son of Amyntas, commander and king of the Macedonians, rode his horse up to the guard-posts of the Athenians and requested that he might have speech with their generals. So while the greater number of the guards stayed at their posts, some ran to the generals...

45. Having heard this, forthwith they accompanied the men to the guard-posts, and when they had arrived there, Alexander thus spoke to them: "Athenians, I lay up these words of mine as a trust to you, charging

you to keep them secret and tell them to no one except only to Pausanias, lest ye bring me to ruin: for I should not utter them if I did not care greatly for the general safety of Hellas, seeing that I am a Hellene myself by original descent and I should not wish to see Hellas enslaved instead of free. I say then that Mardonios and his army cannot get the offerings to be according to their mind, for otherwise ye would long ago have fought. Now however he has resolved to let the offerings alone and to bring on a battle at dawn of day; for, as I conjecture, he fears lest ye should assemble in greater numbers. Therefore prepare yourselves; and if after all Mardonios should put off the battle and not bring it on, stay where ye are and hold out patiently; for they have provisions only for a few days remaining. And if this way shall have its issue according to your mind, then each one of you ought to remember me also concerning liberation, since I have done for the sake of the Hellenes so hazardous a deed by reason of my zeal for you, desiring to show you the design of Mardonios, in order that the Barbarians may not fall upon you when ye are not as yet expecting them: and I am Alexander the Macedonian.” Thus having spoken he rode away back to the camp and to his own position.

46. Then the generals of the Athenians came to the right wing and told Pausanias that which they had heard from Alexander. Upon this saying he being struck with fear of the Persians spoke as follows: “Since then at dawn the battle comes on, it is right that ye, Athenians, should take your stand opposite to the Persians, and we opposite to the Boeotians and those Hellenes who are now posted against you; and for this reason, namely because ye are acquainted with the Medes and with

their manner of fighting, having fought with them at Marathon, whereas we have had no experience of these men and are without knowledge of them; for not one of the Spartans has made trial of the Medes in fight, but of the Boeotians and Thessalians we have had experience. It is right therefore that ye should take up your arms and come to this wing of the army, and that we should go to the left wing.”

In answer to this the Athenians spoke as follows: “To ourselves also long ago at the very first, when we saw that the Persians were being ranged opposite to you, it occurred to us to say these very things, which ye now bring forward before we have uttered them; but we feared lest these words might not be pleasing to you. Since however ye yourselves have made mention of this, know that your words have caused us pleasure, and that we are ready to do this which ye say.”

47. Both then were content to do this, and as dawn appeared they began to change their positions with one another: and the Boeotians perceiving that which was being done reported it to Mardonios, who, when he heard it, forthwith himself also endeavoured to change positions, bringing the Persians along so as to be against the Lacedemonians: and when Pausanias learnt that this was being done, he perceived that he was not unobserved, and he led the Spartans back again to the right wing; and just so also did Mardonios upon his left.

48. When they had been thus brought to their former positions, Mardonios sent a herald to the Spartans and said as follows: “Lacedemonians, ye are said forsooth by those who are here to be very good men, and they have admiration for you because ye do not flee in war nor leave your post, but stay there and either destroy your enemies or

perish yourselves. In this however, as it now appears, there is no truth; for before we engaged battle and came to hand-to-hand conflict we saw you already flee and leave your station, desiring to make the trial with the Athenians first, while ye ranged yourselves opposite to our slaves. These are not at all the deeds of good men in war, but we were deceived in you very greatly; for we expected by reason of your renown that ye would send a herald to us, challenging us and desiring to fight with the Persians alone; but though we on our part were ready to do this, we did not find that ye said anything of this kind, but rather that ye cowered with fear. Now therefore since ye were not the first to say this, we are the first. Why do we not forthwith fight, ye on behalf of the Hellenes, since ye have the reputation of being the best, and we on behalf of the Barbarians, with equal numbers on both sides? and if we think it good that the others should fight also, then let them fight afterwards; and if on the other hand we should not think it good, but think it sufficient that we alone should fight, then let us fight it out to the end, and whichever of us shall be the victors, let these be counted as victorious with their whole army.”

49. The herald having thus spoken waited for some time, and then, as no one made him any answer, he departed and went back; and having returned he signified to Mardonios that which had happened to him. Mardonios then being greatly rejoiced and elated by his empty victory, sent the cavalry to attack the Hellenes: and when the horsemen had ridden to attack them, they did damage to the whole army of the Hellenes by hurling javelins against them and shooting with bows, being mounted archers and hard therefore to fight against: and they disturbed and

choked up the spring Gargaphia, from which the whole army of the Hellenes was drawing its water. Now the Lacedemonians alone were posted near this spring, and it was at some distance from the rest of the Hellenes, according as they chanced to be posted, while the Asopos was near at hand; but when they were kept away from the Asopos, then they used to go backwards and forwards to this spring; for they were not permitted by the horsemen and archers to fetch water from the river..

50. Such then being the condition of things, the generals of the Hellenes, since the army had been cut off from its water and was being harassed by the cavalry, assembled to consult about these and other things, coming to Pausanias upon the right wing: for other things too troubled them yet more than these of which we have spoken, since they no longer had provisions, and their attendants who had been sent to Peloponnese for the purpose of getting them had been cut off by the cavalry and were not able to reach the camp.

51. It was resolved then by the generals in council with one another, that if the Persians put off the battle for that day, they would go to the Island. This is distant ten furlongs from the Asopos and the spring Gargaphia, where they were then encamped, and is in front of the city of the Plataians: and if it be asked how there can be an island on the mainland, thus it is:—the river parts in two above, as it flows from Kithairon down to the plain, keeping a distance of about three furlongs between its streams, and after that it joins again in one stream; and the name of it is Oëroe, said by the natives of the country to be the daughter of Asopos. To this place of which I speak they determined to remove, in order that they might be able to get an abundant supply of water and that the cavalry might not do them

damage, as now when they were right opposite. And they proposed to remove when the second watch of the night should have come, so that the Persians might not see them set forth and harass them with the cavalry pursuing. They proposed also, after they had arrived at this place...to send half the army to Kithairon during this same night, in order to take up their attendants who had gone to get the supplies of provisions; for these were cut off from them in Kithairon.

52. Having thus resolved, during the whole of that day they had trouble unceasingly, while the cavalry pressed upon them; but when the day drew to a close and the attacks of the cavalry had ceased, then as it was becoming night and the time had arrived at which it had been agreed that they should retire from their place, the greater number of them set forth and began to retire, not however keeping it in mind to go to the place which had been agreed upon; but on the contrary, when they had begun to move, they readily took occasion to flee from the cavalry towards the city of the Plataians, and in their flight they came as far as the temple of Hera, which temple is in front of the city of the Plataians at a distance of twenty furlongs from the spring Gargaphia; and when they had there arrived they halted in front of the temple.

53. These then were encamping about the temple of Hera; and Pausanias, seeing that they were retiring from the camp, gave the word to the Lacedemonians also to take up their arms and go after the others who were preceding them, supposing that these were going to the place to which they had agreed to go. Then, when all the other commanders were ready to obey Pausanias, Amompharetos the son of Poliades, the commander of the Pitonate division, said that he would not flee from the

strangers, nor with his own will would he disgrace Sparta; and he expressed wonder at seeing that which was being done, not having been present at the former discussion.

And Pausanias and Euryanax were greatly disturbed that he did not obey them and still more that they should be compelled to leave the Pitonate division behind, since he thus refused; for they feared that if they should leave it in order to do that which they had agreed with the other Hellenes, both Amompharetos himself would perish being left behind and also the men with him. With this thought they kept the Lacedemonian force from moving, and meanwhile they endeavoured to persuade him that it was not right for him to do so.

54. They then were exhorting Amompharetos, who had been left behind alone of the Lacedemonians and Tegeans; and meanwhile the Athenians were keeping themselves quiet in the place where they had been posted, knowing the spirit of the Lacedemonians, that they were apt to say otherwise than they really meant; and when the army began to move, they sent a horseman from their own body to see whether the Spartans were attempting to set forth, or whether they had in truth no design at all to retire; and they bade him ask Pausanias what they ought to do.

55. So when the herald came to the Lacedemonians, he saw that they were still in their place and that the chiefs of them had come to strife with one another: for when Euryanax and Pausanias both exhorted Amompharetos not to run the risk of remaining behind with his men, alone of all the Lacedemonians, they did not at all persuade him, and at last they had come to downright strife; and meanwhile the herald of the Athenians had arrived and was standing by them. And Amompharetos in his

contention took a piece of rock in both his hands and placed it at the feet of Pausanias, saying that with this pebble he gave his vote not to fly from the strangers, meaning the Barbarians. Pausanias then, calling him a madman and one who was not in his right senses, bade tell the state of their affairs to the Athenian herald, who was asking that which he had been charged to ask; and at the same time he requested the Athenians to come towards the Lacedemonians and to do in regard to the retreat the same as they did...

56. He then went away back to the Athenians; and as the dawn of day found them yet disputing with one another, Pausanias, who had remained still throughout all this time, gave the signal, and led away all the rest over the low hills, supposing that Amompharetos would not stay behind when the other Lacedemonians departed (in which he was in fact right); and with them also went the Tegeans. Meanwhile the Athenians, following the commands which were given them, were going in the direction opposite to that of the Lacedemonians; for these were clinging to the hills and the lower slope of Kithairon from fear of the cavalry, while the Athenians were marching below in the direction of the plain.

57. As for Amompharetos, he did not at first believe that Pausanias would ever venture to leave him and his men behind, and he stuck to it that they should stay there and not leave their post; but when Pausanias and his troops were well in front, then he perceived that they had actually left him behind, and he made his division take up their arms and led them slowly towards the main body. This, when it had got away about ten furlongs, stayed for the division of Amompharetos, halting at the river Moloeis and the place called Argiopion...in order that if Amompharetos

and his division should not leave the place where they had been posted, but should remain there, it might be able to come back to their assistance. So Amompharetos and his men were coming up to join them, and the cavalry also of the Barbarians was at the same time beginning to attack them in full force: for the horsemen did on this day as they had been wont to do every day; and seeing the place vacant in which the Hellenes had been posted on the former days, they rode their horses on continually further, and as soon as they came up with them they began to attack them.

...59. [Mardonios] led on the Persians at a run, after they had crossed the Asopos, on the track of the Hellenes, supposing that these were running away from him; and he directed his attack upon the Lacedemonians and Tegeans only, for the Athenians, whose march was towards the plain, he did not see by reason of the hills. Then the rest of the commanders of the Barbarian divisions, seeing that the Persians had started to pursue the Hellenes, forthwith all raised the signals for battle and began to pursue, each as fast as they could, not arranged in any order or succession of post.

60. These then were coming on with shouting and confused numbers, thinking to make short work of the Hellenes; and Pausanias, when the cavalry began to attack, sent to the Athenians a horseman and said thus: "Athenians, now that the greatest contest is set before us, namely that which has for its issue the freedom or the slavery of Hellas, we have been deserted by our allies, we Lacedemonians and ye Athenians, seeing that they have run away during the night that is past. Now therefore it is determined what we must do upon this, namely that we must defend ourselves and protect one another as best we may. If then the cavalry had set forth to attack you at the first, we and the Tegeans, who with us refuse

to betray the cause of Hellas, should have been bound to go to your help; but as it is, since the whole body has come against us, it is right that ye should come to that portion of the army which is hardest pressed, to give aid. If however anything has happened to you which makes it impossible for you to come to our help, then do us a kindness by sending to us the archers; and we know that ye have been in the course of this present war by far the most zealous of all, so that ye will listen to our request in this matter also.”

61. When the Athenians heard this they were desirous to come to their help and to assist them as much as possible; and as they were already going, they were attacked by those of the Hellenes on the side of the king who had been ranged opposite to them, so that they were no longer able to come to the help of the Lacedemonians, for the force that was attacking them gave them much trouble. Thus the Lacedemonians and Tegeans were left alone, being in number, together with light-armed men, the former fifty thousand and the Tegeans three thousand; for these were not parted at all from the Lacedemonians: and they began to offer sacrifice, meaning to engage battle with Mardonios and the force which had come against them. Then since their offerings did not prove favourable, and many of them were being slain during this time and many more wounded—for the Persians had made a palisade of their wicker-work shields and were discharging their arrows in great multitude and without sparing—Pausanias, seeing that the Spartans were hard pressed and that the offerings did not prove favourable, fixed his gaze upon the temple of Hera of the Plataians and called upon the goddess to help, praying that they might by no means be cheated of their hope:

62. and while he was yet calling upon her thus, the Tegeans started forward before them and advanced against the Barbarians, and forthwith after the prayer of Pausanias the offerings proved favourable for the Lacedemonians as they sacrificed. So when this at length came to pass, then they also advanced against the Persians; and the Persians put away their bows and came against them. Then first there was fighting about the wicker-work shields, and when these had been overturned, after that the fighting was fierce by the side of the temple of Demeter, and so continued for a long time, until at last they came to justling, for the Barbarians would take hold of the spears and break them off. Now in courage and in strength the Persians were not inferior to the others, but they were without defensive armour, and moreover they were unversed in war and unequal to their opponents in skill; and they would dart out one at a time or in groups of about ten together, some more and some less, and fall upon the Spartans and perish.

63. In the place where Mardonios himself was, riding on a white horse and having about him the thousand best men of the Persians chosen out from the rest, here, I say, they pressed upon their opponents most of all: and so long as Mardonios survived, they held out against them, and defending themselves they cast down many of the Lacedemonians; but when Mardonios was slain and the men who were ranged about his person, which was the strongest portion of the whole army, had fallen, then the others too turned and gave way before the Lacedemonians; for their manner of dress, without defensive armour, was a very great cause of destruction to them, since in truth they were contending light-armed against hoplites.

64. Then the satisfaction for the murder of Leonidas was paid by Mardonios according to the oracle given to the Spartans...

65. When the Persians were turned to flight at Plataia by the Lacedemonians, they fled in disorder to their own camp and to the palisade which they had made in the Theban territory...

69. The victors then were coming after the troops of Xerxes, both pursuing them and slaughtering them... 70. ...the Persians and the rest of the throng, having fled for refuge to the palisade, succeeded in getting up to the towers before the Lacedemonians came; and having got up they strengthened the wall of defence as best they could...and at length by valour and endurance the Athenians mounted up on the wall and made a breach in it, through which the Hellenes poured in...

The Barbarians however, after the wall had been captured, no longer formed themselves into any close body, nor did any of them think of making resistance, but they were utterly at a loss, 79 as you might expect from men who were in a panic with many myriads of them shut up together in a small space: and the Hellenes were able to slaughter them so that out of an army of thirty myriads, if those four be subtracted which Artabazos took with him in his flight, of the remainder not three thousand men survived. Of the Lacedemonians from Sparta there were slain in the battle ninety-one in all, of the Tegeans sixteen, and of the Athenians two-and-fifty.