

THE LANDMARK
HERODOTUS
THE HISTORIES

A New Translation by Andrea L. Purvis
with Maps, Annotations, Appendices, and Encyclopedic Index

Edited by Robert B. Strassler

With an Introduction by Rosalind Thomas



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TO
GEORGE L. CAWKWELL

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As Artemisia was speaking to Mardonios, all those who were well-disposed toward her thought her words most unfortunate, since they believed she would suffer some punishment from the King for telling him not to wage a battle at sea. On the other hand, those who were envious and jealous of her, because she was honored as one of the most prominent of the allies, were delighted by her response to the question, thinking that she would perish for it. [2] When these opinions were reported to Xerxes, however, he was quite pleased with Artemisia's answer. Even prior to this, he had considered her worthy of his serious attention, but now he held her in even higher regard. Nevertheless, his orders were to obey the majority; he strongly suspected that off Euboea they had behaved like cowards because he was not present, but now he was fully prepared to watch them fight at sea.

When the command to put out to sea was given to the Persian fleet, the crews launched their ships and sailed for Salamis.^a They deployed into their battle lines in a leisurely fashion, and since the day was too far advanced for them to fight a battle and night was coming on, they prepared to do battle on the following day. [2] Now fear and terror overcame the Hellenes, especially those from the Peloponnese, who were terrified because there they were, stationed at Salamis, about to fight at sea for the land of the Athenians, and they felt sure that after their defeat they would be trapped and besieged on an island while leaving their own land unprotected.

In fact, that very night, the army of the barbarians was on the march to the Peloponnese, although the Hellenes had contrived everything in their power to prevent the barbarian from invading it by land. For as soon as the Peloponnesians had learned that Leonidas and his troops had lost their lives at Thermopylae, they hastily left their cities and gathered together at the isthmus, where they established their camp; their commander was the brother of Leonidas, Kleombrotos son of Anaxandridas. [2] Taking their positions at the isthmus, they blocked the Skironian road,^a and then, as they had resolved in council, they built a wall across the isthmus. And since many tens of thousands of men were present and every one of them was working on this project, they were making substantial progress on the work. Stones, bricks, wood, and baskets full of sand were carried to the site, and those who had come to help never ceased from their labor, day or night.

The Hellenes who had come to help at the isthmus were the Lacedaemonians,^a all the Arcadians,^b the Eleans,^c the Corinthians,^d Sicyonians,^e Epidaurians,^f Phleiasians,^g Troizenians,^h and Hermionians.ⁱ These were the men

8.69

480

ATHENS

Many believe that Artemisia will be punished for voicing her negative sentiments, but Xerxes is pleased, although he sides with the majority against her opinion.

8.70

480

SALAMIS

The Persians sail to Salamis, causing fear among the Hellenes that if defeated they might be besieged.

8.71

480

ISTHMUS OF CORINTH

The Persian army advances to the Peloponnese, which is defended by the recent construction of a wall across the isthmus by the Peloponnesians.

8.72

480

ISTHMUS OF CORINTH

Herodotus lists those states which manned the wall to defend the Peloponnese.

8.70.1a Salamis: Map 8.65, inset.

8.71.2a The Skironian road was a very difficult path that by Megarian legend had been made by a hero named Skiron. It is thought to have had precarious sections of narrow ledges high up over the sea on the face of an almost sheer cliff, which would make it quite easy to destroy or block.

8.72.1a Lacedaemon (Sparta): Map 8.72, BX.

8.72.1b Arcadia: Map 8.72, BX.

8.72.1c Elis: Map 8.72, AX.

8.72.1d Corinth: Map 8.72, AX.

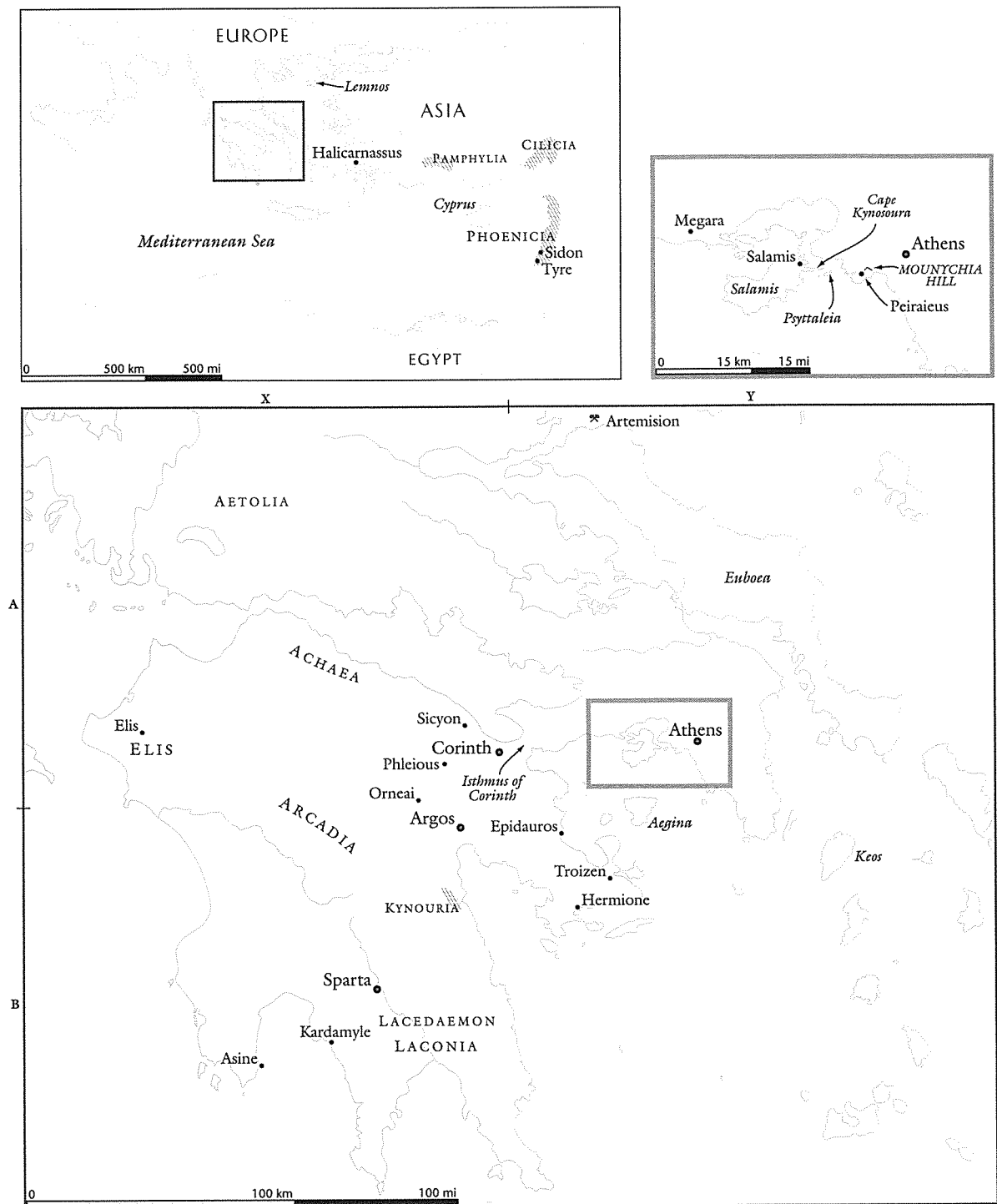
8.72.1e Sicyon: Map 8.72, AX.

8.72.1f Epidaurios: Map 8.72, BY.

8.72.1g Phleious: Map 8.72, AX.

8.72.1h Troizen: Map 8.72, BY.

8.72.1i Hermione: Map 8.72, BY.



MAP 8.72

who rushed to the defense of Hellas in fear of the danger it was in, while the rest of the Peloponnesians cared not at all, even though the festivals of Olympia and Karneia^a had by now been concluded.

Seven peoples inhabit the Peloponnese, and of these, two of them, the Arcadians and the Kynourians,^a are indigenous and remain settled in the same places that they inhabited in ancient times. There is one ethnic group, the Achaeans,^b which never migrated from the Peloponnese but did move out of its own territory into one belonging to others. [2] Of the seven peoples, the remaining four have immigrated to where they now live: the Dorians, Aetolians,^a Dryopes,^b and Lemnians.^c The Dorians have many notable cities; the Aetolians only one, Elis; the Dryopes have Hermione and Asine,^d which lies near Kardamyle^e in Laconia; the Lemnians have all the land of the Paroreatai.^f [3] The Kynourians, being indigenous, seem to be the only Ionians, but they became thoroughly Dorian under the rule of the Argives^a and with the passage of time; they are inhabitants of Orneai^b and its surrounding territory. The rest of the cities belonging to these seven peoples, apart from those I mentioned, assumed a neutral stance; but if I may speak freely, they were in effect medizing by remaining neutral.

Those at the isthmus took on such hard work as they did because they knew they were now running a race with everything at stake, and they did not expect the fleet to distinguish itself. Those at Salamis heard of what the others were doing at the isthmus, but they were terrified nonetheless, afraid not so much for themselves as for the Peloponnese. [2] For a while, they stood side by side, speaking only in whispers, one man to the next at his side, expressing amazement at Eurybiades' foolish decision. But finally the tension burst out into the open. A meeting was convened, and many of the earlier debates were repeated, some of them arguing that they should sail for the Peloponnese and undertake the risk of battle for that land instead of staying to fight for a land that had already been taken by the spear. On the other hand, the Athenians,^a Aeginetans,^b and Megarians^c asserted that they should stay here and defend themselves where they were.

When it became clear that Themistokles was losing the dispute with the Peloponnesians, he withdrew from the conference without being noticed and, after going outside, sent a man by boat to the camp of the Medes with precise instructions as to what he should say. This man's name was Sikinnos;^a

8.72.1j Olympian and Karneian festivals: these festivals might have served as pretexts for Dorian inaction, but not at this time of year (September). See Appendix I, Classical Greek Religious Festivals, §5–12.

8.73.1a Kynouria: Map 8.72, BX.

8.73.1b Achaea: Map 8.72, AX. The Achaeans are said to have moved from Laconia (Map 8.72, BX) to Achaea, which at that time was inhabited by Ionians.

8.73.2a Aetolia: Map 8.72, AX.

8.73.2b Dryopis: Map 8.43, AX.

8.73.2c Lemnos: Map 8.72, locator.

8.73.2d Asine: Map 8.72, BX.

8.73.2e Kardamyle, Laconia: Map 8.72, BX.

8.73.2f Paroreatai: location of this group's territory is unknown, but these Lemnians are the Minyans who came from Lemnos; see 4.145–146, 4.148.

8.73.3a Argos: Map 8.72, BX.

8.73.3b Orneai: Map 8.72, AX.

8.74.2a Athens: Map 8.72, AY, and inset.

8.74.2b Aegina: Map 8.72, BY.

8.74.2c Megara: Map 8.72, inset.

8.75.1a Some have doubted this story of Sikinnos' mission before the battle, but more accept it, reserving their skepticism for Sikinnos' second mission (8.110.2), which, despite what Greeks thought, probably did not in any way influence what Xerxes ordered.

8.73

PELOPONNESE

Herodotus lists the seven nations which inhabit the Peloponnese.

8.74

480

SALAMIS

As work progresses at the isthmus, the Peloponnesians at Salamis call another assembly to debate whether to stay and fight or retreat to the isthmus.

8.75

480

SALAMIS

Themistokles, finding himself outvoted, sends a trusted servant to the Persians to advise them to prevent the Greek fleet from escaping from Salamis.

he was a household servant of Themistokles' who looked after his children. After these events had passed, and at a time when the Thespians were accepting new citizens, Themistokles made this man a Thespian and also made him wealthy. [2] When Sikinnos arrived by boat at the camp, he said to the commanders of the barbarians, "I have been sent here by the commander of the Athenians without the knowledge of the other Hellenes, for he happens to favor the cause of the King and wants your side to prevail over that of the Hellenes. I have come to tell you that the Hellenes are utterly terrified and are planning to flee, and that you now have the opportunity to perform the most glorious of all feats if you do not stand by and watch them escape, [3] for they are in great disagreement with one another and will not stand up to you; indeed you will see them fighting a naval battle against themselves, those favoring your side opposing those who do not." Having conveyed this message, he left them alone and departed.

The commanders, thinking the message credible, responded by first landing many Persians on the islet of Psyttaleia,^a which lies between Salamis^b and the mainland. Then, when the middle of the night had come, they directed the western wing of the fleet to encircle Salamis, while those who had been posted around Keos^c and Kynosoura^d deployed their ships so that they now occupied the entire strait from Salamis to Mounychia.^e [2] They did this in order to prevent the Hellenes from escaping; they intended to trap them at Salamis, where they would make them pay for their encounters at Artemision.^a And the reason they landed Persian troops on the islet of Psyttaleia was so that when the battle took place, the men on the islet would be able to save their compatriots and destroy their enemies, since the island was located in the very path of the battle about to be fought, and most of the men and wreckage would be cast ashore there. [3] All these steps were carried out quietly so that their opponents would not learn of them, but because of all these preparations, the fleet's crews were unable to catch any sleep at all that night.

Now I cannot refute the truth of oracles, since I refuse to reject prophecies that speak quite plainly when I consider words like these:

When with their ships they bridge the sacred coast
of Artemis, who wields a sword of gold, with Kynosoura by the sea
In madness from their hopes after sacking lustrous Athens,
Justice the Divine will then smother mighty Greed, ravenous
son of Hubris

8.76.1a Psyttaleia: Map 8.72, inset. Some scholars have wanted to identify Psyttaleia with the island now called St. George (Hagia Georgios), which is well inside the strait between Salamis and Attica, but most of them agree that Psyttaleia was modern Lipsokoutali, at the entrance to the strait. It is also identified in Figure 8.84.

8.76.1b Salamis: Map 8.72, inset.

8.76.1c Keos: the location of Keos on Salamis is unknown.

8.76.1d Cape Kynosoura (the word means "dog's tail"), the easternmost peninsula of Salamis island: Map 8.72, inset.

8.76.1e Mounychia Hill (Peiraieus): Map 8.72, inset.

8.76.2a Artemision: Map 8.72, AY.

8.76

480

SALAMIS

The Persians find this message credible, and send troops to occupy the island of Psyttaleia and deploy their fleet so as to prevent the Greek ships from escaping.

8.77

Herodotus cites an oracle he considers both clear and irrefutable.

Raging in his lust, he thinks to drink and swallow all.
 [2] Bronze against bronze will then engage closely,
 and Ares will color the open sea red.
 At that time will Hellas see the day of its freedom,
 brought by far-seeing Kronides and the Lady of Victory.^a

I do not dare to refute oracles such as these, expressed so plainly by Bakis,^b nor do I listen to others who do so.

Meanwhile, the commanders at Salamis were now engaged in fierce wrangling. They were not yet aware that the barbarian ships had encircled them on the island; they assumed that they were all still in the same positions in which they had been observed on the day before.

Then, as the commanders were in the midst of their dispute, Aristides^a son of Lysimachos crossed over from Aegina.^b He was an Athenian who had been ostracized^c by the people, but I have come to believe through my inquiries into his character that he was actually the best and most just of all the Athenians.^d [2] This man stood at the door of the council and summoned Themistokles to come out, though he was no friend of his but in fact had been his worst enemy. Because of the magnitude of their present evils, however, he forced himself to forget the past and summoned Themistokles, wishing to converse with him, for he had heard that those who had come from the Peloponnese were eager to sail to the isthmus.^a [3] And when Themistokles emerged, Aristides said to him: "In any crisis, Themistokles, but especially in this one, it is we who should strive to see which of us can do more for our fatherland. Let me tell you that as far as the Peloponnesians are concerned, it makes no difference whether there is much or little talk about sailing away, for I have seen with my own eyes that even if the Corinthians and Eurybiades himself wanted to sail out of here, they could not possibly do so, because we are encircled by our enemies. Well, then, go in and tell them this news."

Themistokles replied, "The appeal that you make is as worthy as the news that you bring is welcome. For you are an eyewitness to just what I wanted to have happen. You should know that what the Medes are doing is all because of me. Since the Hellenes were unwilling to go into battle, it proved necessary to lead them to it against their will. So since you have such

8.78

480

SALAMIS

The Greek generals argue in ignorance.

8.79

480

SALAMIS

Aristides returns from ostracized exile and, calling out his rival Themistokles, tells him to inform the other commanders that the Greek fleet is now surrounded and cannot flee.

8.80

480

SALAMIS

Themistokles tells Aristides that he is pleased, having caused the Persians to move to cut them off, and asks Aristides to tell the others the news himself.

8.77.2a Kronides: Zeus son of Kronos. Lady of Victory: Nike.

8.77.2b Bakis, a famous source of prophecies. See n. 8.20.1a.

8.79.1a Aristides was an Athenian statesman and general of the early fifth century. He supported Miltiades' decision to fight at Marathon, and although he was ostracized in 482, he was recalled in the general amnesty that was declared as Xerxes' forces neared Attica. He commanded the Greek forces at Psyttaleia, and when the anti-Persian Delian League was formed under Athenian leadership in 478, he fixed the tribute quota of each contributory state.

8.79.1b Aegina: Map 8.86, inset.

8.79.1c Ostracism was a procedure by which an Athenian citizen could be honorably banished from Athens and her possessions for ten years without loss of property or citizenship if, after the Athenians chose to hold such a vote, he received the most votes out of a total of at least 6,000 cast (votes were noted on shards of pottery called *ostraka*). See Appendix A, §8, and Figure 8.79, which shows *ostraka* that were used in ostracism votes.

8.79.1d He was known in Athens as "Aristides the Just."

8.79.2a Isthmus of Corinth: Map 8.86.



FIGURE 8.79. POTTERY FRAGMENTS (OSTRAKA) FOUND IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS OF THE ATHENIAN AGORA WHICH WERE USED TO REGISTER OSTRACISM VOTES. THE NAMES SCRATCHED ON THE OSTRAKA ARE (CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT) MEGAKLES, ARISTEIDES (MIS-SPELLED ARISSTEIDES), KIMON, THEMISTOKLES, PERICLES, AND HIPPOCRATES.

good news to report, go tell them yourself. [2] For if I were to tell them, I would appear to have made it up and I would fail to persuade them; no, they will not believe that the barbarians are really doing this. So then, go in yourself and describe the situation to them, and when you have delivered the news, the best thing that could happen would be that they are convinced, but if they do not believe you, it will be all the same for us, because if, as you say, we are surrounded on all sides, they will no longer be able to run away.”

So Aristeides went to meet with the commanders and told them the news, saying that he had just come from Aegina and had experienced great difficulty in trying to sail here and elude those who were now blockading them, because the entire camp of the Hellenes was now encircled by the ships of Xerxes. He then counseled them to prepare to defend themselves, and after saying this, he withdrew. And once again a dispute arose, for the majority of the commanders did not believe him.

They continued to distrust his report until a trireme of Tenian^a deserters arrived, commanded by Panaitios son of Sosimenes, which now, indeed, brought the whole truth. It was in reward for this feat that the Tenians were honored with an inscription, as among those who had assured the destruction of the barbarian, on a tripod at Delphi.^b [2] With the addition of this ship that had deserted to join the fleet at Salamis^a and with the Lemnian^b ship that had earlier joined it at Artemision,^c the Greek fleet was now filled out to 380 ships; it had previously fallen short of this number by two ships.

Since the words of the Tenians were quite convincing to the Hellenes, they made preparations for a naval battle. As dawn was breaking, they convened a meeting of the marines, and of all the commanders, Themistokles issued the most effective orders. Everything he said communicated a contrast between the better and the worse in human nature and circumstances, [2] and he encouraged them to choose the better of these for themselves; and then, after winding up his speech, he ordered them to their ships. Now, just as they were going on board, the trireme that had gone off to fetch the descendants of Aiakos arrived back from Aegina.

The Hellenes set sail with all their ships, and as they moved offshore, they were immediately attacked by the barbarians.

The rest of the Hellenes began to back water and turn their ships toward the beach, but an Athenian, Ameinias of Pallene,^a had advanced his ship farther out, and he rammed one of the enemy's vessels. The two ships became entangled and could not be separated, so it was in that manner, when the others came to help Ameinias, that the battle started. [2] That is how the Atheni-

8.81

480

SALAMIS

Aristeides informs the Peloponnesian generals but is not believed.

8.82

480

SALAMIS

A ship of Tenos deserts from the Persian fleet, confirms the news, and brings the number of Greek ships to 380.

8.83

480

SALAMIS

The Hellenes hold an assembly. Themistokles addresses them, and they prepare to fight.

8.84

480

SALAMIS

The Persian fleet attacks, and although some Hellenes retreat, an Athenian ship charges and begins the fighting, but some say it was an Aeginetan ship that began the battle.

8.82.1a Tenos: Map 8.86.

8.82.1b Delphi: Map 8.86. This may be a reference to the tripod commemorating the victory of the Hellenes over the Persians which is described in 9.81.1. The base and shaft of this tripod can still be seen today in Istanbul on the site of the ancient hippodrome. See Figure 9.81a.

8.82.2a Salamis: Map 8.86, inset.

8.82.2b Lemnos: Map 8.86.

8.82.2c Artemision: Map 8.86.

8.84.1a Pallene, Attic deme: Map 8.86 inset. Attic demes had originally been just townships, villages, or regions in Attica. After the reforms of Kleisthenes in 508/07 (see 5.69), they became official political units of the Athenian state, and every Athenian citizen was identified by his name and the deme in which he had been born.

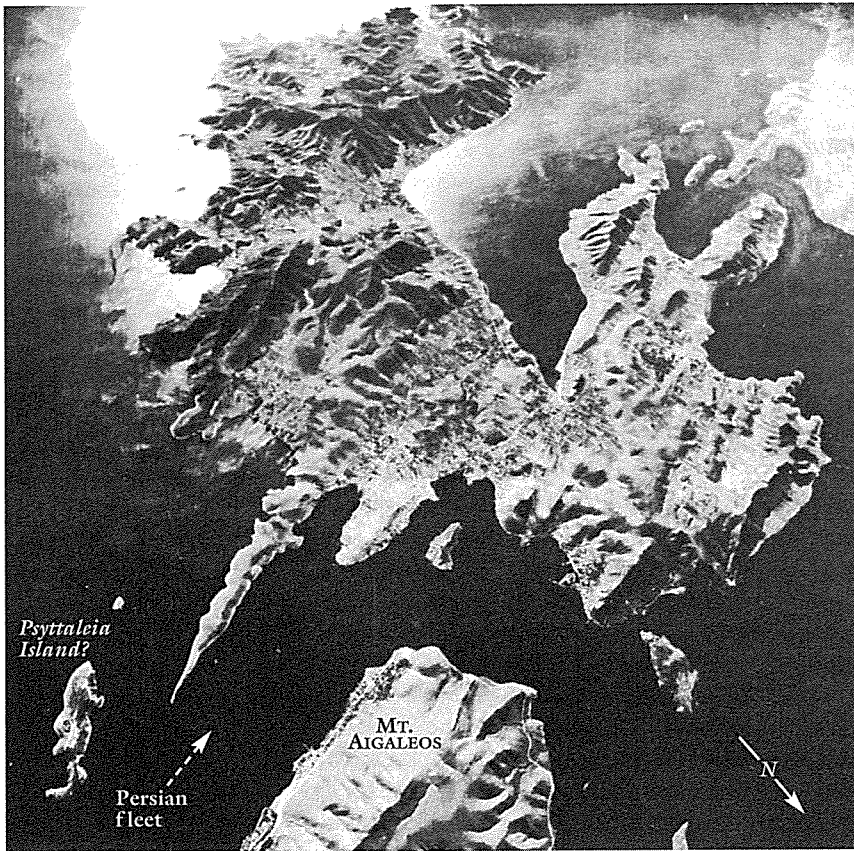


FIGURE 8.84. AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE ISLAND OF SALAMIS AND THE NEARBY MAINLAND (NORTH IS AT THE BOTTOM). THE ISLAND MOST SCHOLARS BELIEVE TO BE PSYTTALEIA, THE CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH THE PERSIAN FLEET ENTERED THE STRAITS, AND MOUNT AIGALEOS (FROM WHICH XERXES WATCHED THE BATTLE) ARE SHOWN IN THE LOWER LEFT QUADRANT OF THE PHOTOGRAPH.

ans claim the sea fight began, but the Aeginetans say it was the ship that had gone to Aegina for the descendants of Aiakos that started it. And it is also said that an apparition of a woman appeared and urged them on so loudly that the entire force of the Hellenes could hear her, beginning with the reproach, “What has gotten into you! How long will you continue to back water?”

The Athenians were facing the Phoenicians,^a whose ships held the west wing of the Persian line toward Eleusis;^b and opposite the Lacedaemonians^c were the Ionian^d ships, who formed the east wing of the Persian line over toward Peiraeus.^e Few of the Ionians, however, deliberately fought like cowards as Themistokles had told them to do;^f in fact, the majority did not. [2] While I could list the names of many trierarchs who captured Greek ships, I will deal with none of them except Theomestor son of Androdamos and Phylakos son of Histiaios, both of whom were Samians.^a [3] The reason

8.85

480

SALAMIS

How most of the Ionians fight well for the Persians, and two of them are well rewarded.

- 8.85.1a Phoenicia: Map 8.72, locator.
 8.85.1b Eleusis: Map 8.86, inset.
 8.85.1c Lacedaemon (Sparta): Map 8.86.
 8.85.1d Ionia: Map 8.86, locator.

- 8.85.1e Peiraeus: Map 8.86, inset.
 8.85.1f Themistokles' tactical instructions to the Ionians were described in 8.22.2.
 8.85.2a Samos: Map 8.86.

why I mention these alone is that Theomestor, on account of this feat, was installed as tyrant of Samos by the Persians, while Phylakos was recorded as benefactor of the King and granted much land. The benefactors of the King are called *orosangai* in Persian.

That, then, is how these men fared. Most of Xerxes' ships at Salamis were disabled, some being ruined by the Athenians, others by the Aeginetans. For since the Hellenes fought the naval battle in disciplined order and remained in their ranks, while the barbarians failed to hold their positions and made no moves that might have followed a sensible plan, the battle was bound to turn out as it did. The men in Xerxes' fleet did, however, prove themselves better men by far on this day than they had off Euboea, since each man fought eagerly and in fear of Xerxes, thinking that the King was watching him.

I cannot speak with certainty about the rest of them, how each specific group of barbarians and Hellenes performed in the fighting, but this is what happened to Artemisia, which resulted in her winning still higher esteem from the King. [2] The King's fleet had reached a state of mass confusion, and it was during this crisis that Artemisia's ship was pursued by one from Attica. She was unable to escape it because there were so many other friendly ships in front of her, and since her own ship was closest to those of the enemy, she made a decision which turned out to be very much to her advantage. While she was still being chased by the Attic ship, she rammed at full speed a friendly ship manned by Kalyndians^a and the king of the Kalyndians himself, Damasithymos. [3] Now I cannot say if there was some quarrel she had with him that had arisen while they were still near the Hellespont,^a or even whether, when she ran into the Kalyndian ship, the deed was premeditated or accidental. [4] But when she rammed it, the good she accomplished for herself was twofold. For when the trierarch of the Attic ship saw that she was ramming a ship of the barbarians, he assumed that Artemisia's vessel was either a Greek ship or one that was deserting from the barbarians and now fighting for the Hellenes, so he turned away from her ship to attack others.

That was one result to her advantage: she escaped and was not destroyed. But another outcome was that, even though she was doing harm to her own side, she won the highest possible praise from Xerxes. [2] For it is said that as the King was watching, he noticed the one ship ramming the other, and one of the men with him said, "My lord, do you see how well Artemisia is fighting, and how she has sunk an enemy ship?" Xerxes inquired if it was truly Artemisia who had accomplished this feat, and they confirmed that it was, clearly recognizing the ensign of her vessel, and believing that the one she had destroyed belonged to the enemy. [3] So all that, as I have explained, brought her good fortune. And in addition, no one from the Kalyndian ship survived to become her accuser. In response to what he had heard, Xerxes is reported to have said, "My men have become women, and my women, men!"

8.86

480

SALAMIS

The Persians are disorganized, but they fight bravely, out of fear of Xerxes, who observes the battle.

8.87

480

SALAMIS

The story of Artemisia, and how she cleverly evades pursuit by ramming a friendly ship and sinking it, leading her pursuer to think her a friendly ship or a defector.

8.88

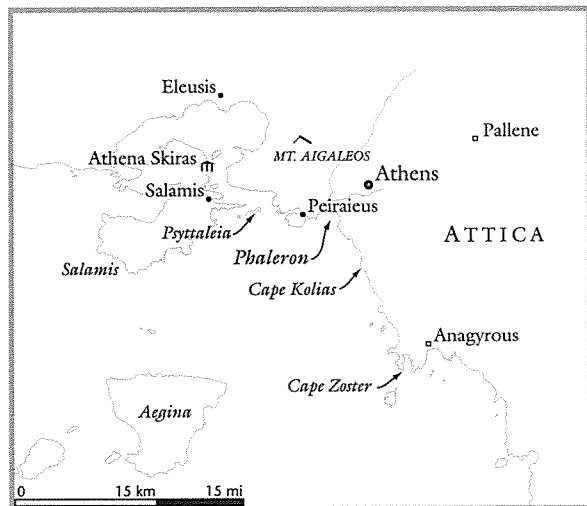
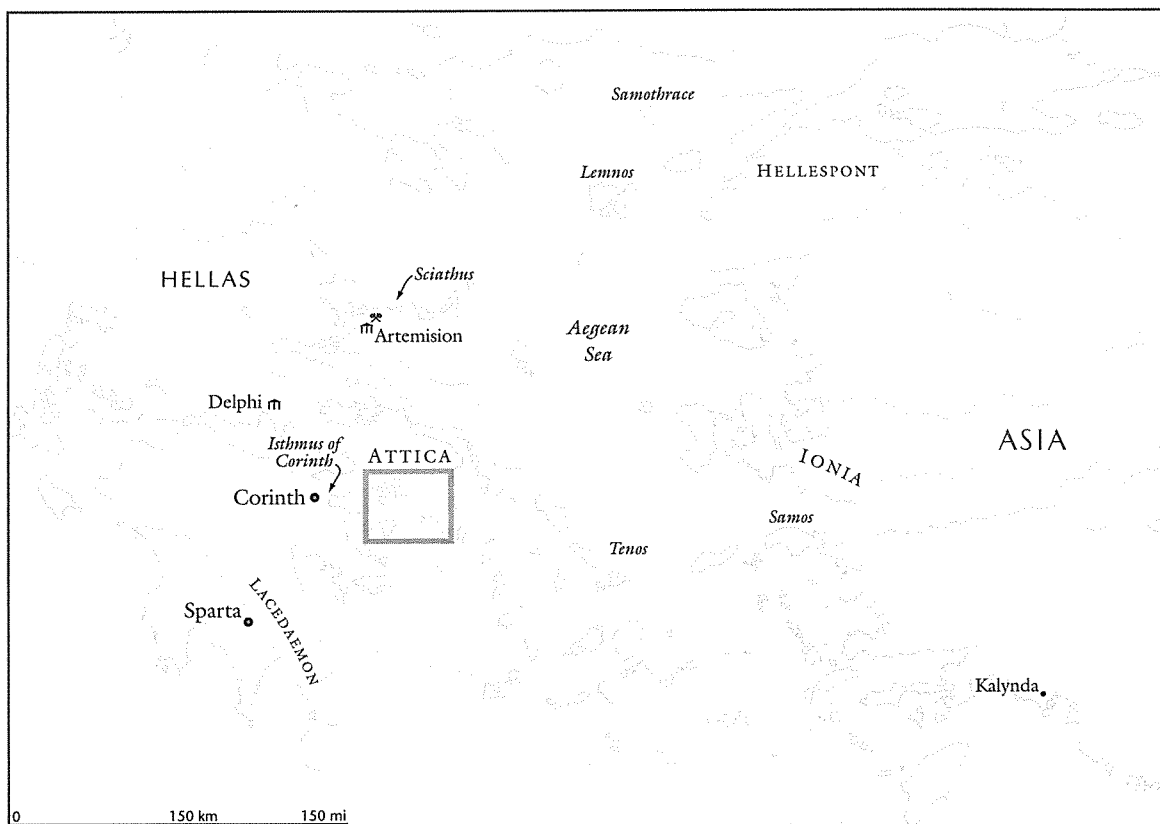
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SALAMIS

Xerxes, thinking Artemisia had sunk a Greek ship, praises her and remarks that his women have become men, and his men, women.

8.87.2a Kalynda: Map 8.86.

8.87.3a Hellespont: Map 8.86.



MAP 8.86

In this struggle the commander Ariabignes, the son of Darius and brother of Xerxes, lost his life, as did many other notable men of the Persians, the Medes, and their other allies; but few of the Hellenes died, for they knew how to swim, so those whose ships were destroyed and who were not killed in hand-to-hand combat swam safely to Salamis.^a [2] Many barbarians, however, drowned in the sea, as they did not know how to swim. Most of their fleet was destroyed when the ships in the lead turned to flee, because those deployed behind them were trying to sail past so as to perform some spectacular feat before the King, and they collided with the leading ships from their own side who were in flight.

In this state of confusion, some of the Phoenicians^a whose ships had been destroyed went to the King and slandered the Ionians, saying that it was because of them that their ships had been lost and that they were traitors. But it so happened that Xerxes did not punish the Ionian commanders with death, while the Phoenicians who had slandered them were repaid for doing so in the following way. [2] While they were still speaking to this effect, a Samothracian^a ship rammed an Attic^b ship, and as the Attic ship began to sink, an Aeginetan^c ship attacked and sunk the Samothracian ship. The Samothracians, being javelin fighters, threw their weapons from their own sinking ship at the Aeginetan marines; and after sweeping them off the deck, they boarded the enemy ship and took possession of it. [3] It was this event that saved the Ionians, for when Xerxes saw them achieving this great feat, he turned to the Phoenicians and, in his extreme vexation, blamed them for everything that had happened, and he ordered that their heads be cut off so that those who had proved to be inferior should never again slander their betters. [4] In fact, Xerxes was constantly watching to see if any of his men performed some remarkable feat. He observed the fighting as he sat at the foot of the mountain called Aigaleos,^a facing Salamis, and whenever he saw one of his commanders carry out an extraordinary deed, he would immediately inquire who was doing it, and had his scribes write down the name of the trierarch, his patronymic,^b and the city from which he came. The presence of Ariaramnes, a Persian who was a friend of the Ionians, also contributed to the sufferings of the Phoenicians.

The King's men now dealt with the Phoenicians.

Those barbarians who had taken flight and were trying to sail out toward Phaleron^a were met by the Aeginetans, who were lying in ambush in the strait and who there performed noteworthy deeds. For while the Athenians in the midst of the *melée* disabled those ships that resisted or that attempted to flee, the Aeginetans did the same to those who were trying to sail out. So those ships which escaped from the Athenians ran right into the Aeginetans.

8.89
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SALAMIS
Many Persians drown
because they cannot swim,
but few Hellenes, who can.

8.90
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SALAMIS
The Phoenicians go to
Xerxes and accuse the
Ionians of treason; but he,
who in his vexation blames
everyone, seeing a heroic
Samothracian ship defeat
its foes, condemns the
Phoenicians instead.

8.91
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SALAMIS
Aeginetan ships attack
those Persian ships who
try to flee to Phaleron.

8.89.1a Salamis: Map 8.86, inset.

8.90.1a Phoenicia: Map 8.72, locator.

8.90.2a Samothrace: Map 8.86.

8.90.2b Attic here means Athenian. Attica: Map 8.86 and inset.

8.90.2c Aegina: Map 8.86, inset.

8.90.4a Mount Aigaleos: Map 8.86, inset.

8.90.4b A person's patronymic was derived from his father's name, as in Themistokles son of Neokles.

8.91.1a Phaleron: Map 8.86, inset.

8.92

480

SALAMIS

Herodotus recounts the anecdotes of Polykritos mocking Themistokles and of the safe return of Pytheas. The remaining Persian ships reach Phaleron and the protection of their army.

At that point, the ship of Themistokles, which was chasing another ship, met with the ship of an Aeginetan, Polykritos son of Krios, which had rammed a Sidonian^a ship. Now this Sidonian ship was the same one that captured the Aeginetan ship that had been keeping watch off Sciathus^b and on which Pytheas son of Ischenoos had been sailing. He was the man whom the Persians had greatly admired after he had been nearly chopped to pieces in the fighting. They still had him on their ship, keeping him there because they respected his valor,^c and now this Sidonian ship conveying him along with some Persians was captured, so that Pytheas in this way survived to return safely to Aegina. [2] When Polykritos looked at the Attic ship and recognized the ensign as belonging to the Athenian flagship, he shouted to Themistokles, taunting him with the charge of “medism”^a that had been brought against the Aeginetans. Such were the insults that Polykritos cast at Themistokles as he rammed the ship. The surviving barbarian ships fled to Phaleron, where they came under the protection of their army.

8.93

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SALAMIS

The Hellenes credited most courageous conduct in the fighting to first the Aeginetans and then the Athenians.

Of the Hellenes who fought in this naval battle at Salamis, praise for the greatest valor went to the Aeginetans, and after them to the Athenians; of individual men, to Polykritos of Aegina and the Athenians Eumenes of Anagyrous^a and Ameinias of Pallene.^b It was Ameinias who had pursued Artemisia; if he had realized that she was sailing on that ship, he would not have stopped before capturing her or being taken himself, [2] for orders to capture her had been given to the Athenian trierarchs, and a prize of 10,000 drachmas had been offered to whoever captured her alive, since they considered it a disgrace that a woman should wage war on Athens. But as I described earlier, she managed to escape, and there were others whose ships had survived also who were all now at Phaleron.

8.94

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SALAMIS

Herodotus recounts a nasty rumor spread by the Athenians that the Corinthians fled in terror, but the other Hellenes agree that the Corinthians were foremost in the battle.

The Athenians say that at the beginning of the battle, just as the ships first clashed, the Corinthian^a commander Adeimantos became utterly terrified. He panicked, raised his sails, and fled from the scene. The rest of the Corinthians, seeing their flagship in flight, did the same and also disappeared. [2] But during their flight, when they had reached the region of Salamis near the sanctuary of Athena Skiras,^a they encountered a small ship sent by some god (it never became apparent who had sent it), and at the time when it came up to the Corinthians, they knew nothing of what was happening to the rest of the fleet. They came to believe that this was a divine occurrence because when this ship drew near to theirs, the men on board said, [3] “Adeimantos, by turning your ships around and fleeing in such haste you have utterly betrayed the Hellenes, who now are winning a victory over their enemies every bit as great as the one they had prayed for.”

8.92.1a Sidon: Map 8.72, locator.

8.92.1b Sciathus: Map 8.86.

8.92.1c The capture of Pytheas son of Ischenoos was described in 7.181.

8.92.2a The Athenians must have accused the Aeginetans of favoring the Persian side, which was now belied

by their conduct in this battle.

8.93.1a Anagyrous, Attic deme: Map 8.86, inset.

8.93.1b Pallene, Attic deme: Map 8.86, inset.

8.94.1a Corinth: Map 8.86.

8.94.2a Precinct of Athena Skiras on Salamis: Map 8.86, inset.

When Adeimantos did not believe what they said, they spoke again, and told him that they were willing to be treated as hostages and to be put to death if the Hellenes did not prove to be victorious. [4] So it was then that he turned his ships around and, with the rest of the Corinthians, sailed back to the camp, but he arrived after the battle had been concluded. That, at least, is the story told by the Athenians. The Corinthians themselves, however, disagree, and think of themselves as among the first in the battle, and the rest of Hellas testifies to the validity of their claim.^a

During the confusion at Salamis, the Athenian Aristеides son of Lysimachos, whom I recently mentioned as the best of men,^a performed the following deed. Picking up many hoplites of Athenian origin, who had been stationed along the coast of Salaminian territory, he brought them to the island of Psyttaleia^b and had them disembark there, and these hoplites then proceeded to murder all the Persians who were occupying the island.

When the battle at sea had broken off, the Hellenes hauled up on the shore of Salamis as much of the wreckage as still remained afloat. They were prepared for another naval battle, expecting the King to use those of his ships that had survived intact. [2] Much of the wreckage was carried by the west wind and driven to the beach of Attica called Kolias,^a and thus was fulfilled every oracle, not only those about the sea battle spoken by Bakis and Mousaios, but also the one concerning the wreckage carried to shore. This oracle had been given many years earlier and belonged to those of the oraclemonger^b Lysistratos of Athens, but it had escaped the notice of all the Hellenes. The oracle said, “The women of Kolias will do their roasting on oars.” This prophecy was to be fulfilled after the King had gone away.^c

When Xerxes realized the severity of the disaster that had occurred, he became afraid that one of the Ionians would advise the Hellenes (if they did not think of it themselves) to sail to the Hellespont^a and break apart the bridges, so that he would be trapped in Europe and in danger of perishing there. And so he made plans to flee. But because he did not want his plan to be detected by either the Hellenes or his own men, he began the attempt to construct a causeway^b to Salamis by tying together Phoenician

8.95

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PSYTTALEIA

Aristeides lands soldiers on Psyttaleia, who kill all the Persians there.

8.96

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SALAMIS

As the Hellenes prepare for further battle, many wrecks are blown onto the Kolian shore, fulfilling oracles.

8.97

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ATHENS

Xerxes decides privately to return to Persia, although he orders further moves to threaten Salamis. All are deceived except Mardonios.

8.94.4a The role of the Corinthians in the battle is mysterious. Herodotus gives the Athenian story of the Corinthians starting to run away as soon as the battle was joined, but adds that the Greeks generally accept that the Corinthians did play the part they claim. A fragmentary inscription of which Plutarch (“On the Malice of Herodotus,” *Moralia*, 870E) gives the full version supports the Corinthian claim. But what were they doing? Was their role, as some have speculated, to feign flight and thus draw the Persian fleet into the straits? Did they “capture Persians and Medes” as the inscription declares? There are awkward holes in Herodotus’ account of the battle.

8.95.1a Aristеides was mentioned in 8.79.1.

8.95.1b Psyttaleia: Map 8.86, inset.

8.96.2a Cape Kolias: Map 8.86, inset.

8.96.2b On oraclemongers, see 7.6.3 and n. 7.6.3a.

8.96.2c There must have been a vast body of oracular predictions, from which one could draw a few that proved to be genuinely prophetic. See Appendix P, §13, 14.

8.97.1a Hellespont: Map 8.86.

8.97.1b Ctesias, an ancient historian of whose work only fragments remain, says that the Persians began to build the causeway before the battle, which would have been pointless. Herodotus’ version is even more improbable, for after the battle had been lost, building the causeway would have been both pointless and hardly possible. Very few modern scholars take Herodotus’ story here seriously.

merchant ships to serve as a pontoon bridge and a wall. In addition, he made preparations as though he was actually determined to wage another naval battle. [2] When the others saw him doing these things, they were convinced that he was firmly committed to staying there to fight, but he did not deceive Mardonios, who was especially experienced in the way Xerxes' mind worked.

As Xerxes was doing all this, he also sent a courier to Persia to report his present misfortune. There is nothing that travels faster, and yet is mortal, than these couriers; the Persians invented this system, which works as follows. It is said that there are as many horses and men posted at intervals as there are days required for the entire journey, so that one horse and one man are assigned to each day. And neither snow nor rain nor heat nor dark of night keeps them from completing their appointed course as swiftly as possible.^a [2] The first courier passes on the instructions to the second, the second to the third, and from there they are transmitted from one to another all the way through, just as the torchbearing relay is celebrated by the Hellenes in honor of Hephaistos. The Persians call this horse-posting system the *angareion*.

The first message had arrived at Susa^a while Xerxes was in possession of Athens, and the news so delighted the Persians who had stayed behind that they scattered myrtle on all the roads, burned incense, and gave themselves over to sacrifices and pleasure. [2] The second message, following closely as it did on the first, so disturbed them that everyone tore their tunics to shreds, with endless crying and wailing, and placed the blame on Mardonios. The Persians behaved this way not so much because they were upset about the ships lost as out of fear for Xerxes himself.

That remained the situation in Persia for the whole time that passed between the arrival of the message and that of Xerxes himself, whose presence put an end to their distress. Now Mardonios could see that Xerxes considered the outcome of the naval battle a great disaster, and he suspected that the King was planning to flee from Athens. So now, fearing that he would pay the penalty for having persuaded the King to make war on Hellas, he decided that it would be better to take the risk of either conquering Hellas or ending his life nobly after risking it for high stakes (although he was inclined to think that he would succeed in conquering Hellas). And so after he had carefully calculated all the factors, he made the following speech to Xerxes: [2] "My lord, do not be distressed or consider what has happened a great misfortune. For our whole contest depends not on wooden things but on men and horses. None of the men who suppose that they are now complete victors will step off their ships

8.98

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PERSIA

A message is sent to Persia to announce the disaster. Herodotus praises the Persian courier system, whose couriers are not stopped by weather or darkness from their appointed course.

8.99

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SUSA

While the Persians are celebrating the capture of Athens, they are confounded by news of the battle of Salamis.

8.100

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ATHENS?

Mardonios advises Xerxes not to be discouraged, as only allies at sea have been defeated, not Persians on land. Fearing blame for his earlier aggressive counsel, he offers, should Xerxes decide to return to Persia, to continue the advance and to conquer the Hellenes with just a part of the Persian army.

8.98.1a This sentence, has long served as an unofficial motto of the U.S. Postal Service. Historians estimate that a courier system as described by Herodotus could cover the 2,000 miles between Sardis and Susa (Map 8.107, AY, and locator) in about a week. An army on foot might well require

three months for the journey, as Aristagoras told Kleomenes (5.50.2).

8.99.1a Susa: Map 8.107, locator.

8.100.2a Mardonios is undoubtedly referring to the Greeks who died at Thermopylae, which the Persians considered to be their victory.

8.100.3a Peloponnese: Map 8.107, BX.