AHIS1010 - Greece to the Persian Wars

Course Outline

Course Co-ordinator: Jane Bellemore
Room: MCLG24
Ph: 4921 5231
Fax: 4921 6933
Email: Jane.Bellemore@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours: Open hours

Semester: Semester 2 2007
Unit Weighting: 10
Teaching Methods: Lecture

Brief Course Description
Examines the history of Greece from the Bronze Age until the end of the Persian Wars, using both archaeological and literary evidence. In so doing it explains the rise of one of the most influential of all ancient cities, democratic Athens. Hence it introduces the world of ancient Greece, preparing the way for further study of Greece at 3000 level, and its methodology serves as an introduction to ancient history in general.

Contact Hours
Lecture for 2 Hours per Week for the Full Term
Tutorial for 1 Hour per Week for 12 Weeks
Tutorials commence in week 2 and end in week 13.

Learning Materials/Texts
Herodotus Historiae, translated by Robin Waterfield, Oxford (OUP) 1998
Course Objectives
1. To encourage a broad knowledge and understanding of the development of Greece up to the end of the Persian Wars.
2. To encourage an understanding of the changing conditions of Greek society, and respect for the manner in which it differed from our own.
3. To encourage a critical approach to both literary and archaeological evidence.
4. To foster the accurate and effective expression of one’s appreciation of, and critical ideas about, ancient society and its leaders.

Course Content
Greece in the Bronze Age
Sources for Greek history
Herodotus as a source
Rise of Persia
Rise of Sparta and Athens
Development of Greek political systems
Conflict between Greece and Persia
Persian Invasions of Greece

Assessment Items

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essays / Written Assignments</th>
<th>Short paper, or equivalent task, 30% (1000 words)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays / Written Assignments</td>
<td>Source Exercise, 30% (1000 words approx.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essays / Written Assignments</td>
<td>Essay, 40% (2000 words)</td>
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</tbody>
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Assumed Knowledge
None

Callaghan Campus Timetable
AHIS1010
GREECE TO THE PERSIAN WARS
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 - 2007
Lecture and Tutorial on Monday:
Monday 11:00 - 13:00 [CT202]
Monday 14:00 - 15:00 [V108]
Monday 15:00 - 16:00 [V109]
Monday 16:00 - 17:00 [V109]
Monday 14:00 - 15:00 [GP2-16]
Monday 15:00 - 16:00 [GP2-16]

Plagiarism
University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if he or she presents the thoughts or works of another as one’s own. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:
- copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;
- using another's ideas without due acknowledgment;
- working with others without permission and presenting the resulting work as though it was completed independently.

Plagiarism is not only related to written works, but also to material such as data, images, music, formulae, websites and computer programs.

Aiding another student to plagiarise is also a violation of the Plagiarism Policy and may invoke a penalty.

For further information on the University policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Policy on Student Academic Integrity at the following link -


The University has established a software plagiarism detection system called Turnitin. When you submit assessment items please be aware that for the purpose of assessing any assessment item the University may -

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking).
- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

Written Assessment Items

Students may be required to provide written assessment items in electronic form as well as hard copy.

Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date, as advised in the Course Outline, unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension of time for submission of the item. University policy is that an assessment item submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, will be penalised.

Any student:

1. who is applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or
2. whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment;

must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, to the appropriate officer following the instructions provided in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure - Policy
Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Please go to the Policy at [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html) for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- **Requests for Special Consideration** must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.
- **Requests for Extensions of Time on Assessment Items** must be lodged no later than the due date of the item.
- **Requests for Rescheduling Exams** must be received in the Student Hub no later than ten working days prior to the first date of the examination period.

Your application may not be accepted if it is received after the deadline. Students who are unable to meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak to their Program Officer in the first instance.

### Changing your Enrolment

The last dates to withdraw without financial or academic penalty (called the HECS Census Dates) are:

For semester 2 courses: 31 August 2007

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of semester will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of semester/trimester, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of semester/trimester must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs.

To change your enrolment online, please refer to [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/changingenrolment.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/changingenrolment.html)

### Faculty Information

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students on campus.

The four Student Hubs are located at:

**Callaghan campus**

- Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Union Building
- Hunter Hub: Student Services Centre, Hunter side of campus

**City Precinct**

- City Hub & Information Common: University House, ground floor in combination with an
Information Common for the City Precinct

**Ourimbah campus**

- Ourimbah Hub: Administration Building

**Faculty websites**

- **Faculty of Business and Law**

- **Faculty of Education and Arts**

- **Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment**

- **Faculty of Health**

- **Faculty of Science and Information Technology**

**Contact details**

**Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie**

Phone: 02 4921 5000  
Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

**Ourimbah**

Phone: 02 4348 4030  
Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

**The Dean of Students**

Resolution Precinct  
Phone: 02 4921 5806  
Fax: 02 4921 7151  
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

**Deputy Dean of Students (Ourimbah)**

Phone: 02 4348 4123  
Fax: 02 4348 4145  
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Various services are offered by the University Student Support Unit:  
Alteration of this Course Outline

No change to this course outline will be permitted after the end of the second week of the term except in exceptional circumstances and with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of any approved changes to this outline.

Web Address for Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards

Web Address for Rules Governing Postgraduate Academic Awards

Web Address for Rules Governing Professional Doctorate Awards

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

The University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness.

If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies, please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register please contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, or via email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au

As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester.

For more information related to confidentiality and documentation please visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website at: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability

Online Tutorial Registration:

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.
Further Information

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- No Assignment Re-submission
- Re-marks & Moderations
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Representatives
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students
### Lecture and Tutorial List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Tutorial</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; July</td>
<td>Introduction&lt;br&gt;Early Greece</td>
<td>JB</td>
<td>No tutorial</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; July</td>
<td>Herodotus as Historian I&lt;br&gt;Herodotus as Historian II</td>
<td>JB&lt;br&gt;HML</td>
<td>1. Herodotean stories</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; July</td>
<td>Herodotus Book One: Lydia&lt;br&gt;Herodotus Book One: Cyrus</td>
<td>JB&lt;br&gt;JB</td>
<td>2. Croesus of Lydia</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; August</td>
<td>Book Two: Egyptian customs&lt;br&gt;Book Two: Egyptian customs</td>
<td>HML&lt;br&gt;HML</td>
<td>3. Cyrus the Great</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; August</td>
<td>Herodotus’ Egyptian History&lt;br&gt;Herodotus’ Egyptian History</td>
<td>JB&lt;br&gt;HML</td>
<td>4. Herodotus’ Egyptian sources</td>
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**Short essay due: 20th August**

| 6.   | 20<sup>th</sup> August | No Lectures nor tutorials                        |          |                                 |
| 7.   | 27<sup>th</sup> August | Book Three: Rise of Darius<br>Book Three: Reign of Darius | HML<br>HML | 5. Egyptian affairs              |
| 8.   | 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept  | Book Four: The Scythians<br>Book Four: Persians in Scythia | JB<br>JB  | 6. Darius’ accession             |
| 9.   | 10<sup>th</sup> Sept  | Book Five: Ionia<br>Book Five: Pisistratus, Clisthenes | JB<br>HML | 7. Scythian Practices            |

**Commentaries due: 24<sup>th</sup> September**

(See Over)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Tutorial</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>24th Sept</td>
<td>Book Seven: Xerxes</td>
<td>HML</td>
<td>9. Greece vhs/dvd</td>
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<td>Book Seven: Thermopylae</td>
<td>JB</td>
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<td><strong>SEMESTER BREAK (Monday 1st October to Friday 12th October)</strong></td>
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<td>Book Eight: Salamis</td>
<td>HML</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>22nd October</td>
<td>Book Nine: Plataea</td>
<td>HML</td>
<td>11. Marathon</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Book Nine: Rise of Athens</td>
<td>JB</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>29th October</td>
<td>Topography of Ancient Greece I</td>
<td>HML</td>
<td>12. Thermopylae</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Topography of Ancient Greece II</td>
<td>HML</td>
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**Major Essay Due 2nd November**

Key to lecturers:
- JB Dr J. Bellemore
- HML Mr H. Lindsay

**Summary of Assessment:**
1. Sources Paper 30% (short essay due on Monday 20th August)
2. Short Essay 30% (commentaries due Monday 24th September)
3. Major Essay 40% (major essay due Friday 2nd November)

Hard copies of all papers should be handed in before 5 pm on the due dates.

The **Major Essay** will examine Herodotus as a historian. Precise topics will be handed out midway through the semester.
Tutorial 1 (week 2) - The credibility of Herodotus

There are some stories given by Herodotus which show both the trustworthiness of his Histories, or that may induce skepticism.

Consider the following stories from the Histories:
1. Arion and the dolphin (1.23-4)  
2. On the source of the inundation of the Nile at the summer solstice (2.19-25)  
3. On how Cheops' pyramid was built and what was written on it (2.124-6)  
4. Polycrates' ring (3.41-2)  
5. On the habits of Indians (3.99-101)  
6. The gold digging ants of India (3.102-5)  
7. Circumnavigation of Africa (4.42-3)

Comment on the credibility of the material, and say why we should or should not trust each anecdote. How committed is Herodotus to the truth of this material?

Modern Authorities

The Cambridge companion to Herodotus, ed. C. Dewald, J. Marincola, Cambridge, 2006 [938.03 HERO-2 DEWA]  
Brill's companion to Herodotus, ed. E.J. Bakker, I.J.F. de Jong, H. van Wees, Leiden; Boston, 2002 [938.03 HERO-2 BAKK]


Evans, J.A.S., Herodotus, Boston, 1982 [888.1/19]

Fehling, D., Herodotus and His Sources, trans J.G. Howie, Leeds, 1989 [888.1/26]


Marincola, J., Greek historians, Oxford, 2001 [938.007202 MARI]

Munson, R.V., Black doves speak: Herodotus and the languages of Barbarians, Cambridge, Mass., 2005 [938.03 HERO-2 MUNS]

Myres, J.L., Herodotus: Father of History, Oxford, 1953 [888.1]

Waters, K.H., Herodotus the Historian, London & Sydney, 1985 [888.1HERO-2 WATE-1]
Read the following sources on the interaction between Croesus of Lydia (ruled ca 560-547) and Solon the Athenian sage (magistrate in Athens 594/3).

1. Herodotus *Histories* 1.29-34 (Solon's meeting with Croesus);

1. 86-88 (the fall of Croesus)

2. There is a chronicle from Babylonia (*Nabonidus Chronicle*), almost contemporary with Croesus, which briefly reports, in the ninth year of Nabonidus, in the month of Iyyar (ca. May 546 BC) as follows:

   Cyrus, the king of Persia, crossed the river Tigris below Arbela and marched to Lu--- (*text broken*). Here he defeated (or ‘killed’) its king, took its possessions, and stationed his own garrison there.

2. Consider also the red-figure amphora by Myson (ca 500-490), depicting the immolation of Croesus. His servant Eutymos lights the pyre, while Croesus pours a libation.

4 The Greek poet Bacchylides (ca 468 BC), a contemporary of Herodotus, refers to the death of Croesus in a choral ode:

   He would not await so miserable a lot as servitude, but had them build a pyre before his brazen-walled court and went up to it with his trusty wife and his fair-tressed daughters, wailing incessantly ... he bade one of his soft-stepping attendants kindle the wooden pile. The girls shrieked and threw their hands up to their mother; for the most hateful of deaths to mortals is that foreseen. But, when the blazing force of that awful fire rushed over them, Zeus sent a black veil of cloud and quenched the yellow flame. Then Delos-born Apollo bore away the old king to the land of the Hyperboreans and there gave him dwelling with his slender-ankled daughter because of his piety.'
Did Croesus die or was he saved by Cyrus?

Why does Croesus survive in Herodotus’ account? See, for example, 1.207-8.

Given the chronological difficulties, is it possible that Croesus and Solon ever met in the way that Herodotus describes? What impact do the stories about Solon have on the historical worth of Herodotus’ narrative?

Consider Plutarch Life of Solon 27 (written ca AD 100):

Some people think they can prove, on chronological grounds that the famous meeting between Solon and Croesus is a fiction. However, when a story is so famous and so well-attested, and, more importantly, so much in keeping with Solon’s character and worthy of his self-assurance, I for one do not feel inclined to reject it on the basis of some so-called chronological tables, which have so far proved incapable of making the slightest progress towards resolving the inconsistencies, despite the revisions undertaken by countless writers [Loeb translation]

**Modern Authorities**

Helpful for introductory overviews are the entries on Croesus, Solon and Cyrus the Great in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford, 1996 [Reference R938.003 OXFO 1996 c.3]


Tutorial 3 (week 4) - Cyrus the Great

Herodotus has been criticised for his depiction of Cyrus the Great (see Avery below).

Consider two aspects of the life of Cyrus:
- His death: Histories 1.204-14.

Herodotus himself notes that there were many versions of the life of Cyrus (1.95), and of his death (1.214).

See, for example, Xenophon Cyropædia 1.1-4 (1-28), and 8.7 (1-28) [888.3W/12]. On-line see translation by H.G. Dakyns:
http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext00/cyrus10.txt
http://evans-experientialism.freewebspace.com/academy_contents.htm

How historical is Herodotus’ account?

What features does Herodotus stress in his depiction of Cyrus? Why does he do this?

Modern Authorities

Avery, H.C., ‘Herodotus’ picture of Cyrus’, American Journal of philology 93 (1972) 529-64
Pelling, C. ‘The urine and the vine: Astyages' dreams at Herodotus 1.107-8, Classical Quarterly 46 (1996) 68-77
Tatum, J. Xenophon’s imperial fiction: on the education of Cyrus, Princeton, 1989 [883.01 XENO-2 TATU]
Tutorial 4 (week 5) - Herodotus' Egyptian sources

Herodotus states or implies that he was present in Egypt, where he personally inspected the sites (autopsy) and that he questioned the locals, especially the priests.

How does Herodotus signal that he is using ‘autopsy’? How does he use first-hand evidence to support his account? How does Herodotus indicate to the reader that he has not directly viewed a location?

Do such claims, to ‘autopsy’ and questioning of valid authorities, make Herodotus a reliable historian?

**Oral Sources:** 2.3-4, 13, 19, 29, 32, 43, 55, 77, 91, 93, 99, 102, 104, 109, 111-3, 116, 118, 120, 121, 124, 129, 136, 138, 143, 147, 150, 155-6

**Autopsy:** 2.5, 8-12, 29-30, 44, 52, 73, 75, 77, 91, 99 (implies autopsy for everything up to 2.99), 103, 104, 106, 125, 126, 132, 137-8, 143, 148, 155-6, 169, 175-6

Note that Herodotus sometimes expresses the limits of his knowledge: e.g. that he has not seen the phoenix (2.73) and that he has to rely on others for information (2.99; cf. 142, 147)

Herodotus also leaves it to the reader occasionally to determine the truth: 2.123, 146, 167

**Modern Authorities**


Brown, T.S. ‘Herodotus speculates about Egypt’, *American Journal of Philology* 86 (1965) 60-76

Evans, J.A.S., *Herodotus*, Boston, 1982 [888.1/19]


Redfield, J., ‘Herodotus the Tourist’, *Classical Philology* 80 (1985) 97-118

Given his depiction of Babylon (1.178-84), can we say that Herodotus visited this city? What are the ramifications of this for his work?

**Modern Authorities**


See also the reading associated with tutorial 4
Notes for students:

This exercise requires you to focus in depth on the work of Herodotus as you undertake the rudiments of research, and to practice composing an essay in a style appropriate for academic work. You will need these skills later in the semester for the major essay.

Your paper should be presented in essay-form, comprising the three general areas:

1. An examination of the problem inherent in the set question, and a reference to the precise area/s you will examine in the essay and why you consider that this selection throws light on the problem (introduction and methodology);

2. A mustering of the evidence under the topics you have outlined (the evidence and argument). An analysis of the evidence is required rather than simply a narrative of events, although some narrative may be required for the material to make sense; and

3. A conclusion based upon the evidence you have argued that will specifically address the question under examination.

Focus on the text given and its context. You need not cite nor even consult outside reading for this exercise, but the suggested reading may help you form your ideas.

In research work in Ancient History, it is common practice to base your main discussion on the ancient evidence and to cite such works in the body of your essay: e.g. This point is illustrated by the ornamentation on the walls (Herodotus Histories 1.184, or abbreviated as Herod. 1.184). Given this practice, footnotes should not contain a single reference to the text of an ancient author, although they might be used for multiple references to texts. Footnotes might instead contain a reference to a modern author, if you have noted the idea of that author in the body of your work, or they might even present the idea of a modern author relating to the point you are making in your work based on the ancient sources, if that idea is relevant to your argument or you wish to refute it.

If you make any point based on the ancient sources, you must provide an explicit reference to these, and similarly with modern authors. Do not be afraid of criticising the works of others, particularly the ancient sources, but you must supply good reasons for dismissing or ignoring various points. Try not to quote passages from the modern sources as a substitute for your own argument, but if you do quote, say whether or not you agree with the author and why. Direct quotes do not count in the word tally.

In terms of the mechanics of footnotes, you may give abbreviated details, for example, citing a modern author by name and page number (Jones, 52), but make sure that you give full details in your bibliography.

Do not forget to include a bibliography containing full details of the text of Thucydides you are using and of any commentaries or books that you have read for the purposes of this task, even if not cited in your notes. Separate your bibliography into ‘Ancient’ and ‘Modern’ sections. Italicise the titles of books or journals.
Herodotus’ description of Egypt (part of his history of the growth of the Persian Empire), given in Book Two falls into discrete segments (see R. Waterford, p. 614):

- Cambyses’ accession to the Persian throne (1)
- the Egyptian king Psammeticus’ attempt to determine the oldest people (2-5)
- a geographical description of Egypt with particular reference to the Nile (5-34)
- ethnographical description of the Egyptians (35-98)
- history of Egypt (99-182)

Read 2.2-3. What strengths and weaknesses appear in Herodotus’ methodology?

Consider the credibility of Herodotus as a geographer or Egypt (2.5-9). How accurate are his measurements?

Consider his geographical elements: (2.10-18).

From his ethnographical section, consider his observations on the cat (2.66-7), and on the crocodile and the hippopotamus (2.68-71).

From the historical section, examine Herodotus’ inclusion of curious stories concerning King Rhampsinitus (2.121).

What is illogical or incredible in his account at this point. Why did Herodotus include this tale when he clearly did not himself believe it (2.123)?

**Modern Authorities**


Herodotus gives an account of the rise of Darius in 3.30-1, 61-62, 64, 70, 78, 151-53, 160.

How does Herodotus’ account of the accession (61-68) compare with Darius’ own statements on the Bisitun (Behistun) rock inscription below:

From: [http://www.livius.org/be-bm/behistun/behistun01.html](http://www.livius.org/be-bm/behistun/behistun01.html)

**Murder of Smerdis and coup of Gaumâta the Magian**

(10) King Darius says: The following is what was done by me after I became king. A son of Cyrus, named Cambyses, one of our dynasty, was king here before me. That Cambyses had a brother, Smerdis by name, of the same mother and the same father as Cambyses. Afterwards, Cambyses slew this Smerdis. When Cambyses slew Smerdis, it was not known unto the people that Smerdis was slain. Thereupon Cambyses went to Egypt. When Cambyses had departed into Egypt, the people became hostile, and the lie multiplied in the land, even in Persia and Media, and in the other provinces.

(11) King Darius says: Afterwards, there was a certain man, a Magian, Gaumâta by name, who raised a rebellion in Paišiyâuvâdâ, in a mountain called Arakadriš. On the fourteenth day of the month Viyaxana [11 March 522] did he rebel. He lied to the people, saying: 'I am Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, the brother of Cambyses.' Then were all the people in revolt, and from Cambyses they went over unto him, both Persia and Media, and the other provinces. He seized the kingdom; on the ninth day of the month Garmapada [1 July 522] he seized the kingdom. Afterwards, Cambyses died of natural causes.

(12) King Darius says: The kingdom of which Gaumâta, the Magian, dispossessed Cambyses, had always belonged to our dynasty. After that Gaumâta, the Magian, had dispossessed Cambyses of Persia and Media, and of the other provinces, he did according to his will. He became king.

**Darius kills Gaumâta and restores the kingdom**

(13) King Darius says: There was no man, either Persian or Mede or of our own dynasty, who took the kingdom from Gaumâta, the Magian. The people feared him exceedingly, for he slew many who had known the real Smerdis. For this reason did he slay them, 'that they may not know that I am not Smerdis, the son of Cyrus.' There was none who dared to act against Gaumâta, the Magian, until I came. Then I prayed to Ahuramazda; Ahuramazda brought me help. On the tenth day of the month Bâgayâdiš [29 September 522] I, with a few men, slew that Gaumâta, the Magian, and the chief men who were his followers. At the stronghold called Sikâyauvatiš, in the district called Nisaia in Media, I slew him; I dispossessed him of the kingdom. By the grace of Ahuramazda I became king; Ahuramazda granted me the kingdom.

(14) King Darius says: The kingdom that had been wrested from our line I brought back and I re-established it on its foundation. The temples which Gaumâta, the Magian, had destroyed, I restored to the people, and the pasture lands, and the herds and the dwelling places, and the houses which Gaumâta, the Magian, had taken away. I settled the people in their place, the people of Persia, and Media, and the other provinces. I restored that which had been taken away, as is was in the days of old. This did I by the grace of Ahuramazda; I laboured until I had established our dynasty in its place, as in the days of old; I laboured, by the grace of Ahuramazda, so that Gaumâta, the Magian, did not dispossess our house.
Site on Achaemenid Archive:
http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/ARI/ARI.html

**Modern Authorities**


Burn, A.R., *Persia and the Greeks* 2, Stanford, 1984 [938.03 BURN]


**Tutorial 7 (week 9) - Scythian Practices**

Herodotus gives a lengthy description of the way of life of the Scythians in Book Four. In particular, note his description of the practices of these barbarians (4.59-82)

What is wrong with these people in the eyes of Herodotus? How different is their behaviour from that of the Greeks?

See also Hippocrates *Airs, Waters and Places* 13-22 (See *Hippocratic Writings*, trans J. Chadwick ... [et al.], Harmondsworth, 1978 (1983 [printing]), 161-7 [888.9W H6577 6]. See also: http://classics.mit.edu/Hippocrates/airwatp1.html

Why does Herodotus include a description of Amazons (4.110-17).

Does the archaeological evidence confirm or deny Herodotus’ account?

How historical is Herodotus’ account of the Scythians and of the Amazons?

**Modern Authorities**


Hartog, F. *The mirror of Herodotus: the representation of the other in the writing of history*, tr. J. Lloyd, Berkeley, 1998 [888.1 HERO-2 HART]

Tyrrell, W.B., *Amazons, a study in Athenian mythmaking*, Baltimore, 1984 [305.3 TYRR]
Herodotus records some of the history of the Cypselids, tyrants of Corinth, of Cypselus and his son Periander

Cypselus: *Histories* 5.92
Periander: 3.48, 5.92-3

There are other sources for the Cypselids, fragments by Nicolaus of Damascus (ca 20 BC), who perhaps followed a fourth century historian Ephorus, and a mention of these events by Pausanias (AD 2nd C, a traveller to Olympia).

For the fragments of Nicolaus, see attachment

Pausanias 5.17.5: There is also a chest made of cedar [at Olympia], with figures on it, some of ivory, some of gold, others carved out of the cedar-wood itself. It was in this chest that Cypselus, the tyrant of Corinth, was hidden by his mother when the Bacchiads were anxious to discover him after his birth. In gratitude for the saving of Cypselus, his descendants, Cypselids as they are called, dedicated the chest at Olympia. The Corinthians of that age called chests kypselai, and from this word, they say, the child received his name of Cypselus.

What elements of the story of Cypselus are common and which differ? What is the ‘true’ story? How accurate is Herodotus? Why does he include this material?

What do these stories convey about attitudes to tyranny?

**Modern Sources**


Oost, S.I., ‘Cypselus the Bacchiad’, *Classical Philology* 67 (1972) 10-30


Nicolaus (Ephorus): taken from
http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~rauhn/Hist_416/Hist%20416/EPHORUS.htm

Fragment 57: Cypselus, who was himself a Bacchiad on his mother’s side, became the first tyrant of Corinth by killing Hippoclides (or Patrocleides), the last of the Bacchiads. How he succeeded him in power at Corinth and ruled with greater authority is as follows. The response of the oracle predicted that Cypselus the son of Aetion would expel the Bacchiad dynasty. Therefore, when Cypselus was born and was still wrapped in swaddling clothes, several mercenaries were dispatched to kill him. Coming to his house with the intent of killing him, they found the child reaching out to them and smiling. Struck by tender mercy, the assassins could not kill the child, but after explaining to Aetion what they had been ordered to do, they decided to leave. Since Aetion now knew what had been decreed, he immediately took the child to Olympia where he placed it as a suppliant before the god. After receiving the god’s surety, the child was taken home to Cleonae, and he grew in beauty and character to excel all others.

After this Cypselus wanted to return to Corinth, and so he consulted the Delphic oracle, and receiving a favorable response, he delayed no longer, but went to Corinth, where he rapidly earned the respect of the citizens because of his courage and modesty, particularly since his character contrasted so remarkably with the arrogance and violence of the rest of the Bacchiads. And he soon earned for himself even greater love of the citizens when he fulfilled the duties of polemarch (war leader), since whoever held this office tended to surpass all others. And this he did greatly through the following. There was a law among the Corinthians that whoever was convicted in the popular court was to be brought before the polemarch, who was to imprison them until such time as they paid their fines assessed, and that part of these fines were kept by the polemarch himself. Cypselus never arrested or bound any citizen, but rather, he released them upon receiving sureties, and he sometimes went surety himself. In any event he always returned his portion of the assessed fines to those punished. In this manner he quickly became the hero of the populace.

Seeing that the people of Corinth truly hated the Bacchiads and that if only they had a leader they would overthrow them, he proposed himself and gained the support of the people by revealing the ancient oracle whereby it was predicted that he himself would put an end to Bacchiad rule. He added further how they had tried to kill him as a baby and how even now they were plotting against him, but that it was in the end impossible to avert that which was fated to be. The Corinthians gladly listening to these speeches began to hate the Bacchiads even more and to love Cypselus, whose noble character gave them reason to hope for fresh changes. Having thus built his support, he killed Patroclides, a violator of laws and troublesome man who then was in charge. In his place Cypselus had himself proclaimed king (basileus) by the people.

Cypselus then recalled all the exiles and had them restored to the full rights and honours of which the Bacchiads had deprived them, and by this means was able to accomplish all necessary measures against the Bacchiads. Those who opposed them he banished to newly formed colonies, so that he could more effectively control the opponents who remained. He also dispatched his two illegitimate sons Pylades and Echiades to found the colonies at Leucas and Anactorium. He also drove all the Bacchiads into exile and confiscated their possessions in the name of the state. The Bacchiads meanwhile took control of Corcyra.

Cypselus ruled Corinth with mildness, he never resorted to bodyguards and was not the least bit hated by the Corinthians. Finally after a reign of 30 years, he died, leaving four sons, of which one Periander, was legitimate, while the other four were illegitimate.

Fragment 58: Periander, the son of Cypselus the king of Corinth, accepted the rule of his father according to the custom of the time, but converted it into tyranny through his cruelty and violence.
He surrounded himself with 300 bodyguards. He prohibited the citizens from conducting business and going about their private affairs and daily vexed them with new accusations. Whenever he saw anyone loitering in the agora, he immediately punished him, fearing that he was plotting conspiracies against him. It was said that he engaged in another unholy crime, namely performing sex with his wife after she had died. Being extremely aggressive and warlike, he undertook great expeditions and by constructing triremes, seized control of the sea on both sides of Corinth. Many claim that he was one of the Seven Sages of Greece, but this is false.

Fragment 59: When Periander the tyrant of Corinth was an old man, all of his sons perished: Euagoras while founding the colony at Potidea, Lycophron while attempting to establish a tyranny among the neighbouring villages, Gorgus while winning a race, broke his back. Nicolaus finally, who seemed to be the best son of all, was killed by a conspiracy in the following manner. Periander, after the loss of his other sons wanted to put his rule in order, and knowing that the Corinthians hated him greatly, and that owing to Nicolaus' moderation they would be able to endure his rule more easily, Periander left for Corcyra and decreed that he was yielding Corinth to Nicolaus. When some of the Corcyraeans learned of Periander's intentions, fearing that the arrival of the tyrant at their town would put an end to their freedom, hastily killed Nicolaus themselves. Upon this Periander organised an army and invaded Corcyra. Seizing the town, he ordered that the fifty ringleaders of this deed be executed along with their sons, and that numerous others be dispatched to King Alyattes of Lydia for slavery. These prisoners upon arriving on their way at Samos threw themselves at the mercy of the sanctuary of Hera and were spared by the Samians, who learned the truth of the matter. Periander, after placing Corcyra under Psammetichus the son of his brother Gorgus, returned to Corinth.

Fragment 60: Periander left the rule of Corinth to Cypselus the son of his brother Gorgus, who coming from Corcyra was able to maintain the tyranny at Corinth for a short while. Eventually several Corinthians formed a faction and killed Cypselus, thus liberating the city for all time. The people opened up the house of the tyrants and confiscated their goods. They ordered Cypselus to be interred beyond the frontier of the city and (exhuming his remains) they scattered most of his bones...
Second Assessment

Commentary/Sources Test (Two exercises @ 500 = 1000 words total)

Due Week 11 (5.00 pm, Monday 24th September)

This paper is worth up to 30% of the semester's marks (each exercise @ 15%)

In approximately 500 words each, comment on TWO of the following (three) extracts from Herodotus’ works. Do not connect the TWO extracts you have chosen, but deal with them as separate pieces of evidence.

1. If a house catches fire, what happens to the cats is quite extraordinary. The Egyptians do not bother to try to put the fire out, but position themselves at intervals around the house and look out for the cats. The cats slip between them, however, and even jump over them, and dash into the fire. This plunges the Egyptians into deep grief.

   [Herodotus Histories 2.66]

2. ‘The seven of them met and conferred, and exchanged pledges. When it was Darius’ turn to express his opinion, he said, ‘I thought I was the only one who knew that it was the Magus who was ruling over us and that Smerdis the son of Cyrus was dead. In fact, that’s exactly why I was eager to come here – to bring about the Magus’ death. But since, as it turns out, you too know what’s going on, and I am not alone, I suggest that we act immediately. I don’t think that there is anything to be gained by delay.’

   [Herodotus Histories 3.71]

3. One of these Bacchiadae, whose name was Amphion, had a daughter called Labda, who was lame. Since no one from within the family wanted to marry her, Eétion the son of Echecrates married her: Eétion was a commoner from Petra, but traced his ancestry back to the Lapithae and Caeneidae. Now Eétion had no children by Labda or anyone else, so he travelled to Delphi to ask whether he would have an heir.

   [Herodotus Histories 5.92]

See over for details concerning the methodology behind this exercise.
**How to deal with a source-examination exercise**

The following is an exemplar to help you deal with commentary-style answers. For example, you might be provided with the following extract by Herodotus and asked to comment upon it:

> When news of the theft of the thief’s corpse reached the king [Rhampsinitis], he was furious. There was nothing he wanted more than to catch whoever it was who had pulled the trick off. So what he did – so the story goes, but I find it unbelievable – was to install his daughter in a room with instructions to accept all men indiscriminately; she was not to sleep with them, however, until she had got them to tell her the cleverest and the worst things they had ever done in their lives. As soon as the business with the thief came up in someone’s reply, she was to grab him and not let him go.

[Herodotus *Histories* 2.121]

1) **Set the piece of evidence given within a context**, both the immediate and the broader context. Often this will include a specific reference to the episode and general story-line of a particular work, and you should cite dating or geographical details if possible:

This passage (Hist 2.121) is an extract from Herodotus’ account of Egyptian history in the pre-Greek period, Hist. 2.99-142 (ca 3100 to 700 BC), including this fictionalised, folktale account covering the reigns of perhaps Ramesses II and III. Herodotus has cleverly distanced himself from the material, claiming that he heard these stories from Egyptian priests (Hist. 2.99), to whom he repeatedly refers, but he also notes that he will use the evidence of his own eyes in an attempt at verification (‘autopsy’), which he does in the first section of 2.121. Herodotus gives a rough date for the reign of Rhampsinitis, to the generation after the Trojan War (14th - 13th C BC), since Rhampsinitis’ father Proteus allegedly had contact with Helen of Troy and Menelaus of Sparta (2.112-121). This puts the material under discussion in the Late Bronze Age, the period when, in fact, the Ramesses lived (ca. 1320-1069 BC), but the account need not be trustworthy simply because Herodotus’ chronology is not inaccurate.

2) **Discuss the problems or issues raised by the extract**, citing where possible other evidence to substantiate or contradict the extract:

The main issues raised are: why it is that Herodotus has included this highly implausible account of how Rhampsinitis dealt with the problem of theft from his treasury; and how we are to accept the material presented.

That the story is not meant to be believed is clear from its content, since it includes ridiculous elements, like the pharaoh’s prostituting his daughter. Its format is suspect because of its happy ending (even for the ‘disgraced’ daughter), a feature redolent of folktale, rather than history. This story’s link, via the character of Rhampsinitis, to the subsequent anecdote about the pharaoh’s descent to Hades (2.122), completely discredits all of the material, and so both stories should be rejected. Another feature that discredits the material is that it relies upon a prejudice against foreigners, that an Egyptian king would consider prostitution to help solve a palace enigma, something that would have astounded a Greek audience.
3) Resolve the problem/s.

First, we should note that Herodotus himself casts grave doubts on the story’s accuracy by challenging the reader not to believe the version given because he himself does not, and later, in 2.123, he adds a further disclaimer to this story (and to that of Rhampsinitis in the underworld), where he states that his brief is merely to recount the traditions reported to him, not to judge them. From these comments, and from the highly improbable nature of the story, the reader is made fully aware that the tale is just that, and is not meant to be a true history.

Herodotus has included this material probably simply to entertain or even to amaze the reader with the motif of strange happenings and happy endings. With other material in his *Histories*, Herodotus is more circumspect; as for example when he reports on the gateway built by Rhampsinitis (2.132), which the reader is fully expected to accept as true, since Herodotus implies that he has seen the structure for himself. Thus, Herodotus clearly distinguishes fact from fiction in his work, a technique very well illustrated by the various stories surrounding the character of Rhampsinitis.
Tutorial 9 (week 11) - Video of Ancient Greece

During the tutorial times for this week, there will be shown a documentary on ancient Greece. Much of the material covered in this viewing will be familiar to you from lectures. Re-read your lectures to familiarize your self with the material.
Tutorial 10 (week 12) - The tyranny of Pisistratus

How can we explain the favourable press given by our main ancient authorities to the tyranny of Pisistratus of Athens? Was he really better than other tyrants, ushering a golden age, or should these authorities be suspected of partisanship?

Ancient Sources

Herodotus Histories 1.59, 64, 5.65; [Aristotle] Athenaiou Politeia 16-17; Plutarch Solon 31.2-5.
For these sources and more, see: http://www.csun.edu/~hcfl004/peisistratos.html

These passages are also collected by G. R. Stanton, Athenian politics, c. 800-500 B.C.: a sourcebook, London, New York, 1990, pp.103-110 [938.5 STAN]

Points to consider:

1. What do the sources understand when they call his rule ‘democratic’?
2. Pisistratus’ approach to constitutional matters.
3. Pisistratus’ attitude to local and Attic festivals and the purpose of his building projects.
4. His benevolence to the farmers and other financial policies, and their motivation.

Modern Authorities

Andrewes, A., The Greek tyrants, London, 1956 [938.02 ANDR]


Lavelle, B.M., The sorrow and the pity: a prolegomenon to a history of Athens under the Peisistratids, c. 560-510 BC, Stuttgart, 1993, esp. 59-86 [938.02 LAVE]

Lavelle, B. ‘The Peisistratids and the mines of Thrace’, Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies 33 (1992) 5-23

Tutorial 11 (week 13) - The Battle of Marathon

What are the strengths and weaknesses of Herodotus’ account of the battle of Marathon? Is it possible to reconstruct the course of the campaign from what he tells us?

What do the other accounts add to the traditions about Marathon?

**Ancient Sources:**

Herodotus *Histories* 6.94-121

Inscriptional and other evidence to be found in C. W. Fornara, *Archaic Times to the End of the Peloponnesian War* 48-9 [938 FORN 1983]

Scenes of the battle were painted about 460 BC on the walls of a portico in Athens. Pausanias (2nd century AD) describes them as follows (1.15):

At the end of the painting are those who fought at Marathon; the Boeotians of Plataea and the Attic contingent are coming to blows with the foreigners. In this place neither side has the better, but the centre of the fighting shows the foreigners in flight and pushing one another into the morass, while at the end of the painting are the Phoenician ships, and the Greeks killing the foreigners who are scrambling into them. Here is also a portrait of the hero Marathon, after whom the plain is named, of Theseus represented as coming up from the underworld, of Athena and of Heracles. The Marathonians, according to their own account, were the first to regard Heracles as a god. Of the fighters the most conspicuous figures in the painting are Callimachus, who has been elected commander-in-chief by the Athenians, Miltiades, one of the generals, and a hero called Echetlus, of whom I shall make mention later (Loeb translation).

Cornelius Nepos (1st century BC) *Life of Miltiades* 4-6:

4. Now Darius, having returned from Europe to Asia and being urged by his friends to reduce Greece to submission, got ready a fleet of five hundred ships and put it under the command of Datis and Artaphernes, giving them in addition two hundred thousand foot and ten thousand horsemen. He alleged as a pretext for his hostility to the Athenians that it was with their help that the Ionians had taken Sardis and slain his garrison. Those officers of the king having landed on Euboea, quickly took Eretria, carried off all the citizens of that place, and sent them to the king in Asia. Then they kept on to Attica and led their forces into the plain of Marathon, which is distant about ten miles from Athens.

The Athenians, though greatly alarmed by this hostile demonstration, so near and so threatening, asked help only from the Lacedaemonians, sending Phidippus, a courier of the class known as “all-day runners”, to report how pressing was their need of aid. But at home they appointed ten generals to command the army, including Miltiades; among these there was great difference of opinion, whether it were better to take refuge within their walls or go to meet the enemy and fight a decisive battle. Miltiades alone
persistently urged them to take the field at the earliest possible moment; stating that if they did so, not only would the citizens take heart, when they saw that their courage was not distrusted, but for the same reason the enemy would be slower to act, if they realised that the Athenians dared to engage them with so small a force.

5. In that crisis no city gave help to the Athenians except the Plataeans. They sent a thousand soldiers, whose arrival raised the number of combatants to ten thousand. It was a band inflamed with a marvellous desire for battle, and their ardour gave Miltiades’ advice preference over that of his colleagues. Accordingly, through his influence the Athenians were induced to lead their forces from the city and encamp in a favourable position. Then, on the following day, the army was drawn up at the foot of the mountain in a part of the plain that was not wholly open - for there were isolated trees in many places - and they joined battle. The purpose was to protect themselves by the high mountains and at the same time prevent the enemy’s cavalry, hampered by the scattered trees, from surrounding them with their superior numbers.

Although Datis saw that the position was not favourable to his men, yet he was eager to engage, trusting to the number of his troops; and the more so because he thought it to his advantage to give battle before the Lacedaemonian reinforcements arrived. Therefore he led out his hundred thousand foot and ten thousand horse and began the battle. In the contest that ensued the Athenians were so superior in valour that they routed a foe of tenfold their own number and filled them with such fear that the Persians fled, not to their camp, but to their ships. A more glorious victory was never before won; for never did so small a band lay low so great a power.

6. It does not seem out of place to tell what reward was given to Miltiades for that victory, in order that it may the more readily be understood that the nature of all states is the same. For just as among the people of Rome distinctions were formerly few and slight and for that reason glorious while today they are lavish and worthless, so we find it to have been at Athens in days gone by. For the sole honour that our Miltiades received for having won freedom for Athens and for all Greece was this: that when the picture of the battle of Marathon was painted in the colonnade called Poicile, his portrait was given the leading place among the ten generals and he was represented in the act of haranguing the troops and giving the signal for battle. (Loeb translation).

Suidas (Byzantine lexicographer)

When Datis invaded Attica, they saw that the Ionians, when he had withdrawn, went up to the trees, and signalled to the Athenians that the cavalry were apart. Miltiades, learning of their departure, thus attacked and conquered.
Modern Authorities

Cambridge Ancient History\(^2\) vol 4 (Cambridge 1988) 506-17

Doenges, N.A. 'The Campaign and Battle of Marathon’, Historia 47 (1998) 1-17


Hignett, C., Xerxes' Invasion of Greece, Oxford, 1963 [938.03 XERX-2 HIGN]


Holoka, J.P., 'Marathon and the myth of the same-day march', Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies 38/4 (1997) 329-53


Tutorial 12 (week 14) - The Battle of Thermopylae

Although the Persians defeated the Greeks at the pass of Thermopylae, consider who won the propaganda battle, according to Herodotus’ account (Histories 7.172-239). Why does Herodotus present the Spartans in such a positive light?

When possibly did the alleged oracular prediction about a Spartan king become current (7.220-1)? What does this tell us about oracles and their use by Herodotus?

Note the research techniques used by Herodotus in 7.214. What does this tell us about his historical aims?

Is Herodotus’ version likely to be superior to that found in later sources?

Ancient Sources

Diodorus Siculus11.5.4-11.6, and on the death of Leonidas, see 11.9.1-10.4 (see attachment)


Herodotus in his narration of the battle has made obscure the greatest deed of Leonidas, when he said that all of them fell in the narrow area by the hill. It happened otherwise. For when they learned during the night about the outflanking movement of the enemy, they arose and marched to the camp and tent of the king, intending to kill him and willing to die in the attempt. They proceeded right up to the tent, killing anyone in their way and routing the rest. When Xerxes was not to be found, while seeking him in the vast and sprawling camp and wandering about, they were with difficulty destroyed by the barbarians who pressed upon them from all sides.

Modern Authorities

Cartledge, P. Thermopylae: the battle that changed the world, Woodstock, NY, c2006 [938.03 CART]


[11.5.4-5] After the Persians had encamped on the Spercheius River, Xerxes dispatched envoys to Thermopylae to discover, among other things, how the Greeks felt about the war with him; and he commanded them to make this proclamation: "King Xerxes orders all to give up their arms, to depart unharmed to their native lands, and to be allies of the Persians; and to all Greeks who do this he will give more and better lands than they now possess." [5] But when Leonidas heard the commands of the envoys, he replied to them: "If we should be allies of the king we should be more useful if we kept our arms, and if we should have to wage war against him, we should fight the better for our freedom if we kept them; and as for the lands which he promises to give, the Greeks have learned from their fathers to gain lands, not by cowardice, but by valour."

[11.6] The king, on hearing from his envoys the replies of the Greeks, sent for Demaratus, a Spartan who had been exiled from his native land and taken refuge with him, and with a scoff at the replies he asked the Laconian, "Will the Greeks flee more swiftly than my horses can run, or will they dare to face such armaments in battle?" [2] And Demaratus, we are told, replied, "You yourself are not unacquainted with the courage of the Greeks, since you use Greek forces to quell such barbarians as revolt. So do not think that those who fight better than the Persians to maintain your sovereignty, will risk their lives less bravely against the Persians to maintain their own freedom." But Xerxes with a scoff at him ordered Demaratus to stay by his side in order that he might witness the Lacedaemonians in flight. [3] Xerxes with his army came against the Greeks at Thermopylae. And he put the Medes in front of all the other peoples, either because he preferred them by reason of their courage or because he wished to destroy them in a body; for the Medes still retained a proud spirit, the supremacy which their ancestors had exercised having only recently been overthrown. [4] And he also designated together with the Medes the brothers and sons of those who had fallen at Marathon, believing that they would wreak vengeance upon the Greeks with the greatest fury. The Medes, then, having been drawn up for battle in the manner we have described, attacked the defenders of Thermopylae; but Leonidas had made careful preparation and massed the Greeks in the narrowest part of the pass.

[11.7] The fight which followed was a fierce one, and since the barbarians had the king as a witness of their valour and the Greeks kept in mind their liberty and were exhorted to the fray by Leonidas, it followed that the struggle was amazing. [2] For since the men stood shoulder to shoulder in the fighting and the blows were struck in close combat, and the lines were densely packed, for a considerable time the battle was equally balanced. But since the Greeks were superior in valour and in the great size of their shields, the Medes gradually gave way; for many of them were slain and not a few wounded. The place of the Medes in the battle was taken by Cissians and Sacae, selected for their valour, who had been stationed to support them; and joining the struggle fresh as they were against men who were worn out they withstood the hazard of combat for a short while, but as they were slain and pressed upon by the soldiers of Leonidas, they gave way. [3] For the barbarians used small round or irregularly shaped shields, by which they enjoyed an advantage in open fields, since they were thus enabled to move more easily, but in narrow places they could not easily inflict wounds upon an enemy who were formed in close ranks and had their entire bodies protected by large shields, whereas they, being at a disadvantage by reason of the lightness of their protective armour, received repeated wounds. [4] At last Xerxes, seeing that the entire area about the passes was strewn with dead bodies and that the barbarians were not holding out against the valour of the Greeks, sent forward the picked Persians known as the "Immortals," who were reputed to be pre-eminent among the entire host for their deeds of courage. But when these also fell after only a brief resistance, then at last, as night fell, they ceased from battle, the barbarians having lost many dead and the Greeks a small number.

[11.8] On the following day Xerxes, now that the battle had turned out contrary to his expectation, choosing from all the peoples of his army such men as were reputed to be of outstanding bravery and daring, after an earnest exhortation announced before the battle that if they should storm the
approach he would give them notable gifts, but if they fled the punishment would be death. [2] These men hurled themselves upon the Greeks as one mighty mass and with great violence, but the soldiers of Leonidas closed their ranks at this time, and making their formation like a wall took up the struggle with armour. And so far did they go in their eagerness that the lines which were wont to join in the battle by turns would not withdraw, but by their unintermitted endurance of the hardship they got the better and slew many of the picked barbarians. [3] The day long they spent in conflict, vying with one another; for the older soldiers challenged the fresh vigour of the youth, and the younger matched themselves against the experience and fame of their elders. And when finally even the picked barbarians turned in flight, the barbarians who were stationed in reserve blocked the way and would not permit the picked soldiers to flee; consequently they were compelled to turn back and renew the battle. [4] While the king was in a state of dismay, believing that no man would have the courage to go into battle again, there came to him a certain Trachinian, a native of the region, who was familiar with the mountainous area. This man was brought into the presence of Xerxes and undertook to conduct the Persians by way of a narrow and precipitous path, so that the men who accompanied him would get behind the forces of Leonidas, which, being surrounded in this manner, would be easily annihilated. [5] The king was delighted, and heaping presents upon the Trachinian he dispatched twenty thousand soldiers with him under cover of night. But a certain man among the Persians named Tyrhastiadas, a Cymaean by birth, who was honourable and upright in his ways, deserting from the camp of the Persians in the night came to Leonidas, who knew nothing of the act of the Trachinian, and informed him.

[11.9] The Greeks, on hearing of this, gathered together about the middle of the night and conferred about the perils which were bearing down on them. And although some declared that they should relinquish the pass at once and make their way in safety to the allies, stating that any who remained in the place could not possibly come off with their lives, Leonidas, the king of the Lacedaemonians, being eagerly desirous to win both for himself and for the Spartans a garland of great glory, gave orders that the rest of the Greeks should all depart and win safety for themselves, in order that they might fight together with the Greeks in the battles which still remained; but as for the Lacedaemonians, he said, they must remain and not abandon the defence of the pass, for it was fitting that those who were the leaders of Hellas should gladly die striving for the need of honour. [2] Immediately, then, all the rest departed, but Leonidas together with his fellow citizens performed heroic and astounding deeds; and although the Lacedaemonians were but few (he detained only the Thespiaeans) and he had all told not more than five hundred men, he was ready to meet death on behalf of Hellas. [3] After this the Persians who were led by the Trachinian, after making their way around the difficult terrain, suddenly caught Leonidas between their forces, and the Greeks, giving up any thought of their own safety and choosing renown instead, with one voice asked their commander to lead them against the enemy before the Persians should learn that their men had made their way around them. [4] And Leonidas, welcoming the eagerness of his soldiers, ordered them to prepare their breakfast quickly, since they would dine in Hades, and he himself, in accordance with the order he had given, took food, believing that by so doing he could keep his strength for a long time and endure the strain of contest. When they had hastily refreshed themselves and all were ready, he ordered the soldiers to attack the camp, slaying any who came in their way, and to strike for the very pavilion of the king.

[11.10] The soldiers, then, in accordance with the orders given them, forming in a compact body fell by night upon the encampment of the Persians, Leonidas leading the attack1; and the barbarians, because of the unexpectedness of the attack and their ignorance of the reason for it, ran together from their tents with great tumult and in disorder, and thinking that the soldiers who had set out with the Trachinian had perished and that the entire force of the Greeks was upon them, they were struck with terror. [2] Consequently many of them were slain by the troops of Leonidas, and even more perished at the hands of their comrades, who in their ignorance took them for enemies. For the night prevented any understanding of the true state of affairs, and the confusion, extending as it did throughout the entire encampment, occasioned, we may well believe, great slaughter; since
they kept killing one another, the conditions not allowing of a close scrutiny, because there was no order from a general nor any demanding of a password nor, in general, any recovery of reason. [3] Indeed, if the king had remained at the royal pavilion, he also could easily have been slain by the Greeks and the whole war would have reached a speedy conclusion; but as it was, Xerxes had rushed out to the tumult, and the Greeks broke into the pavilion and slew almost to a man all whom they caught there. [4] So long as it was night they wandered throughout the entire camp seeking Xerxes—a reasonable action; but when the day dawned and the entire state of affairs was made manifest, the Persians, observing that the Greeks were few in number, viewed them with contempt; the Persians did not, however, join battle with them face to face, fearing their valour, but they formed on their flanks and rear, and shooting arrows and hurling javelins at them from every direction they slew them to a man. Now as for the soldiers of Leonidas who guarded the passes of Thermopylae, such was the end of life they met.

[11.11] The merits of these men, who would not regard them with wonder? They with one accord did not desert the post to which Greece had assigned them, but gladly offered up their own lives for the common salvation of all Greeks, and preferred to die bravely rather than to live shamefully. The consternation of the Persians also, no one could doubt that they felt it. [2] For what man among the barbarians could have conceived of that which had taken place? Who could have expected that a band of only five hundred ever had the daring to charge against the hundred myriads? Consequently what man of later times might not emulate the valour of those warriors who, finding themselves in the grip of an overwhelming situation, though their bodies were subdued, were not conquered in spirit? These men, therefore, alone of all of whom history records, have in defeat been accorded a greater fame than all others who have won the fairest victories. For judgement must be passed upon brave men, not by the outcome of their actions, but by their purpose; in the one case Fortune is mistress, in the other it is the purpose which wins approval. [3] What man would judge any to be braver than were those Spartans who, though not equal in number to even the thousandth part of the enemy, dared to match their valour against the unbelievable multitudes? Nor had they any hope of overcoming so many myriads, but they believed that in bravery they would surpass all men of former times, and they decided that, although the battle they had to fight was against the barbarians, yet the real contest and the award of valour they were seeking was in competition with all who had ever won admiration for their courage. [4] Indeed they alone of those of whom we have knowledge from time immemorial chose rather to preserve the laws of their state than their own lives, not feeling aggrieved that the greatest perils threatened them, but concluding that the greatest boon for which those who practise valour should pray is the opportunity to play a part in contests of this kind. [5] And one would be justified in believing that it was these men who were more responsible for the common freedom of the Greeks than those who were victorious at a later time in the battles against Xerxes; for when the deeds of these men were called to mind, the Persians were dismayed whereas the Greeks were incited to perform similar courageous exploits. [6] And, speaking in general terms, these men alone of the Greeks down to their time passed into immortality because of their exceptional valour. Consequently not only the writers of history but also many of our poets have celebrated their brave exploits; and one of them is Simonides, the lyric poet, who composed the following encomium 1 in their praise, worthy of their valour:

Of those who perished at Thermopylae
All glorious is the fortune, fair the doom;
Their grave's an altar, ceaseless memory's theirs
Instead of lamentation, and their fate
Is chant of praise. Such winding-sheet as this
Nor mould nor all-consuming time shall waste.
This sepulchre of valiant men has taken
The fair renown of Hellas for its inmate.
And witness is Leonidas, once king
Of Sparta, who hath left behind a crown
Of valour mighty and undying fame.
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Set Text

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