

## Lecture 24: Greeks Tame the Hydra



HIST 213

Spring 2012

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## Chronology of Persian-Greek Interaction

- 550 Ionian Greeks under Persian rule
- 499-4 Ionian Rebellion
- 490 Darius invades Greece
  - Battle of Marathon
- 480 Xerxes Invades Greece
  - Battles of Salamis and Plataea
- 448 Peace Treaty between Persia and Greece
- 407 Persians fund Spartan fleet
- 401 Anabasis of Xenophon
- 396-5 Invasion of Asia Minor by Agesilaos
- 395 Persians fund Social War in Greece
- 350 Philip II of Macedonia calls for “crusade” against Persia

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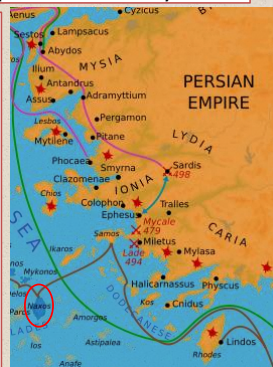
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## Ionian Revolt (499-494 BCE)

- 499 Aristogoras, tyrant of Miletos wants to attack Naxos
  - He can't pay for it
    - so persuades satrap to invade
    - The invasion fails
  - Aristogoras needs to repay Persians
  - leads rebellion against Persian tyrants
  - He goes to Greece to ask for help
    - Sparta refuses
    - Athens sends a fleet




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## Ionian Rebellion Against Persia

- Ionian cities rebel
- 498 Greeks from Ionia attempt to take Satrap capital of Sardis
- fire breaks out
    - Temple of Ahura-Mazda is burned
  - Battle of Ephesus
    - Greeks routed
- 497-5 Persian Counter-Attack
- Cyprus taken
  - Hellespont pacified
- 494 Sack of Miletus
- Satrap installs democracies in place of tyrannies

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## Darius not pleased with the Greeks

- Motives obscure
  - punishment of Athenian aid to Ionians
  - was going to conquer it anyway
- fleet and army prepared to sail to Attica and Eretria
- Approaches former Athenian tyrant Hippias




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## Persian Wars

Three Phases:

**Phase I: 490s**

- 492 Persian fleet destroyed at Athos
- 490 Battle of Marathon

**Phase II 480 BCE**

- August Battle of Thermopylae/Artemisium
- Sept Persians occupy Athens
  - Athens burned
  - Battle of Salamis (naval)
  - Greeks Win

**Phase III 479 BCE**

- 479 Battle of Plataea

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**First Persian Invasion (492)**

Mardonios led the Persian Army across the Hellespont into Thrace and Macedonia

Athens and Eretria are assumed to have been targets

Persian fleet is destroyed off the Chalcidice near Mt. Athos

**Second Persian Invasion (490)**

Darius sends a fleet under Datis bring along **Hippias**, Athenian exile and son of last Athenian tyrant

- 1<sup>st</sup> Naxos
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Eretria on Euboea sacked
- 3<sup>rd</sup> landing at Marathon

Pheidippides an Athenian herald, was sent to Sparta to request help They said "No."

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### Persian triremes at Marathon (computer simulation)




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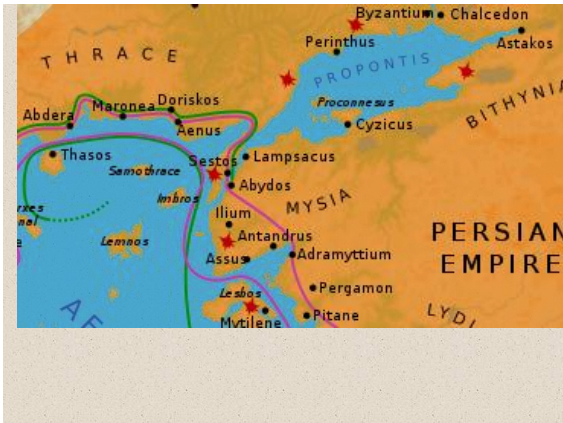
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### Xerxes' Bridge across the Hellespont

Lashes triremes and pentaconters together for pontoon bridge: 2 miles long

- From Abydos 360 ships
- From Sestos 314 ships
- bows facing current
- special anchors designed to hold ships in place
- huge cables of flax and papyrus

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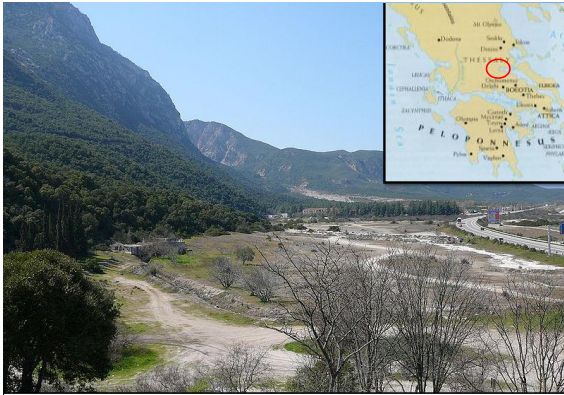
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Modern Thermopylae

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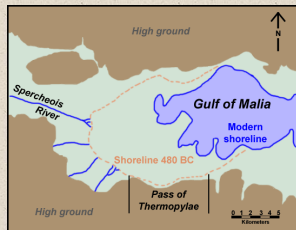
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### Topographical Advantage

- Very small pass between steep cliffs and Gulf of Malia
- Xerxes' huge army would have to stop and pass through




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### Forces at Thermopylae

#### Greeks

- Summer of 480 BCE
- force of 7,000 men marched north to block the pass
  - Lead by Leonidas, Agiad king of Sparta with 300 Spartiate hoplites

#### Persians

- between 200,000-750,000 men
- sources are unreliable
  - esp. Herodotus

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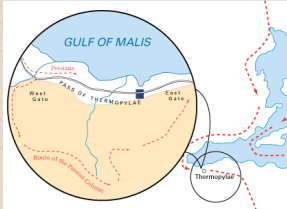
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## Persians now fearful of Greeks

- Greek local named Ephialtes shows Persians a path around pass – “Immortals” sent
- Greeks army goes south
- Leonidas stays with 300 Spartans to give Hellenic army time to escape
- Fulfills prophesy




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## Famous Spartan Quotes

- Μολών λάβει: “having come, take”
- “Eat a hardy breakfast for tonight we dine in Hades.”
- “Then we will fight in the shade.”

*Go tell the Spartans, passerby,  
that here, obedient to their orders, we lie.*

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## Persian advances after Thermopylae

- population of Attica evacuate to Peloponnesus
- Xerxes enters Athens unopposed
  - burns it to the ground in revenge for Sardis
- Persian fleet at Phaleron
- Greek fleet at Salamis
- Xerxes sets up his throne on a bluff over the Bay of Salamis to watch the final destruction of resistance




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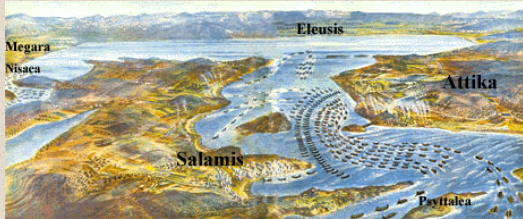
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**Battle of Salamis (Sept. 23 480 BCE)**

- ~366 Allied ships
  - Athens 180
  - Corinth 40
  - Aegina 30
  - Allies (remainder)

- ~800-600 ships
  - Phoenicians
  - Egyptians
  - Ionian Greeks




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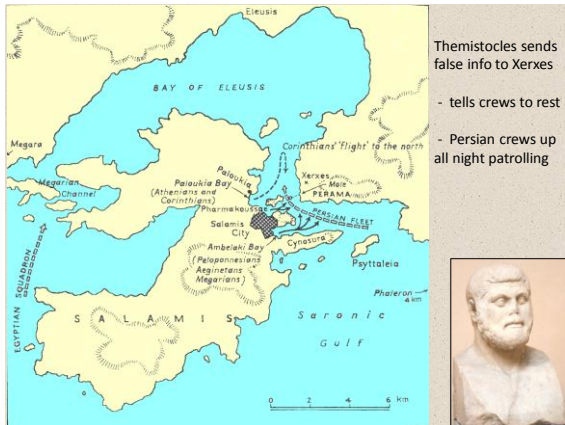
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Themistocles sends false info to Xerxes  
 - tells crews to rest  
 - Persian crews up all night patrolling

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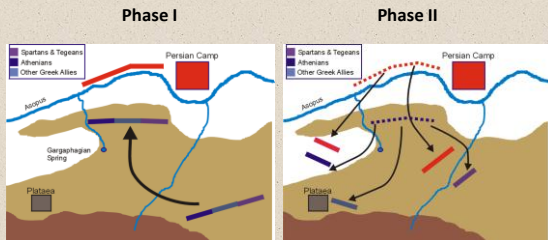
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**Battle of Plataea (479 BCE)**




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## Significance of Plataea

- Persia would never again threaten Greece
  - Rest of army retreats as civil war breaks out
- Gave psychological boost to Greeks
- Victory inspired achievement in arts and science
- indicated (to the Greeks) that the *polis* was the superior political and military system
  - differences in *poleis* would cause problems later

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## The Persians

### Darius II (423-405 BCE)

- changed Persian policy towards Greek affairs
- fund the weaker side and keep them fighting
- served Persian interests
- Artaxerxes II (404-359 BCE)
  - successfully continued this policy
  - oldest son of Darius II

### Prince Cyrus

- 2<sup>nd</sup> son of Darius II
- funded Lysander to defeat Athens
- revolted against his brother Artaxerxes
  - with help from Sparta and other Greek mercenaries
- wins Battle of Cunaxa (401)
  - but is killed

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## Anabasis on Xenophon (401-399 BCE)

- Sparta entered into an alliance with Cyrus
  - claimed the Persian throne against his brother
- Spartan-led army made it to center of Mesopotamia
- Battle of Cunaxa (401 BCE)
  - Cyrus wins battle
  - but is killed
- Spartans have to fight their way back home




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## Significance of Greek-Persian Military interaction

- Demonstrates the superiority of Greek hoplite arms and tactics
- Need for the Shahan-shah to fight with troops
- political weakness of the Persian Empire
  - clan system of Persian power structure
  - relatives fight for the throne
  - satrapies vie for total power
- Persian army organization weakened due to its heterogeneity
  - units fight in large army
  - little incentive or coordination



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