

## = Battle of Salamis =

The Battle of Salamis ( / ˈsæləˈmɪs / ; Ancient Greek : ????????? ???? ????????? , Naumachia t?s Salaminos ) was a naval battle fought between an alliance of Greek city @-@ states under Themistocles and the Persian Empire under King Xerxes in 480 BC which resulted in a decisive victory for the outnumbered Greeks . The battle was fought in the straits between the mainland and Salamis , an island in the Saronic Gulf near Athens , and marked the high @-@ point of the second Persian invasion of Greece .

To block the Persian advance , a small force of Greeks blocked the pass of Thermopylae , while an Athenian @-@ dominated Allied navy engaged the Persian fleet in the nearby straits of Artemisium . In the resulting Battle of Thermopylae , the rearguard of the Greek force was annihilated , whilst in the Battle of Artemisium the Greeks had heavy losses and retreated after the loss at Thermopylae . This allowed the Persians to conquer Boeotia and Attica . The Allies prepared to defend the Isthmus of Corinth whilst the fleet was withdrawn to nearby Salamis Island .

Although heavily outnumbered , the Greek Allies were persuaded by the Athenian general Themistocles to bring the Persian fleet to battle again , in the hope that a victory would prevent naval operations against the Peloponessus . The Persian king Xerxes was also eager for a decisive battle . As a result of subterfuge on the part of Themistocles , the Persian navy sailed into the Straits of Salamis and tried to block both entrances . In the cramped conditions of the Straits , the great Persian numbers were an active hindrance , as ships struggled to maneuver and became disorganized . Seizing the opportunity , the Greek fleet formed in line and scored a decisive victory .

Xerxes then retreated to Asia with much of his army , leaving Mardonius to complete the conquest of Greece . However , the following year , the remainder of the Persian army was decisively beaten at the Battle of Plataea and the Persian navy at the Battle of Mycale . Afterwards , the Persians made no more attempts to conquer the Greek mainland . These battles of Salamis and Plataea thus mark a turning point in the course of the Greco @-@ Persian wars as a whole ; from then onward , the Greek poleis would take the offensive . A number of historians believe that a Persian victory would have hamstrung the development of Ancient Greece , and by extension western civilization , and this has led them to claim that Salamis is one of the most significant battles in human history .

## = = Background = =

The Greek city @-@ states of Athens and Eretria had supported the unsuccessful Ionian Revolt against the Persian Empire of Darius I in 499 @-@ 494 BC , led by the satrap of Miletus , Aristagoras . The Persian Empire was still relatively young , and prone to revolts amongst its subject peoples . Moreover , Darius was a usurper , and had spent considerable time extinguishing revolts against his rule . The Ionian revolt threatened the integrity of his empire , and Darius thus vowed to punish those involved ( especially those not already part of the empire ) . Darius also saw the opportunity to expand his empire into the fractious world of Ancient Greece . A preliminary expedition under Mardonius , in 492 BC , to secure the land approaches to Greece ended with the re @-@ conquest of Thrace and forced Macedon to become a client kingdom of Persia .

In 491 BC , Darius sent emissaries to all the Greek city @-@ states , asking for a gift of ' earth and water ' in token of their submission to him . Having had a demonstration of his power the previous year , the majority of Greek cities duly obliged . In Athens , however , the ambassadors were put on trial and then executed ; in Sparta , they were simply thrown down a well . This meant that Sparta was also now effectively at war with Persia .

Darius thus put together an amphibious task force under Datis and Artaphernes in 490 BC , which attacked Naxos , before receiving the submission of the other Cycladic Islands . The task force then moved on Eretria , which it besieged and destroyed . Finally , it moved to attack Athens , landing at the bay of Marathon , where it was met by a heavily outnumbered Athenian army . At the ensuing Battle of Marathon , the Athenians won a remarkable victory , which resulted in the withdrawal of the Persian army to Asia .

Darius therefore began raising a huge new army with which he meant to completely subjugate

Greece ; however , in 486 BC , his Egyptian subjects revolted , indefinitely postponing any Greek expedition . Darius then died whilst preparing to march on Egypt , and the throne of Persia passed to his son Xerxes I. Xerxes crushed the Egyptian revolt , and very quickly restarted the preparations for the invasion of Greece . Since this was to be a full @-@ scale invasion , it required long @-@ term planning , stock @-@ piling and conscription . Xerxes decided that the Hellespont would be bridged to allow his army to cross to Europe , and that a canal should be dug across the isthmus of Mount Athos ( rounding which headland , a Persian fleet had been destroyed in 492 BC ) . These were both feats of exceptional ambition , which would have been beyond any other contemporary state . By early 480 BC , the preparations were complete , and the army which Xerxes had mustered at Sardis marched towards Europe , crossing the Hellespont on two pontoon bridges .

The Athenians had also been preparing for war with the Persians since the mid @-@ 480s BC , and in 482 BC the decision was taken , under the guidance of the Athenian politician Themistocles , to build a massive fleet of triremes that would be necessary for the Greeks to fight the Persians . However , the Athenians did not have the manpower to fight on land and sea ; and therefore combatting the Persians would require an alliance of Greek city states . In 481 BC , Xerxes sent ambassadors around Greece asking for earth and water , but made the very deliberate omission of Athens and Sparta . Support thus began to coalesce around these two leading states . A congress of city states met at Corinth in late autumn of 481 BC , and a confederate alliance of Greek city @-@ states was formed . It had the power to send envoys asking for assistance and to dispatch troops from the member states to defensive points after joint consultation . This was remarkable for the disjointed Greek world , especially since many of the city @-@ states in attendance were still technically at war with each other .

Initially the ' congress ' agreed to defend the narrow Vale of Tempe , on the borders of Thessaly , and thereby block Xerxes 's advance . However , once there , they were warned by Alexander I of Macedon that the vale could be bypassed through the pass by the modern village of Sarantaporo , and that the army of Xerxes was overwhelming , the Greeks retreated . Shortly afterwards , they received the news that Xerxes had crossed the Hellespont . A second strategy was therefore adopted by the allies . The route to southern Greece ( Boeotia , Attica and the Peloponnesus ) would require the army of Xerxes to travel through the very narrow pass of Thermopylae . This could easily be blocked by the Greek hoplites , despite the overwhelming numbers of Persians . Furthermore , to prevent the Persians bypassing Thermopylae by sea , the Athenian and allied navies could block the straits of Artemisium . This dual strategy was adopted by the congress . However , the Peloponnesian cities made fall @-@ back plans to defend the Isthmus of Corinth should it come to it , whilst the women and children of Athens had been evacuated en masse to the Peloponnesian city of Troezen .

Famously , the much smaller Greek army held the pass of Thermopylae against the Persians for three days before being outflanked by a mountain path . Much of the Greek army retreated , before the Spartans and Thespians who had continued to block the pass were surrounded and killed . The simultaneous Battle of Artemisium was up to that point a stalemate ; however , when news of Thermopylae reached them , the Allied fleet also retreated , since holding the straits of Artemisium was now a moot point .

= = Prelude = =

The Allied fleet now sailed from Artemisium to Salamis to assist with the final evacuation of Athens . En route Themistocles left inscriptions addressed to the Ionian Greek crews of the Persian fleet on all springs of water that they might stop at , asking them to defect to the Allied cause . Following Thermopylae , the Persian army proceeded to burn and sack the Boeotian cities that had not surrendered , Plataea and Thespieae , before marching on the now evacuated city of Athens . The Allies ( mostly Peloponnesian ) prepared to defend the Isthmus of Corinth , demolishing the single road that led through it , and building a wall across it .

This strategy was flawed , however , unless the Allied fleet was able to prevent the Persian fleet from transporting troops across the Saronic Gulf . In a council @-@ of @-@ war called once the

evacuation of Athens was complete , the Corinthian naval commander Adeimantus argued that the fleet should assemble off the coast of the Isthmus in order to achieve such a blockade . However , Themistocles argued in favour of an offensive strategy , aimed at decisively destroying the Persians ' naval superiority . He drew on the lessons of Artemisium , pointing out that " battle in close conditions works to our advantage " . He eventually won through , and the Allied navy remained off the coast of Salamis .

The time @-@ line for Salamis is difficult to establish with any certainty . Herodotus presents the battle as though it occurred directly after the capture of Athens , but nowhere explicitly states as much . If Thermopylae / Artemisium occurred in September , then this may be the case , but it is probably more likely that the Persians spent two or three weeks capturing Athens , refitting the fleet , and resupplying . Clearly though , at some point after capturing Athens , Xerxes held a council of war with the Persian fleet ; Herodotus says this occurred at Phalerum . Artemisia , queen of Halicarnassus and commander of its naval squadron in Xerxes 's fleet , tried to convince him to wait for the Allies to surrender believing that battle in the straits of Salamis was an unnecessary risk . Nevertheless , Xerxes and his chief advisor Mardonius pressed for an attack .

It is difficult to explain exactly what eventually brought about the battle , assuming that neither side simply attacked without forethought . Clearly though , at some point just before the battle , new information began to reach Xerxes of rifts in the allied command ; the Peloponnesians wished to evacuate from Salamis while they still could . This alleged rift amongst the Allies may have simply been a ruse , in order to lure the Persians to battle . Alternatively , this change in attitude amongst the Allies ( who had waited patiently off the coast of Salamis for at least a week while Athens was captured ) may have been in response to Persian offensive maneuvers . Possibly , a Persian army had been sent to march against the Isthmus in order to test the nerve of the fleet .

Either way , when Xerxes received this news , he ordered his fleet to go out on patrol off the coast Salamis , blocking the southern exit . Then , at dusk , he ordered them to withdraw , possibly in order to tempt the Allies into a hasty evacuation . That evening Themistocles now attempted what appears to have been a spectacularly successful use of disinformation . He sent a servant , Sicinnus , to Xerxes , with a message proclaiming that Themistocles was " on the king 's side and prefers that your affairs prevail , not the Hellenes " . Themistocles claimed that the Allied command was in @-@ fighting , that the Peloponnesians were planning to evacuate that very night , and that to gain victory all the Persians need to do was to block the straits . In performing this subterfuge , Themistocles seems to have been trying to bring about exactly the opposite ; to lure the Persian fleet into the Straits . This was exactly the kind of news that Xerxes wanted to hear ; that the Athenians might be willing to submit to him , and that he would be able to destroy the rest of the Allied fleet . Xerxes evidently took the bait , and the Persian fleet was sent out that evening to effect this block . Xerxes ordered a throne to be set up on the slopes of Mount Aigaleo ( overlooking the straits ) , in order to watch the battle from a clear vantage point , and so as to record the names of commanders who performed particularly well .

According to Herodotus , the Allies spent the evening heatedly debating their course of action . The Peloponnesians were in favour of evacuating , and at this point Themistocles attempted his ruse with Xerxes . It was only when Aristides , the exiled Athenian general arrived that night , followed by some deserters from the Persians , with news of the deployment of the Persian fleet , that the Peloponnesians accepted that they could not escape , and so would fight .

However , Peloponnesians may have been party to Themistocles 's stratagem , so serenely did they accept that they would now have to fight at Salamis . The Allied navy was thus able to prepare properly for battle the forthcoming day , whilst the Persians spent the night fruitlessly at sea , searching for the alleged Greek evacuation . The next morning , the Persians sailed into the straits to attack the Greek fleet ; it is not clear when , why or how this decision was made , but it is clear that they did take the battle to the Allies .

= = The opposing forces = =

### == The Greek fleet ==

Herodotus reports that there were 378 triremes in the Allied fleet , and then breaks the numbers down by city state ( as indicated in the table ) . However , his numbers for the individual contingents only add up to 371 . He does not explicitly say that all 378 fought at Salamis ( " All of these came to the war providing triremes ... The total number of ships ... was three hundred and seventy @-@ eight " ) , and he also says that the Aeginetans " had other manned ships , but they guarded their own land with these and fought at Salamis with the thirty most seaworthy " . Thus it has been supposed that the difference between the numbers is accounted for a garrison of 12 ships left at Aegina . According to Herodotus , two more ships defected from the Persians to the Greeks , one before Artemisium and one before Salamis , so the total complement at Salamis would have been 373 ( or 380 ) .

According to the Athenian playwright Aeschylus , who actually fought at Salamis , the Greek fleet numbered 310 triremes ( the difference being the number of Athenian ships ) . Ctesias claims that the Athenian fleet numbered only 110 triremes , which ties in with Aeschylus 's numbers . According to Hyperides , the Greek fleet numbered only 220 . The fleet was effectively under the command of Themistocles , but nominally led by the Spartan nobleman Eurybiades , as had been agreed at the congress in 481 BC . Although Themistocles had tried to claim leadership of the fleet , the other city states with navies objected , and so Sparta ( which had no naval tradition ) was given command of the fleet as a compromise .

Plain numbers represent triremes ; those indicated in parentheses are penteconters ( fifty @-@ oared galleys )

### == The Persian fleet ==

According to Herodotus , the Persian fleet initially numbered 1 @, @ 207 triremes . However , by his reckoning they lost approximately a third of these ships in a storm off the coast of Magnesia , 200 more in a storm off the coast of Euboea , and at least 50 ships to Allied action at the Battle of Artemisium . Herodotus claims that these losses were replaced in full , but only mentions 120 ships from the Greeks of Thrace and nearby islands as reinforcements . Aeschylus , who fought at Salamis , also claims that he faced 1 @, @ 207 warships there , of which 207 were " fast ships " . Diodorus and Lysias independently claim there were 1 @, @ 200 ships in the Persian fleet assembled at Doriskos in the spring of 480 BC . The number of 1 @, @ 207 ( for the outset only ) is also given by Ephorus , while his teacher Isocrates claims there were 1 @, @ 300 at Doriskos and 1 @, @ 200 at Salamis . Ctesias gives another number , 1 @, @ 000 ships , while Plato , speaking in general terms refers to 1 @, @ 000 ships and more .

The number 1 @, @ 207 appears very early in the historical record ( 472 BC ) , and the Greeks appear to have genuinely believed they faced that many ships . Because of the consistency in the ancient sources , some modern historians are inclined to accept 1 @, @ 207 as the size of the initial Persian fleet ; others reject this number , with 1 @, @ 207 being seen as more of a reference to the combined Greek fleet in the Iliad , and generally claim that the Persians could have launched no more than around 600 warships into the Aegean . However , very few appear to accept that there were this many ships at Salamis : most favour a number in the range 600 @-@ 800 . This is also the range given by adding the approximate number of Persian ships after Artemisium ( ~ 550 ) to the reinforcements ( 120 ) quantified by Herodotus .

### == Strategic and tactical considerations ==

The overall Persian strategy for the invasion of 480 BC was to overwhelm the Greeks with a massive invasion force , and complete the conquest of Greece in a single campaigning season . Conversely , the Greeks sought to make the best use of their numbers by defending restricted locations and to keep the Persians in the field for as long as possible . Xerxes had obviously not anticipated such resistance , or he would have arrived earlier in the campaigning season ( and not

waited 4 days at Thermopylae for the Greeks to disperse ) . Time was now of the essence for the Persians ? the huge invasion force could not be reasonably supported indefinitely , nor probably did Xerxes wish to be at the fringe of his empire for so long . Thermopylae had shown that a frontal assault against a well defended Greek position was useless ; with the Allies now dug in across the Isthmus , there was little chance of conquering the rest of Greece by land . However , as equally demonstrated by Thermopylae , if the Greeks could be outflanked , their smaller numbers of troops could be destroyed . Such an outflanking of the Isthmus required the use of the Persian navy , and thus the destruction of the Allied navy . Therefore , if Xerxes could destroy the Allied navy , he would be in a strong position to force a Greek surrender ; this seemed the only hope of concluding the campaign in that season . Conversely by avoiding destruction , or as Themistocles hoped , by crippling the Persian fleet , the Greeks could effectively thwart the invasion .

However , it was strategically not necessary for the Persians to actually fight this battle at Salamis . According to Herodotus , Queen Artemisia of Caria pointed this out to Xerxes in the run @-@ up to Salamis . Artemisia suggested that fighting at sea was an unnecessary risk , recommending instead :

If you do not hurry to fight at sea , but keep your ships here and stay near land , or even advance into the Peloponnese , then , my lord , you will easily accomplish what you had in mind on coming here . The Hellenes are not able to hold out against you for a long time , but you will scatter them , and they will each flee to their own cities .

The Persian fleet was still large enough to both bottle up the Allied navy in the straits of Salamis , and send ships to land troops in the Peloponnese . However , in the final reckoning , both sides were prepared to stake everything on a naval battle , in the hope of decisively altering the course of the war .

The Persians were at a significant tactical advantage , outnumbering the Allies , but also having " better sailing " ships . The " better sailing " that Herodotus mentions was probably due to the superior seamanship of the crews ; most of the Athenian ships ( and therefore the majority of the fleet ) were newly built as according to Themistocles ' request to the Athenians to build a fleet of 200 triremes in 483 BC , and had inexperienced crews . It is important to note that despite the inexperienced crew on part of the Athenians , these newly constructed triremes would ultimately prove crucial in the forthcoming conflict with Persia . The most common naval tactics in the Mediterranean area at the time were ramming ( triremes being equipped with a ram at the bows ) , or boarding by ship @-@ borne marines ( which essentially turned a sea battle into a land one ) . The Persians and Asiatic Greeks had by this time begun to use a manoeuvre known as diekplous . It is not entirely clear what this was , but it probably involved sailing into gaps between enemy ships and then ramming them in the side . This maneuver would have required skilled sailing , and therefore the Persians would have been more likely to employ it ; the Allies however , developed tactics specifically to counter this .

There has been much debate as to the nature of the Allied fleet compared to the Persian fleet . Much of this centres on the suggestion , from Herodotus , that the Allied ships were heavier , and by implication less maneuverable . The source of this heaviness is uncertain ; possibly the Allied ships were bulkier in construction , or that the ships were water @-@ logged since they had not been dried out in the winter ( though there is no real evidence for either suggestion ) . Another suggestion is that the heaviness was caused by the weight of fully armored hoplite marines ( 20 fully armored hoplites would have weighed 2 tons ) . This ' heaviness ' , whatever its cause , would further reduce the likelihood of them employing the diekplous . It is therefore probable that the Allies had extra marines on board if their ships were less maneuverable , since boarding would then be the main tactic available to them ( at the cost of making the ships even heavier ) . Indeed , Herodotus refers to the Greeks capturing ships at Artemisium , rather than sinking them . It has been suggested that the weight of the Allied ships may also have made them more stable in the winds off the coast of Salamis , and made them less susceptible to ramming ( or rather , less liable to sustain damage when rammed ) .

Tactically speaking then , a battle in the open sea , where their superior seamanship and numbers could count was preferable for the Persians . For the Greeks , the only realistic hope of a decisive

victory was to draw the Persians into a constricted area , where their numbers would count for little . The battle at Artemisium had seen attempts to negate the Persian advantage in numbers , but ultimately the Allies may have realised that they needed an even more constricted channel in order to defeat the Persians . Therefore , by sailing into the Straits of Salamis to attack the Greeks , the Persians were playing into the Allies ' hands . It seems probable that the Persians would not have attempted this unless the Persians were confident of the collapse of the Allied navy , and thus Themistocles 's subterfuge appears to have played a key role in tipping the balance in the favor of the Greeks . Salamis was , for the Persians , an unnecessary battle and a strategic mistake .

= = The battle = =

The actual battle of Salamis is not well described by the ancient sources , and it is unlikely that anyone ( other than perhaps Xerxes ) involved in the battle had a clear idea what was happening across the width of the straits . What follows is more of a discussion than a definitive account .

= = = Dispositions = = =

In the Allied fleet , the Athenians were on the left , and on the right were probably the Spartans ( although Diodorus says it was the Megareans and Aeginetians ) ; the other contingents were in the center . The Allied fleet probably formed into two ranks , since the straits would have been too narrow for a single line of ships . Herodotus has the Allied fleet in a line running north @-@ south , probably with the northern flank off the coast of modern @-@ day Saint George 's Islet ( Ayios Georgis ) , and the southern flank off the coast of Cape Vavari ( part of Salamis ) . Diodorus suggests the Allied fleet was aligned east @-@ west , spanning the straits between Salamis and Mount Aigaleo ; however , it was perhaps unlikely that the Allies would have rested one of their flanks against Persian occupied territory .

It seems relatively certain that the Persian fleet was sent out to block the exit from the Straits the evening before the battle . Herodotus clearly believed that the Persian fleet actually entered the Straits at nightfall , planning to catch the Allies as they fled . However , modern historians have greatly debated this point , with some pointing out the difficulties of maneuvering in this confined space by night , and others accepting Herodotus 's version . There are thus two possibilities ; that during the night the Persians simply blocked the exit to the Straits , and then entered the straits in daylight ; or that they entered the straits and positioned themselves for battle during the night . Regardless of when they attempted it , it seems likely that the Persians pivoted their fleet off the tip of Cape Vavari , so that from an initial east @-@ west alignment ( blocking the exit ) , they came round to a north @-@ south alignment ( see diagram ) . The Persian fleet seems to have been formed into three ranks of ships ( according to Aeschylus ) ; with the powerful Phoenician fleet on the right flank next to Mount Aigaleo , the Ionian contingent on the left flank and the other contingents in the centre .

Diodorus says that the Egyptian fleet was sent to circumnavigate Salamis , and block the northern exit from the Straits . If Xerxes wanted to trap the Allies completely , this maneuver would have made sense ( especially if he was not expecting the Allies to fight ) . However , Herodotus does not mention this ( and possibly alludes to the Egyptian presence in the main battle ) , leading some modern historians to dismiss it ; though again , others accept it as a possibility . Xerxes had also positioned around 400 troops on the island known as Psyttaleia , in the middle of the exit from the straits , in order to kill or capture any Greeks who ended up there ( as a result of shipwreck or grounding ) .

= = = The opening phase = = =

Regardless of what time they entered the straits , the Persians did not move to attack the Allies until daylight . Since they were not planning to flee after all , the Allies would have been able to spend the night preparing for battle , and after a speech by Themistocles , the marines boarded and the ships

made ready to sail . According to Herodotus , this was dawn , and as the Allies " were putting out to sea the barbarians immediately attacked them " . If the Persians only entered the straits at dawn , then the Allies would have had the time to take up their station in a more orderly fashion .

Aeschylus claims that as the Persians approached ( possibly implying that they were not already in the Straits at dawn ) , they heard the Greeks singing their battle hymn ( paeon ) before they saw the Allied fleet :

Herodotus recounts that , according to the Athenians , as the battle began the Corinthians hoisted their sails and began sailing away from the battle , northwards up the straits . However , he also says that other Greeks denied this story . If this did in fact occur , one possible interpretation is that these ships had been a decoy sent to reconnoitre the northern exit from the straits , in case the arrival of the encircling Egyptian detachment was imminent ( if indeed this also occurred ) . Another possibility ( not exclusive of the former ) is that the departure of the Corinthians triggered the final approach of the Persians , suggesting as it did that the Allied fleet was disintegrating . At any rate , if they indeed ever left , the Corinthians soon returned to the battle .

Approaching the Allied fleet in the crowded Straits , the Persians appear to have become disorganised and cramped in the narrow waters . Moreover , it would have become apparent that , far from disintegrating , the Greek fleet was lined up , ready to attack them . However , rather than attacking immediately , the Allies initially appeared to back their ships away as if in fear . According to Plutarch , this was to gain better position , and also in order to gain time until the early morning wind . Herodotus recounts the legend that as the fleet had backed away , they had seen an apparition of a woman , asking them " Madmen , how far will ye yet back your ships ? " However , he more plausibly suggests that whilst the Allies were backing water , a single ship shot forward to ram the nearest Persian vessel . The Athenians would claim that this was the ship of the Athenian Ameinias of Pallene ; the Aeginetans would claim it as one of their ships . The whole Greek line then followed suit and made straight for the disordered Persian battle line .

= = = The main battle = = =

The details of the rest of the battle are generally sketchy , and no one involved would have had a view of the entire battlefield . Triremes were generally armed with a large ram at the front , with which it was possible to sink an enemy ship , or at least disable it by shearing off the banks of oars on one side . If the initial ramming was not successful , marines boarded the enemy ship and something similar to a land battle ensued . Both sides had marines on their ships for this eventuality ; the Greeks with fully armed hoplites ; the Persians probably with more lightly armed infantry .

Across the battlefield , as the first line of Persian ships was pushed back by the Greeks , they became fouled in the advancing second and third lines of their own ships . On the Greek left , the Persian admiral Ariabignes ( a brother of Xerxes ) was killed early in the battle ; left disorganised and leaderless , the Phoenician squadrons appear to have been pushed back against the coast , many vessels running aground . In the centre , a wedge of Greek ships pushed through the Persians lines , splitting the fleet in two . According to Plutarch , Ariabignes was killed by Ameinias and Socles ( Greek : ?????? ) of Pallene . When Ariabignes attempted to board on their ship , they hit him with their spears , and thrust him into the sea . Plutarch also mention that it was Artemisia who recognized Ariabignes body floating among the shipwrecks and brought it back to Xerxes .

Herodotus recounts that Artemisia , the Queen of Halicarnassus , and commander of the Carian contingent , found herself pursued by the ship of Ameinias of Pallene . In her desire to escape , she attacked and rammed another Persian vessel , thereby convincing the Athenian captain that the ship was an ally ; Ameinias accordingly abandoned the chase . However , Xerxes , looking on , thought that she had successfully attacked an Allied ship , and seeing the poor performance of his other captains commented that " My men have become women , and my women men " . The friendly ship she sank was a Calyndian ship and the king of the Calyndians , Damasithymos ( Greek : ????????? ) was on it. None of the crew of the Calyndian ship survived .

The Persian fleet began to retreat towards Phalerum , but according to Herodotus , the Aeginetans ambushed them as they tried to leave the Straits . The remaining Persian ships limped back to the

harbour of Phalerum and the shelter of the Persian army . The Athenian general Aristides then took a detachment of men across to Psyttaleia to slaughter the garrison that Xerxes had left there . The exact Persian casualties are not mentioned by Herodotus . However , he claims that the next year , the Persian fleet numbered 300 triremes . The number of losses then depends on the number of ships the Persian had to begin with ; something in the range of 200 ? 300 seems likely , based on the above estimates for the size of the Persian fleet . According to Herodotus , the Persians suffered many more casualties than the Greeks because most Persians did not know how to swim . Xerxes , sitting on Mount Aigaleo on his throne , witnessed the carnage . Some ship @-@ wrecked Phoenician captains tried to blame the Ionians for cowardice before the end of the battle . Xerxes , in a foul mood , and having just witnessed an Ionian ship capture an Aeginetan ship , had the Phoenicians beheaded for slandering " more noble men " . According to Diodorus , Xerxes " put to death those Phoenicians who were chiefly responsible for beginning the flight , and threatened to visit upon the rest the punishment they deserved " , causing the Phoenicians to sail to Asia when night fell .

= = Aftermath = =

In the immediate aftermath of Salamis , Xerxes attempted to build a pontoon bridge or causeway across the straits , in order to use his army to attack the Athenians ; however , with the Greek fleet now confidently patrolling the straits , this proved futile . Herodotus tells us that Xerxes held a council of war , at which the Persian general Mardonius tried to make light of the defeat :

Sire , be not grieved nor greatly distressed because of what has befallen us . It is not on things of wood that the issue hangs for us , but on men and horses ... If then you so desire , let us straightway attack the Peloponnese , or if it pleases you to wait , that also we can do ... It is best then that you should do as I have said , but if you have resolved to lead your army away , even then I have another plan . Do not , O king , make the Persians the laughing @-@ stock of the Greeks , for if you have suffered harm , it is by no fault of the Persians . Nor can you say that we have anywhere done less than brave men should , and if Phoenicians and Egyptians and Cyprians and Cilicians have so done , it is not the Persians who have any part in this disaster . Therefore , since the Persians are in no way to blame , be guided by me ; if you are resolved not to remain , march homewards with the greater part of your army . It is for me , however , to enslave and deliver Hellas to you with three hundred thousand of your host whom I will choose .

Fearing that the Greeks might attack the bridges across the Hellespont and trap his army in Europe , Xerxes resolved to do this , taking the greater part of the army with him . Mardonius handpicked the troops who were to remain with him in Greece , taking the elite infantry units and cavalry , to complete the conquest of Greece . All of the Persian forces abandoned Attica , however , with Mardonius over @-@ wintering in Boeotia and Thessaly ; the Athenians were thus able to return to their burnt city for the winter .

The following year , 479 BC , Mardonius recaptured Athens ( the Allied army still preferring to guard the Isthmus ) . However , the Allies , under Spartan leadership , eventually agreed to try to force Mardonius to battle , and marched on Attica . Mardonius retreated to Boeotia to lure the Greeks into open terrain and the two sides eventually met near the city of Plataea ( which had been razed the previous year ) . There , at the Battle of Plataea , the Greek army won a decisive victory , destroying much of the Persian army and ending the invasion of Greece ; whilst at the near @-@ simultaneous Battle of Mycale the Allied fleet destroyed much of the remaining Persian fleet .

= = Significance = =

The Battle of Salamis marked the turning point in the Greco @-@ Persian wars . After Salamis , the Peloponnese , and by extension Greece as an entity , was safe from conquest ; and the Persians suffered a major blow to their prestige and morale ( as well as severe material losses ) . At the following battles of Plataea and Mycale , the threat of conquest was removed , and the Allies were able to go on the counter @-@ offensive . The Greek victory allowed Macedon to revolt against



Persian rule ; and over the next 30 years , Thrace , the Aegean Islands and finally Ionia would be removed from Persian control by the Allies , or by the Athenian @-@ dominated successor , the Delian League . Salamis started a decisive swing in the balance of power toward the Greeks , which would culminate in an eventual Greek victory , severely reducing Persian power in the Aegean .

Like the Battles of Marathon and Thermopylae , Salamis has gained something of a ' legendary ' status ( unlike , for instance , the more decisive Battle of Plataea ) , perhaps because of the desperate circumstances and the unlikely odds . A significant number of historians have stated that Salamis is one of the most significant battles in human history ( though the same is often stated of Marathon ) . In a more extreme form of this argument , some historians argue that if the Greeks had lost at Salamis , the ensuing conquest of Greece by the Persians would have effectively stifled the growth of Western Civilization as we know it . This view is based on the premise that much of modern Western society , such as philosophy , science , personal freedom and democracy are rooted in the legacy of Ancient Greece . Thus , this school of thought argues that , given the domination of much of modern history by Western Civilization , Persian domination of Greece might have changed the whole trajectory of human history . It is also worth mentioning that the celebrated blossoming of hugely influential Athenian culture occurred only after the Persian wars were won .

Militarily , it is difficult to draw many lessons from Salamis , because of the uncertainty about what actually happened . Once again the Allies chose their ground well in order to negate Persian numbers , but this time ( unlike Thermopylae ) had to rely on the Persians launching an unnecessary attack for their position to count . Since it brought about that attack , perhaps the most important military lesson is to be found in the use of deception by Themistocles to bring about the desired response from the enemy .

= = See Also = =

Battle of Myeongnyang - a sea battle in which a small fleet of Korean ships defeated a far larger Japanese invasion fleet

= = = Ancient sources = = =

Herodotus , The Histories Perseus online version

Aeschylus , extract from The Persians

Ctesias , Persica ( excerpt in Photius 's epitome )

Diodorus Siculus , Bibliotheca Historica

Thucydides , History of the Peloponnesian War

Ephorus , Universal History

Plutarch , Themistocles

Cicero , On the Laws

= = = Modern sources = = =

Burn , A.R. ( 1985 ) . " Persia and the Greeks " in The Cambridge History of Iran , Volume 2 : The Median and Achaemenid Periods , Ilya Gershevitch , ed . Cambridge University Press .

Fehling , D. ( 1989 ) . Herodotus and His " Sources " : Citation , Invention , and Narrative Art . Translated by J.G. Howie . Leeds : Francis Cairns .

Finley , Moses ( 1972 ) . " Introduction " . Thucydides ? History of the Peloponnesian War ( translated by Rex Warner ) . Penguin . ISBN 0 @-@ 14 @-@ 044039 @-@ 9 .

Green , Peter ( 1970 ) . The Year of Salamis , 480 ? 479 BC . London : Weidenfeld and Nicolson ( ISBN 0 @-@ 297 @-@ 00146 @-@ 9 ) .

Green , Peter ( 1998 ) . The Greco @-@ Persian Wars . Berkeley : University of California Press ( hardcover , ISBN 0 @-@ 520 @-@ 20573 @-@ 1 ) ( paperback , ISBN 0 @-@ 520 @-@ 20313 @-@ 5 ) .

Hanson , Victor Davis ( 2001 ) . Carnage and Culture : Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western

Power . New York : DoubleDay , 2001 ( hardcover , ISBN 0 @-@ 385 @-@ 50052 @-@ 1 ) ; New York : Anchor Books ( paperback , ISBN 0 @-@ 385 @-@ 72038 @-@ 6 ) .

???????? ???? ?????????? ??????? ( History of the Greek nation ) vol ? , ?????????? ??????? ( Editorial Athens ) 1971 .

Holland , Tom ( 2005 ) . Persian Fire . London : Abacus ( ISBN 978 @-@ 0 @-@ 349 @-@ 11717 @-@ 1 ) .

Köster , A.J. ( 1934 ) . Studien zur Geschichte des Antikes Seewesens . Klio Beiheft 32 .

Lazenby , JF . ( 1993 ) . The Defence of Greece 490 ? 479 BC . Aris & Phillips Ltd . ( ISBN 0 @-@ 85668 @-@ 591 @-@ 7 ) .

Lee , Felicia R. ( 2006 ) . A Layered Look Reveals Ancient Greek Texts The New York Times , 27 November 2006 .

Pipes , David ( 1998 ) . " Herodotus : Father of History , Father of Lies " . Archived from the original on January 27 , 2008 . Retrieved 2008 @-@ 01 @-@ 18 .

Strauss , Barry ( 2004 ) . The Battle of Salamis : The Naval Encounter That Saved Greece ? and Western Civilization . New York : Simon and Schuster ( hardcover , ISBN 0 @-@ 7432 @-@ 4450 @-@ 8 ; paperback , ISBN 0 @-@ 7432 @-@ 4451 @-@ 6 ) .