



THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Greek Battle Strategy and Its Victory Over  
Persia

*Luke Hedt*

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The early 5th century BC was a pivotal time in the formation of the Hellenic identity, marking the decisive point between the period of *póleis* Greece and the true Hellenic period. The cornerstone of this identity formation was the defeat of Persia in the Greco-Persian Wars, beginning in 499 BC with the Ionian Revolt. But what brought about the defeat of Persia? What tactics were the Greeks employing in the period that brought about their victories? This essay will attempt to address these questions, discussing how their strategies and arms and armour were instrumental in the defeat of Persia in the Greco-Persian Wars and Carthage in the First Sicilian War.

The Greek City States were not a cohesive unit at the outbreak of the 5th century BC as we tend to think of them today. Rather each urban centre tended to control the land around it, and considered itself a separate (and usually superior) entity to the other cities that would now be considered Greek. Your city of origin was usually considered more important than their ‘Greekness,’ it was a more relevant identifier, to be say, Athenian than Greek prior to the Greco-Persian Wars. However, most of the Greek city states often equipped themselves rather similarly, copying the armour style of Sparta, the most effective fighting force in the locality.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Green 1996d.

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