

**WEEK FIVE:**  
**The “Others” – Greeks and Persians II**

**Tuesday: Defeating the Persians I: Marathon and Thermopylae**

For Tuesday, we will read a pair of narratives from the Greco-Persian Wars: Darius’ failed invasion of Attica at Marathon and Thermopylae, the first major engagement in mainland Greece during Xerxes’ campaign in 480 BCE. Darius vows to take vengeance on the Athenians for their support of the Ionian Revolt and the Sack of Miletus, even having a servant regularly whisper in his ear to “remember the Athenians!” (Hdt. 5.105). After an initial invasion under Mardonios that failed in a shipwreck off of Mt. Athos, Darius finally sends a second expedition under the general Datis and guided by Hippas, a deposed Athenian tyrant. Under the command of Miltiades, the Athenians meet and repulse the Persians as they land on the shore at Marathon.

Thermopylae (you may know it as the inspiration of the original *300* movie or—if you are a true cinephile—*The 300 Spartans* from the 1960s) is the battle that is most often thought of when people recall the Greco-Persian Wars. A small contingent of Greeks from several city states head to the narrow pass at Thermopylae in an effort to stall the advance of the much larger Persian army. The Persian army had to make its way through the narrows at Thermopylae and the restricted space effectively limited the numerical advantage that the Persians held. The “David vs. Goliath” nature of the story as “300 Spartans” stand against an army of “millions” was as appealing an underdog story in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE as it is today. While the popular narratives about Thermopylae that persist today preserve the highlights of Herodotus’ account, you will likely find some of the details surprising. We will not be reading the narrative of the Battle of Artemision, a naval battle that coincided with the events at Thermopylae, but you will occasionally see reference to the fate of the fleets there. The Greeks at Artemision provided valuable cover for the infantry at Thermopylae.

**Assignment:**

- **Marathon:** Herodotus, *Histories* 6.94-124 (=Landmark pp. 464-79) and 5.105 (pp. 415-top of p. 416)
- **Thermopylae:** Herodotus, *Histories* 7.175-239 (=Landmark pp. 572-98)

**Reading Questions:**

- What are the motivating factors for Darius and Xerxes in these invasions? How does Herodotus characterize their plans?
- To what does Herodotus attribute the Greek victories and defeats in these campaigns? To what does he attribute the Persian victories and defeats? (Note that these two things can be very distinct and not always inverse to each other!)
- How does Herodotus incorporate the gods into these narratives? What role do oracles play in how the events unfold?
- What lessons does Herodotus claim (or even just implicitly suggest) we should take from these events?
- How do the battle narratives compare to what we saw in the *Iliad*? Are there heroes and, if so, how do they behave? How are the enemies depicted in the fighting and in the aftermath of the battles?

## Thursday: Defeating the Persians II: Salamis and Artemisia

For Thursday, we will examine the next phase of the Second Persian Invasion of Greece. After the Greeks withdrew from Thermopylae and Artemision, their main forces were gathering in preparation to defend the Isthmus near Corinth, a narrow stretch of land that was reasonably defensible but a retreat that far south would leave Athens and the surrounding city-states unprotected from the Persian advance. The Athenians, as a result, plan to withdraw from their city and ferry the entire population to the nearby islands of Salamis and Aegina. In order to protect their recently relocated citizens, the Athenians try to convince the Greek coalition to fight a naval battle near Salamis before retreating to the Isthmus. The Athenian general Themistocles plays a crucial role in bringing about this engagement. As happened at Thermopylae, too, the physical space that this battle occurred in gave a distinct advantage to the Greeks, whose smaller and more maneuverable vessels could navigate the narrow straits at Salamis more easily than their opponents.

Along the way in this narrative, you will also encounter one of my favorite Greek leaders of all time: Artemisia, the Queen of Halicarnassus (Herodotus' hometown!). Halicarnassus, like most of the Ionian and Carian coasts of Asia Minor, was a subject-state to the Persian Empire, so Artemisia fights against the mainland Greeks in these campaigns. Though she rules a relatively small vassal state on the fringes of the Persian Empire, Artemisia works her way into Xerxes' councils and often offers him advice on how to pursue his campaign. Read the brief (one chapter) intro to Artemisia (7.99) and then quickly review the passages from the Salamis narrative that you just read, but focus this time on the figure of Artemisia.

### Assignment:

- **Salamis:** Herodotus, *Histories* 8.40-125 (=Landmark pp. 616-top of p. 654)
- **Artemisia, Queen of Halicarnassus:** Herodotus, *Histories* 7.99 (=Landmark p. 534); review from the Salamis reading the following sections: **8.68-69, 8.87-88, 8.93, 8.101-103**

### Reading Questions:

- How does Herodotus describe the decision-making process of the Greek coalition before Salamis? How does this compare with his characterization of the Persian councils here and elsewhere? How, too, does this compare to the Greek and Trojan councils from the *Iliad*?
- How does Themistocles behave in the events before, during, and after the Battle of Salamis? How does he or does he not play the role of hero?
- How does each side acquit themselves in battle? To what does Herodotus attribute the victory or defeat for each side?
- What does Herodotus have to say about Artemisia? To what extent does she seem Greek and to what extent is she "Other" or an enemy? How does she compare to the other leaders on each side of the conflict?

### People, Terms, Events and Concepts, to know from Week Five:

Marathon	Darius	
Athens/Athenians	Mount Athos	Hippias
Ionian Revolt	Datis	Sparta/Spartans
Mardonios	Oracles	Miltiades

“Shield Signal”

Xerxes

Thermopylae

Artemision

Delphi/Delphians

Leonidas

Medizing

Demaratos

Ephialtes

Anopaia Path

Phocians

Thebans

Dienekes

Achaimenes

Gorgo

Salamis

Eurybiades

Acropolis

Themistocles

Isthmus at Corinth

Peloponnese

Artemisia

Aristeides