

= 300 ( film ) =

300 is a 2006 American epic fantasy war film based on the 1998 comic series of the same name by Frank Miller and Lynn Varley . Both are fictionalized retellings of the Battle of Thermopylae within the Persian Wars . The film was directed by Zack Snyder , while Miller served as executive producer and consultant . It was filmed mostly with a super @-@ imposition chroma key technique , to help replicate the imagery of the original comic book .

The plot revolves around King Leonidas ( Gerard Butler ) , who leads 300 Spartans into battle against the Persian " god @-@ King " Xerxes ( Rodrigo Santoro ) and his invading army of more than 300 @, @ 000 soldiers . As the battle rages , Queen Gorgo ( Lena Headey ) attempts to rally support in Sparta for her husband . The story is framed by a voice @-@ over narrative by the Spartan soldier Dilios ( David Wenham ) . Through this narrative technique , various fantastical creatures are introduced , placing 300 within the genre of historical fantasy .

300 was released in both conventional and IMAX theaters in the United States on March 9 , 2007 , and on DVD , Blu @-@ ray Disc , and HD DVD on July 31 , 2007 . The film received mixed reviews , receiving acclaim for its original visuals and style , but criticism for favoring visuals over characterization and its depiction of the ancient Persians in Iran , a characterization which some had deemed racist ; however , the film was a box office success , grossing over \$ 450 million , with the film 's opening being the 24th largest in box office history at the time . A sequel , 300 : Rise of an Empire , which is based on Miller 's unpublished graphic novel prequel Xerxes , was released on March 7 , 2014 .

= = Plot = =

In 479 BC , one year after the famed Battle of Thermopylae , Dilios , a hoplite in the Spartan Army , begins his story by depicting the life of Leonidas I from childhood to kingship via Spartan doctrine . Dilios 's story continues and Persian messengers arrive at the gates of Sparta demanding " earth and water " as a token of submission to King Xerxes ; the Spartans reply by killing and kicking the messengers into a well . Leonidas then visits the Ephors , proposing a strategy to drive back the numerically superior Persians through the Hot Gates ; his plan involves building a wall in order to funnel the Persians into a narrow pass between the rocks and the sea . The Ephors consult the Oracle , who decrees that Sparta will not go to war during the Carneia . As Leonidas angrily departs , a messenger from Xerxes appears , rewarding the Ephors for their covert support .

Although the Ephors have denied him permission to mobilize Sparta 's army , Leonidas gathers three hundred of his best soldiers in the guise of his personal bodyguard ; they are joined along the way by Arcadians . At Thermopylae , they construct the wall made up of stones and slain Persian scouts as mortar , angering the Persian Emissary . Stelios , an elite Spartan soldier , orders him to go back to the Persian lines and warn Xerxes after cutting off his whipping arm . Meanwhile , Leonidas encounters Ephialtes , a deformed Spartan whose parents fled Sparta to spare him certain infanticide . Ephialtes asks to redeem his father 's name by joining Leonidas ' army , warning him of a secret ( goat ) path the Persians could use to outflank and surround the Spartans . Though sympathetic , Leonidas rejects him since his deformity physically prevents him from holding his shield high enough ; potentially compromising the phalanx formation , and Ephialtes is enraged .

The battle begins soon after the Spartans ' refusal to lay down their weapons . Using the Hot Gates to their advantage , plus their superior fighting skills , the Spartans repel wave upon wave of the advancing Persian army . During a lull in the battle , Xerxes personally approaches Leonidas to persuade him to surrender , offering him wealth and power in exchange for his allegiance ; Leonidas declines and mocks Xerxes for the inferior quality of his fanatical warriors . In response , Xerxes sends in his elite guard , the Immortals , later that night . Despite some Spartans being killed , they heroically defeat the Immortals ( with slight help from the Arcadians ) . On the second day , Xerxes sends in new waves of armies from Asia and other Persian city @-@ states , including war elephants , to crush the Spartans once and for all , but to no avail . Meanwhile , Ephialtes defects to Xerxes to whom he reveals the secret path in exchange for wealth , luxury , and ( especially ) a

uniform . The Arcadians retreat upon learning of Ephialtes ' betrayal , but the Spartans stay . Leonidas orders an injured but reluctant Dilios to return to Sparta and tell them of what has happened , a " tale of victory " .

In Sparta , Queen Gorgo tries to persuade the Spartan Council to send reinforcements to aid the 300 . Theron , a corrupt politician , claims that he " owns " the Council and threatens the Queen , who reluctantly submits to his sexual demands in return for his help . When Theron disgraces her in front of the Council , Gorgo kills him out of rage , revealing within his robe a bag of Xerxes ' gold . Marking his betrayal , the Council unanimously agrees to send reinforcements . On the third day , the Persians , led by Ephialtes , traverse the secret path , encircling the Spartans . Xerxes ' general again demands their surrender . Leonidas seemingly kneels in submission , allowing Stelios to leap over him and kill the general . A furious Xerxes orders his troops to attack . Leonidas rises and throws his spear at Xerxes ; barely missing him , the spear cuts across and wounds his face , proving the God @-@ King 's mortality . Leonidas and the remaining Spartans fight to the last man until they finally succumb to an arrow barrage .

Dilios , now back at Sparta , concludes his tale before the Council . Inspired by their King 's sacrifice , the Persians will now face a larger Greek army 40 @,@ 000 strong , led by 10 @,@ 000 Spartans . After one final speech commemorating the 300 , Dilios , now head of the Spartan Army , leads them into battle against the Persians across the fields of Plataea , ending the film .

= = Cast = =

Gerard Butler as Leonidas , King of Sparta .

David Wenham as Dilios , narrator and Spartan soldier .

Lena Headey as Queen Gorgo , Queen of Sparta ( Gorgo has a larger role in the film than she does in the comic book , where she only appears in the beginning ) .

Giovanni Cimmino as Pleistarchus , son of Leonidas and Gorgo ( Pleistarchus does not feature in the comic book ) .

Dominic West as Theron , a fictional corrupt Spartan politician ( Theron is not featured in the comic book ) .

Vincent Regan as Captain Artemis , Leonidas ' loyal captain and friend .

Tom Wisdom as Astinos , Captain Artemis ' eldest son . In the film Astinos has a constant presence until he dies . In the comic book Astinos is only mentioned when he dies .

Andrew Pleavin as Daxos , an Arcadian leader who joins forces with Leonidas .

Andrew Tiernan as Ephialtes , a deformed Spartan outcast and traitor .

Rodrigo Santoro as King Xerxes , King of Persia .

Stephen McHattie as The Loyalist , a loyal Spartan politician .

Michael Fassbender as Stelios , a young , spirited and highly skilled Spartan soldier .

Peter Mensah as a Persian messenger who gets kicked into the well by Leonidas .

Kelly Craig as Pythia , an Oracle to the Ephors .

Tyler Neitzel as young Leonidas .

Robert Maillet as Über Immortal ( giant ) , a muscular and deranged Immortal who battles Leonidas during the Immortal fight .

Patrick Sabongui as the Persian General who tries to get Leonidas to comply at the end of the battle .

Leon Laderach as Executioner , a hulking , clawed man who executes men who have displeased Xerxes .

Tyrone Benskin as the whip @-@ wielding Persian Emissary .

= = Production = =

Producer Gianni Nunnari was not the only person planning a film about the Battle of Thermopylae ; director Michael Mann already planned a film of the battle based on the book Gates of Fire . Nunnari discovered Frank Miller 's graphic novel 300 , which impressed him enough to acquire the film rights

. 300 was jointly produced by Nunnari and Mark Canton , and Michael B. Gordon wrote the script . Director Zack Snyder was hired in June 2004 as he had attempted to make a film based on Miller 's novel before making his debut with the remake of Dawn of the Dead . Snyder then had screenwriter Kurt Johnstad rewrite Gordon 's script for production and Frank Miller was retained as consultant and executive producer .

The film is a shot @-@ for @-@ shot adaptation of the comic book , similar to the film adaptation of Sin City . Snyder photocopied panels from the comic book , from which he planned the preceding and succeeding shots . " It was a fun process for me ... to have a frame as a goal to get to , " he said . Like the comic book , the adaptation also used the character Dilios as a narrator . Snyder used this narrative technique to show the audience that the surreal " Frank Miller world " of 300 was told from a subjective perspective . By using Dilios ' gift of storytelling , he was able to introduce fantasy elements into the film , explaining that " Dilios is a guy who knows how not to wreck a good story with truth . " Snyder also added the sub @-@ plot in which Queen Gorgo attempts to rally support for her husband .

Two months of pre @-@ production were required to create hundreds of shields , spears , and swords , some of which were recycled from Troy and Alexander . Creatures were designed by Jordy Schell , and an animatronic wolf and thirteen animatronic horses were created . The actors trained alongside the stuntmen , and even Snyder joined in . Upwards of 600 costumes were created for the film , as well as extensive prosthetics for various characters and the corpses of Persian soldiers . Shaun Smith and Mark Rappaport worked hand in hand with Snyder in pre @-@ production to design the look of the individual characters , and to produce the prosthetic makeup effects , props , weapons and dummy bodies required for the production .

300 entered active production on October 17 , 2005 , in Montreal , and was shot over the course of sixty days in chronological order with a budget of \$ 60 million . Employing the digital backlot technique , Snyder shot at the now @-@ defunct Icestorm Studios in Montreal using bluescreens . Butler said that while he did not feel constrained by Snyder 's direction , fidelity to the comic imposed certain limitations on his performance . Wenham said there were times when Snyder wanted to precisely capture iconic moments from the comic book , and other times when he gave actors freedom " to explore within the world and the confines that had been set . " Headey said of her experience with the bluescreens , " It 's very odd , and emotionally , there 's nothing to connect to apart from another actor . " Only one scene , in which horses travel across the countryside , was shot outdoors . The film was an intensely physical production , and Butler pulled an arm tendon and developed foot drop .

Post @-@ production was handled by Montreal 's Meteor Studios and Hybride Technologies filled in the bluescreen footage with more than 1 @,@ 500 visual effects shots . Visual effects supervisor Chris Watts and production designer Jim Bissell created a process dubbed " The Crush , " which allowed the Meteor artists to manipulate the colors by increasing the contrast of light and dark . Certain sequences were desaturated and tinted to establish different moods . Ghislain St @-@ Pierre , who led the team of artists , described the effect : " Everything looks realistic , but it has a kind of a gritty illustrative feel . " Various computer programs , including Maya , RenderMan and RealFlow , were used to create the " spraying blood . " The post @-@ production lasted for a year and was handled by a total of ten special effects companies .

= = Soundtrack = =

In July 2005 , composer Tyler Bates begun work on the film , describing the score as having " beautiful themes on the top and large choir , " but " tempered with some extreme heaviness . " The composer had scored for a test scene that the director wanted to show to Warner Bros. to illustrate the path of the project . Bates said that the score had " a lot of weight and intensity in the low end of the percussion " that Snyder found agreeable to the film . The score was recorded at Abbey Road Studios and features the vocals of Azam Ali . A standard edition and a special edition of the soundtrack containing 25 tracks was released on March 6 , 2007 , with the special edition containing a 16 @-@ page booklet and three two @-@ sided trading cards .

The score has caused some controversy in the film composer community , garnering criticism for its striking similarity to several other recent soundtracks , including James Horner and Gabriel Yared 's work for the film Troy . The heaviest borrowings are said to be from Elliot Goldenthal 's 1999 score for Titus . " Remember Us , " from 300 , is identical in parts to the " Finale " from Titus , and " Returns a King " is similar to the cue " Victorious Titus . " ( see copyright issues . ) On August 3 , 2007 , Warner Bros. Pictures acknowledged in an official statement :

... a number of the music cues for the score of 300 were , without our knowledge or participation , derived from music composed by Academy Award winning composer Elliot Goldenthal for the motion picture Titus . Warner Bros. Pictures has great respect for Elliot , our longtime collaborator , and is pleased to have amicably resolved this matter .

= = Promotion and release = =

The official 300 website was launched by Warner Bros. in December 2005 . The " conceptual art " and Zack Snyder 's production blog were the initial attractions of the site . Later , the website added video journals describing production details , including comic @-@ to @-@ screen shots and the creatures of 300 . In January 2007 , the studio launched a MySpace page for the film . The Art Institutes created a micro @-@ site to promote the film .

At Comic @-@ Con International in July 2006 , the 300 panel aired a promotional teaser of the film , which was positively received . Despite stringent security , the trailer was subsequently leaked on the Internet . Warner Bros. released the official trailer for 300 on October 4 , 2006 , and later on it made its debut on Apple.com where it received considerable exposure . The background music used in the trailers was " Just Like You Imagined " by Nine Inch Nails . A second 300 trailer , which was attached to Apocalypto , was released in theaters on December 8 , 2006 , and online the day before . On January 22 , 2007 , an exclusive trailer for the film was broadcast during prime time television . The trailers have been credited with igniting interest in the film and contributing to its box @-@ office success .

In April 2006 , Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment announced its intention to make a PlayStation Portable game , 300 : March to Glory , based on the film . Collision Studios worked with Warner Bros. to capture the style of the film in the video game , which was released simultaneously with the film in the United States . The National Entertainment Collectibles Association produced a series of action figures based on the film , as well as replicas of weapons and armor .

Warner Bros. promoted 300 by sponsoring the Ultimate Fighting Championship 's light heavyweight champion Chuck Liddell , who made personal appearances and participated in other promotional activities . The studio also joined with the National Hockey League to produce a 30 @-@ second TV spot promoting the film in tandem with the Stanley Cup playoffs .

In August 2006 , Warner Bros. announced 300 's release date as March 16 , 2007 , but in October the release was moved forward to March 9 , 2007 . 300 was released on DVD , Blu @-@ ray Disc , and HD DVD on July 31 , 2007 , in Region 1 territories , in single @-@ disc and two @-@ disc editions . 300 was released in single @-@ disc and steelcase two @-@ disc editions on DVD , BD and HD DVD in Region 2 territories beginning August 2007 . On July 21 , 2009 , Warner Bros. released a new Blu @-@ ray Disc entitled 300 : The Complete Experience to coincide with the Blu @-@ ray Disc release of Watchmen . This new Blu @-@ ray Disc is encased in a 40 @-@ page Digibook and includes all the extras from the original release as well as some new ones . These features include a Picture @-@ in @-@ Picture feature entitled The Complete 300 : A Comprehensive Immersion , which enables the viewer to view the film in three different perspectives . This release also includes a digital copy .

On July 9 , 2007 , the American cable channel TNT bought the rights to broadcast the film from Warner Bros. TNT started airing the film in September 2009 . Sources say that the network paid between \$ 17 million and just under \$ 20 million for the broadcasting rights . TNT agreed to a three @-@ year deal instead of the more typical five @-@ year deal .

= = Reception = =

### == Box office ==

300 was released in North America on March 9 , 2007 , in both conventional and IMAX theaters . It grossed \$ 28 @, @ 106 @, @ 731 on its opening day and ended its North American opening weekend with \$ 70 @, @ 885 @, @ 301 , breaking the record held by Ice Age : The Meltdown for the biggest opening weekend in the month of March and for a Spring release . Since then 300 's Spring release record was broken by Fast and Furious and 300 's March record was broken by Tim Burton 's Alice in Wonderland . 300 's opening weekend gross is the 24th highest in box office history , coming slightly below The Lost World : Jurassic Park but higher than Transformers . It was the third biggest opening for an R @-@ rated film ever , behind The Matrix Reloaded ( \$ 91 @. @ 8 million ) and The Passion of the Christ ( \$ 83 @. @ 8 million ) . The film also set a record for IMAX cinemas with a \$ 3 @. @ 6 million opening weekend . The film grossed \$ 456 @, @ 068 @, @ 181 worldwide .

300 opened two days earlier , on March 7 , 2007 , in Sparta , and across Greece on March 8 . Studio executives were surprised by the showing , which was twice what they had expected . They credited the film 's stylized violence , the strong female role of Queen Gorgo which attracted a large number of women , and a MySpace advertising blitz . Producer Mark Canton said , " MySpace had an enormous impact but it has transcended the limitations of the Internet or the graphic novel . Once you make a great movie , word can spread very quickly . "

### == Reviews ==

#### === Critical reception ===

Since its world premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival on February 14 , 2007 , in front of 1 @, @ 700 audience members , 300 has received generally mixed reviews . While it received a standing ovation at the public premiere , it was panned at a press screening hours earlier , where many attendees left during the showing and those who remained booed at the end . Critics are divided on the film . Rotten Tomatoes reports that 60 % of critics gave the film a positive review , based upon a sample of 225 , with an average score of 6 @. @ 1 out of 10 . Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics , gave the film an average score of 52 based on 42 reviews .

Some of the most unfavorable reviews came from major American newspapers . A.O. Scott of The New York Times describes 300 as " about as violent as Apocalypto and twice as stupid , " while criticizing its color scheme and suggesting that its plot includes racist undertones ; Scott also poked fun at the buffed bodies of the actors portraying the Spartans , declaring that the Persian characters are " pioneers in the art of face @-@ piercing " , but that the Spartans had access to " superior health clubs and electrolysis facilities " . Kenneth Turan writes in the Los Angeles Times that " unless you love violence as much as a Spartan , Quentin Tarantino or a video @-@ game @-@ playing teenage boy , you will not be endlessly fascinated . " Roger Ebert , in his review , gave the film a two @-@ star rating , writing , " 300 has one @-@ dimensional caricatures who talk like professional wrestlers plugging their next feud . " Some critics employed at Greek newspapers have been particularly critical , such as film critic Robby Eksiel , who said that moviegoers would be dazzled by the " digital action " but irritated by the " pompous interpretations and one @-@ dimensional characters . "

Variety 's Todd McCarthy describes the film as " visually arresting " although " bombastic " while Kirk Honeycutt , writing in The Hollywood Reporter , praises the " beauty of its topography , colors and forms . " Writing in the Chicago Sun Times , Richard Roeper acclaims 300 as " the Citizen Kane of cinematic graphic novels . " Empire gave the film 3 / 5 having a verdict of " Visually stunning , thoroughly belligerent and as shallow as a pygmy 's paddling pool , this is a whole heap of style

tinged with just a smidgen of substance . " 300 was also warmly received by websites focusing on comics and video games . Comic Book Resources ' Mark Cronan found the film compelling , leaving him " with a feeling of power , from having been witness to something grand . " IGN 's Todd Gilchrist acclaimed Zack Snyder as a cinematic visionary and " a possible redeemer of modern moviemaking . "

= = = Accolades = = =

At the MTV Movie Awards 2007 , 300 was nominated for Best Movie , Best Performance for Gerard Butler , Best Breakthrough Performance for Lena Headey , Best Villain for Rodrigo Santoro , and Best Fight for Leonidas battling " the Über Immortal " , but only won the award for Best Fight . 300 won both the Best Dramatic Film and Best Action Film honors in the 2006 ? 2007 Golden Icon Awards presented by Travolta Family Entertainment . In December 2007 , 300 won IGN 's Movie of the Year 2007 , along with Best Comic Book Adaptation and King Leonidas as Favorite Character . The movie received 10 nominations for the 2008 Saturn Awards , winning the awards for Best Director and Best Action / Adventure / Thriller Film . In 2009 , National Review magazine ranked 300 number 5 on its 25 Best Conservative Movies of the Last 25 Years list .

= = = Historical accuracy = = =

Since few records about the actual martial arts used by the Spartans survive aside from accounts of formations and tactics , the fight choreography led by stunt coordinator and fight choreographer Damon Caro , was a synthesis of different weapon arts with Filipino martial arts as the base . This can be seen in the blade work and the signature use of the off hand by Arnis / Kali / Eskrima in the offensive use of the shields . The Spartans ' use of the narrow terrain , in those particular circumstances , is a military tactic known as " defeat in detail " .

Paul Cartledge , Professor of Greek History at Cambridge University , advised the filmmakers on the pronunciation of Greek names , and said they " made good use " of his published work on Sparta . He praises the film for its portrayal of " the Spartans ' heroic code " , and of " the key role played by women in backing up , indeed reinforcing , the male martial code of heroic honour " , while expressing reservations about its " ' West ' ( goodies ) vs ' East ' ( baddies ) polarization " . Cartledge writes that he enjoyed the film , although he found Leonidas ' description of the Athenians as " boy lovers " ironic , since the Spartans themselves incorporated institutional pederasty into their educational system .

Ephraim Lytle , assistant professor of Hellenistic History at the University of Toronto , said 300 selectively idealizes Spartan society in a " problematic and disturbing " fashion , as well as portraying the " hundred nations of the Persians " as monsters and non @-@ Spartan Greeks as weak . He suggests that the film 's moral universe would have seemed " as bizarre to ancient Greeks as it does to modern historians " .

Victor Davis Hanson , National Review columnist and former professor of Classical history at California State University , Fresno , who wrote the foreword to a 2007 re @-@ issue of the graphic novel , said the film demonstrates a specific affinity with the original material of Herodotus in that it captures the martial ethos of ancient Sparta and represents Thermopylae as a " clash of civilizations " . He remarks that Simonides , Aeschylus , and Herodotus viewed Thermopylae as a battle against " Eastern centralism and collective serfdom " , which opposed " the idea of the free citizen of an autonomous polis " . He also said the film portrays the battle in a " surreal " manner , and that the intent was to " entertain and shock first , and instruct second " .

Touraj Daryaee , now Baskerville Professor of Iranian History and the Persian World at the University of California , Irvine , criticized the film 's use of classical sources , writing :

Some passages from the Classical authors Aeschylus , Diodorus , Herodotus and Plutarch are split over the movie to give it an authentic flavor . Aeschylus becomes a major source when the battle with the " monstrous human herd " of the Persians is narrated in the film . Diodorus ' statement about Greek valor to preserve their liberty is inserted in the film , but his mention of Persian valor is

omitted . Herodotus ' fanciful numbers are used to populate the Persian army , and Plutarch 's discussion of Greek women , specifically Spartan women , is inserted wrongly in the dialogue between the " misogynist " Persian ambassador and the Spartan king . Classical sources are certainly used , but exactly in all the wrong places , or quite naively . The Athenians were fighting a sea battle during this .

Robert McHenry , former editor @-@ in @-@ chief of Encyclopædia Britannica and author of How to Know said the film " is an almost ineffably silly movie . Stills from the film could easily be used to promote Buns of Steel , or AbMaster , or ThighMaster . It 's about the romanticizing of the Spartan ' ideal ' , a process that began even in ancient times , was promoted by the Romans , and has survived over time while less and less resembling the actual historical Sparta . "

The director of 300 , Zack Snyder , stated in an MTV interview that " the events are 90 percent accurate . It 's just in the visualization that it 's crazy .... I 've shown this movie to world @-@ class historians who have said it 's amazing . They can 't believe it 's as accurate as it is . " Nevertheless , he also said the film is " an opera , not a documentary . That 's what I say when people say it 's historically inaccurate " . He was also quoted in a BBC News story as saying that the film is , at its core " a fantasy film " . He also describes the film 's narrator , Dilios , as " a guy who knows how not to wreck a good story with truth " .

In an interview 300 writer Frank Miller said , " The inaccuracies , almost all of them , are intentional . I took those chest plates and leather skirts off of them for a reason . I wanted these guys to move and I wanted ' em to look good . I knocked their helmets off a fair amount , partly so you can recognize who the characters are . Spartans , in full regalia , were almost indistinguishable except at a very close angle . Another liberty I took was , they all had plumes , but I only gave a plume to Leonidas , to make him stand out and identify him as a king . I was looking for more an evocation than a history lesson . The best result I can hope for is that if the movie excites someone , they 'll go explore the histories themselves . Because the histories are endlessly fascinating . "

Dr. Kaveh Farrokh in a paper entitled " The 300 Movie : Separating Fact from Fiction " notes that the film falsely portrays " the Greco @-@ Persian Wars in binary terms : the democratic , good , rational ' Us ' versus the tyrannical , evil and irrational , ' other ' of the ever @-@ nebulous ( if not exotic ) ' Persia ' " . He reminds the reader about three commonly accepted historical pieces of evidence that demonstrate the fundamental and essential contribution of the Achaemenid Empire to the creation of democracy and human rights . " The founder of the Achaemenid Empire , Cyrus the Great , was the world 's first world emperor to openly declare and guarantee the sanctity of human rights and individual freedom " , " Cyrus was a follower of the teachings of Zoroaster , the founder of one of the world 's oldest monotheistic religions " , and to put his own words in action " When Cyrus defeated King Nabonidus of Babylon , he officially declared the freedom of the Jews from their Babylonian captivity . This was the first time in history that a world power had guaranteed the survival of the Jewish people , religion , customs and culture . "

= = = Controversy = = =

Before the release of 300 , Warner Bros. expressed concerns about the political aspects of the film 's theme . Snyder relates that there was " a huge sensitivity about East versus West with the studio . " Media speculation about a possible parallel between the Greco @-@ Persian conflict and current events began in an interview with Snyder that was conducted before the Berlin Film Festival . The interviewer remarked that " everyone is sure to be translating this [ film ] into contemporary politics . " Snyder replied that , while he was aware that people would read the film through the lens of current events , no parallels between the film and the modern world were intended .

Outside the current political parallels , some critics have raised more general questions about the film 's ideological orientation . The New York Post 's Kyle Smith wrote that the film would have pleased " Adolf 's boys , " and Slate 's Dana Stevens compares the film to The Eternal Jew , " as a textbook example of how race @-@ baiting fantasy and nationalist myth can serve as an incitement to total war . " Roger Moore , a critic for the Orlando Sentinel , relates 300 to Susan Sontag 's definition of " fascist art . " Alleanza Nazionale , an Italian neoconservative political party formed

from the collapse of the neo @-@ fascist party MSI , has used imagery from the work within candidate propaganda posters titled : " Defend your values , your civilization , your district " .

Newsday critic Gene Seymour , on the other hand , stated that such reactions are misguided , writing that " the movie 's just too darned silly to withstand any ideological theorizing . " Snyder himself dismissed ideological readings , suggesting that reviewers who critique " a graphic novel movie about a bunch of guys ... stomping the snot out of each other " using words like " ' neocon , ' ' homophobic , ' ' homoerotic ' or ' racist ' " are " missing the point . " Snyder , however , also admitted to fashioning an effeminate villain specifically to play into the homophobia of young straight males . Slovenian critic Slavoj Žižek pointed out that the story represents " a poor , small country ( Greece ) invaded by the army of a much large [ r ] state ( Persia ) , " suggesting that the identification of the Spartans with a modern superpower is flawed .

The 300 writer Frank Miller said : " The Spartans were a paradoxical people . They were the biggest slave owners in Greece . But at the same time , Spartan women had an unusual level of rights . It 's a paradox that they were a bunch of people who in many ways were fascist , but they were the bulwark against the fall of democracy . The closest comparison you can draw in terms of our own military today is to think of the red @-@ caped Spartans as being like our special @-@ ops forces . They 're these almost superhuman characters with a tremendous warrior ethic , who were unquestionably the best fighters in Greece . I didn 't want to render Sparta in overly accurate terms , because ultimately I do want you to root for the Spartans . I couldn 't show them being quite as cruel as they were . I made them as cruel as I thought a modern audience could stand . "

= = = = Eugenics = = = =

Ephraim Lytle , assistant professor of Hellenistic history at the University of Toronto , commented : " Ephialtes , who betrays the Greeks , is likewise changed from a local Malian of sound body into a Spartan outcast , a grotesquely disfigured troll who by Spartan custom should have been left exposed as an infant to die . Leonidas points out that his hunched back means Ephialtes cannot lift his shield high enough to fight in the phalanx . This is a transparent defence of Spartan eugenics , and convenient given that infanticide could as easily have been precipitated by an ill @-@ omened birthmark . "

Michael M. Chemers , author of " ' With Your Shield , or on It ' : Disability Representation in 300 " in the Disability Studies Quarterly , said that the film 's portrayal of the hunchback and his story " is not mere ableism : this is anti @-@ disability . "

Frank Miller ? commenting on areas where he lessened the Spartan cruelty for narrative purposes ? said : " I have King Leonidas very gently tell Ephialtes , the hunchback , that they can 't use him [ as a soldier ] , because of his deformity . It would be much more classically Spartan if Leonidas laughed and kicked him off the cliff . "

= = Depictions of Persians and Iran 's reaction = =

From its opening , 300 also attracted controversy over its portrayal of Persians . Officials of the Iranian government denounced the film . Some scenes in the film portray demon @-@ like and other fictional creatures as part of the Persian army , and the fictionalized portrayal of Persian King Xerxes I has been criticized as effeminate . Critics suggested that this was meant to stand in stark contrast to the sheer masculinity of the Spartan army . Steven Rea argued that the film 's Persians were a vehicle for an anachronistic cross @-@ section of Western stereotypes of Asian and African cultures .

The film 's portrayal of ancient Persians caused a particularly strong reaction in Iran . Azadeh Moaveni of Time reported that Tehran was " outraged " following the film 's release . Moaveni identified two factors which may have contributed to the intense reaction : its release on the eve of Nowruz , the Persian New Year , and the common Iranian view of the Achaemenid Empire as " a particularly noble page in their history . " Various Iranian officials condemned the film . The Iranian Academy of the Arts submitted a formal complaint against the film to UNESCO , labelling it an attack



on the historical identity of Iran . The Iranian mission to the U.N. protested the film in a press release , and Iranian embassies protested its screening in France , Thailand , Turkey , and Uzbekistan . The film was banned within Iran as " hurtful American propaganda " . Reviewers in the United States and elsewhere " noted the political overtones of the West @-@ against @-@ Iran story line and the way Persians are depicted as decadent , sexually flamboyant and evil in contrast to the noble Greeks " . With bootleg versions of the film already available in Tehran with the film 's international release and news of the film 's surprising success at the U.S. box office , it prompted widespread anger in Iran . Azadeh Moaveni of Time reported , " All of Tehran was outraged . Everywhere I went yesterday , the talk vibrated with indignation over the film " . Newspapers in Iran featured headlines such as " Hollywood declares war on Iranians " and " 300 AGAINST 70 MILLION " ( Iran 's population ) . Ayende @-@ No , an independent Iranian newspaper , said that " [ t ] he film depicts Iranians as demons , without culture , feeling or humanity , who think of nothing except attacking other nations and killing people " . Four Iranian Members of Parliament have called for Muslim countries to ban the film , and a group of Iranian film makers submitted a letter of protest to UNESCO regarding the film 's alleged misrepresentation of Iranian history and culture . Iran 's cultural advisor to president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has called the film an " American attempt for psychological warfare against Iran " .

Moaveni identified two factors which may have contributed to the intensity of Iranian indignation over the film . First , she describes the timing of the film 's release , on the eve of Norouz , the Persian New Year , as " inauspicious . " Second , Iranians tend to view the era depicted in the film as " a particularly noble page in their history " . Moaveni also suggests that " the box office success of 300 , compared with the relative flop of Alexander ( another spurious period epic dealing with Persians ) , is cause for considerable alarm , signaling ominous U.S. intentions " .

According to The Guardian , Iranian critics of 300 , ranging from bloggers to government officials , have described the movie " as a calculated attempt to demonise Iran at a time of intensifying U.S. pressure over the country 's nuclear programme " . An Iranian government spokesman described the film as " hostile behavior which is the result of cultural and psychological warfare " . Moaveni reported that the Iranians she interacted with were " adamant that the movie was secretly funded by the U.S. government to prepare Americans for going to war against Iran " .

Dana Stevens of Slate states , " If 300 , the new battle epic based on the graphic novel by Frank Miller and Lynn Varley , had been made in Germany in the mid @-@ 1930s , it would be studied today alongside The Eternal Jew as a textbook example of how race @-@ baiting fantasy and nationalist myth can serve as an incitement to total war . Since it 's a product of the post @-@ ideological , post @-@ Xbox 21st century , 300 will instead be talked about as a technical achievement , the next blip on the increasingly blurry line between movies and video games .

= = In popular culture = =

300 has been spoofed in film , television , and other media , and spawned the " This is Sparta ! " internet meme . Skits based upon the film have appeared on Saturday Night Live and Robot Chicken , the latter of which mimicked the visual style of 300 in a parody set during the American Revolutionary War , titled " 1776 " . Other parodies include an episode of South Park named " D @-@ Yikes ! " , and " BOO ! " by Mad magazine in its September 2007 issue # 481 , written by Desmond Devlin and illustrated by Mort Drucker . 20th Century Fox released Meet the Spartans , a spoof directed by Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer . Universal Pictures was planning a similar parody , titled National Lampoon 's 301 : The Legend of Awesomest Maximus Wallace Leonidas .

300 , particularly its pithy quotations , has been " adopted " by the student body of Michigan State University ( whose nickname is the Spartans ) , with chants of " Spartans , what is your profession ? " becoming common at sporting events starting after the film 's release , and Michigan State basketball head coach Tom Izzo dressed as Leonidas at one student event . Nate Ebner , a football player with the New England Patriots in the National Football League and formerly with the Ohio State Buckeyes , was nicknamed " Leonidas , " after the Greek warrior @-@ king hero of Sparta acted by Gerard Butler in the movie 300 , because of his intense workout regimen , and his beard .

= = Background = =

Frank Miller 's original graphic novel 300 was inspired by the film The 300 Spartans , which Frank Miller first saw at age 6 .

= = Sequel = =

In June 2008 , producers Mark Canton , Gianni Nunnari and Bernie Goldmann revealed that work had begun on a sequel to 300 , 300 : Rise of an Empire . Legendary Pictures had announced that Frank Miller started writing the follow @-@ up graphic novel , and Zack Snyder was interested in directing the adaptation , but moved on to develop and direct the Superman reboot Man of Steel . Noam Murro directed instead , while Zack Snyder produced . The film focused on the Athenian admiral , Themistocles , as portrayed by Australian actor Sullivan Stapleton . The sequel , 300 : Rise of an Empire , was released on March 7 , 2014 .