

## HERODOTUS Book VIII: Lines 40-100

~10K words (Read aloud time ~60 min + map pointing)

40. Meanwhile the fleet of the Hellenes after leaving Artemision put in to land at Salamis at the request of the Athenians: and for this reason the Athenians requested them to put in to Salamis, namely in order that they might remove out of Attica to a place of safety their children and their wives, and also deliberate what they would have to do; for in their present case they meant to take counsel afresh, because they had been deceived in their expectation. For they had thought to find the Peloponnesians in full force waiting for the Barbarians in Boeotia; they found however nothing of this, but they were informed on the contrary that the Peloponnesians were fortifying the Isthmus with a wall, valuing above all things the safety of the Peloponnesians and keeping this in guard; and that they were disposed to let all else go. Being informed of this, the Athenians therefore made request of them to put in to Salamis.

41. The others then put in their ships to land at Salamis, but the Athenians went over to their own land; and after their coming they made a proclamation that every one of the Athenians should endeavour to save his children and household as best he could. So the greater number sent them to Troizen, but others to Egina, and others to Salamis, and they were urgent to put these out of danger, both because they desired to obey the oracle and also especially for another reason, which was this:—the Athenians say that a great serpent lives in the temple [25](#) and guards the Acropolis; and they not only say this, but also they set forth for it monthly offerings, as if it were really there; and the offering consists of a honey-cake. This honey-cake, which before used always to be consumed, was at this time left untouched. When the priestess had signified this, the Athenians left the city much more and with greater eagerness than before, seeing that the goddess also had (as they supposed) left the Acropolis. Then when all their belongings had been removed out of danger, they sailed to the encampment of the fleet.

42. When those who came from Artemision had put their ships in to land at Salamis, the remainder of the naval force of the Hellenes, being informed of this, came over gradually to join them [26](#) from Troizen: for they had been ordered beforehand to assemble at Pogon, which is the harbour of the Troizenians. There were assembled accordingly now many more ships than those which were in the sea-fight at Artemision, and from more cities. Over the whole was set as admiral the same man as at Artemision, namely Eurybiades the son of Eurycleides, a Spartan but not of the royal house; the Athenians however supplied by far the greatest number of ships and those which sailed the best.

43. The following were those who joined the muster:—From Peloponnesians the Lacedaemonians furnishing sixteen ships, the Corinthians furnishing the same complement as at Artemision, the Sikyonians furnishing fifteen ships, the Epidaurians ten, the Troizenians five, the men of Hermion [2601](#) three, these all, except the Hermionians, being of Doric and Makedonian [27](#) race and having made their last migration from Erineos and Pindos and the land of Dryopis; [28](#) but the people of Hermion are Dryopians, driven out by Heracles and the Malians from the land which is now called Doris.

44. These were the Peloponnesians who joined the fleet, and those of the mainland outside the Peloponnese were as follows:—the Athenians, furnishing a number larger than all the rest, [29](#) namely one hundred and eighty ships, and serving alone, since the Plataians did not take part with the Athenians in the sea-fight at Salamis, because when the Hellenes were departing from Artemision and come near Chalkis, the Plataians disembarked on the opposite shore of Boeotia and proceeded to the removal of their households. So being engaged in saving these, they had been left behind. As for the Athenians, in the time when the Pelasgians occupied that which is now called Hellas, they were Pelasgians, being named Cranaoi, and in the time of king Kecrops they came to be called Kecropidai; then when Erechtheus had succeeded to his power, they had their name changed to Athenians; and after Ion the son of Xuthos became commander [30](#) of the Athenians, they got the name from him of Ionians.

45. The Megarians furnished the same complement as at Artemision; the Amprakiots came to the assistance of the rest with seven ships, and the Leucadians with three, these being by race Dorians from Corinth.

46. Of the islanders the Eginetans furnished thirty; these had also other ships manned, but with them they were guarding their own land, while with the thirty which sailed best they joined in the sea-fight at Salamis. Now the Eginetans are Dorians from Epidaurus, and their island had formerly the name of Oinone. After the Eginetans came the Chalkidians with the twenty ships which were at Artemision, and the Eretrians with their seven: these are Ionians. Next the Keians, furnishing the same as before and being by race Ionians from Athens. The Naxians furnished four ships, they having been sent out by the citizens of their State to join the Persians, like the other islanders; but neglecting these commands they had come to the Hellenes, urged thereto by Democritos, a man of repute among the citizens and at that time commander of a trireme. Now the Naxians are Ionians coming originally from Athens. The Styrians furnished the same ships as at Artemision, and the men of Kythnos one ship and one fifty-oared galley, these both being Dryopians. Also the Seriphians, the Siphnians and the Melians served with the rest; for they alone of the islanders had not given earth and water to the Barbarian.

47. These all who have been named dwelt inside the land of the Thesprotians and the river Acheron; for the Thesprotians border upon the land of the Amprakiots and Leucadians, and these were they who came from the greatest distance to serve: but of those who dwell outside these limits the men of Croton were the only people who came to the assistance of Hellas in her danger; and these sent one ship, of whom the commander was Phaylos, a man who had three times won victories at the Pythian games. Now the men of Croton are by descent Achaians.

48. All the rest who served in the fleet furnished triremes, but the Melians, Siphnian and Seriphians fifty-oared galleys: the Melians, who are by descent from Lacedemon, furnished two, the Siphnians and Seriphians, who are Ionians from Athens, each one. And the whole number of the ships, apart from the fifty-oared galleys, was three hundred and seventy-eight. [31](#)

49. When the commanders had assembled at Salamis from the States which have been mentioned, they began to deliberate, Eurybiades having proposed that any one who desired it should declare his opinion as to where he thought it most convenient to fight a sea-battle in those regions of which they had command; for Attica had already been let go, and he was now proposing the question about the other regions. And the opinions of the speakers for the most

part agreed that they should sail to the Isthmus and there fight a sea-battle in defence of the Peloponnese, arguing that if they should be defeated in the sea-battle, supposing them to be at Salamis they would be blockaded in an island, where no help would come to them, but at the Isthmus they would be able to land where their own men were.

50. While the commanders from the Peloponnese argued thus, an Athenian had come in reporting that the Barbarians were arrived in Attica and that all the land was being laid waste with fire. For the army which directed its march through Boeotia in company with Xerxes, after it had burnt the city of the Thespians (the inhabitants having left it and gone to the Peloponnese) and that of the Plataians likewise, had now come to Athens and was laying waste everything in those regions. Now he had burnt Thespias [3101](#) and Plataia because he was informed by the Thebans that these were not taking the side of the Medes.

51. So in three months from the crossing of the Hellespont, whence the Barbarians began their march, after having stayed there one month while they crossed over into Europe, they had reached Attica, in the year when Calliades was archon of the Athenians. And they took the lower city, which was deserted, and then they found that there were still a few Athenians left in the temple, either stewards of the temple or needy persons, who had barred the entrance to the Acropolis with doors and with a palisade of timber and endeavoured to defend themselves against the attacks of the enemy, being men who had not gone out to Salamis partly because of their poverty, and also because they thought that they alone had discovered the meaning of the oracle which the Pythian prophetess had uttered to them, namely that the "bulwark of wood" should be impregnable, and supposed that this was in fact the safe refuge according to the oracle, and not the ships.

52. So the Persians taking their post upon the rising ground opposite the Acropolis, which the Athenians call the Hill of Ares, [32](#) proceeded to besiege them in this fashion, that is they put towers round about their arrows and lighted it, and then shot them against the palisade. The Athenians who were besieged continued to defend themselves nevertheless, although they had come to the extremity of distress and their palisade had played them false; nor would they accept proposals for surrender, when the sons of Peisistratos brought them forward: but endeavouring to defend themselves they contrived several contrivances against the enemy, and among the rest they rolled down large stones when the Barbarians approached the gates; so that for a long time Xerxes was in a difficulty, not being able to capture them.

53. In time however there appeared for the Barbarians a way of approach after their difficulties, since by the oracle it was destined that all of Attica which is on the mainland should come to be under the Persians. Thus then it happened that on the front side [33](#) of the Acropolis behind the gates and the way up to the entrance, in a place where no one was keeping guard, nor would one have supposed that any man could ascend by this way, here men ascended by the temple of Aglauros the daughter of Cecrops, although indeed the place is precipitous: and when the Athenians saw that they had ascended up to the Acropolis, some of them threw themselves down from the wall and perished, while others took refuge in the sanctuary [34](#) of the temple. Then those of the Persians who had ascended went first to the gates, and after opening these they proceeded to kill the suppliants; and when all had been slain by them, they plundered the temple and set fire to the whole of the Acropolis.

54. Then Xerxes, having fully taken possession of Athens, sent to Susa a mounted messenger to report to Artabanos the good success which they had. And on the next day after sending the herald he called together the exiles of the Athenians who were accompanying him, and bade them go up to the Acropolis and sacrifice the victims after their own manner; whether it was that he had seen some vision of a dream which caused him to give this command, or whether perchance he had a scruple in his mind because he had set fire to the temple. The Athenian exiles did accordingly that which was commanded them:

55, and the reason why I made mention of this I will here declare:—there is in this Acropolis a temple [35](#) of Erechtheus, who is said to have been born of the Earth, and in this there is an olive-tree and a sea, which (according to the story told by the Athenians) Poseidon and Athene, when they contended for the land, set as witnesses of themselves. Now it happened to this olive-tree to be set on fire with the rest of the temple by the Barbarians; and on the next day after the conflagration those of the Athenians who were commanded by the king to offer sacrifice, saw when they had gone up to the temple that a shoot had run up from the stock of the tree about a cubit in length. These then made report of this.

56. The Hellenes meanwhile at Salamis, when it was announced to them how it had been as regards the Acropolis of the Athenians, were disturbed so greatly that some of the commanders did not even wait for the question to be decided which had been proposed, but began to go hastily to their ships and to put up their sails, meaning to make off with speed; and by those of them who remained behind it was finally decided to fight at sea in defence of the Isthmus. So night came on, and they having been dismissed from the council were going to their ships:

57, and when Themistocles had come to his ship, Mnesiphilos an Athenian asked him what they had resolved; and being informed by him that it had been determined to take out the ships to the Isthmus and fight a battle by sea in defence of the Peloponnese, he said: "Then, if they set sail with the ships from Salamis, thou wilt not fight any more sea-battles at all for the fatherland, for they will all take their way to their several cities and neither Eurybiades nor any other man will be able to detain them or to prevent the fleet from being dispersed: and Hellas will perish by reason of evil counsels. But if there by any means, go thou and try to unsettle that which has been resolved, if perchance thou mayest persuade Eurybiades to change his plans, so as to stay here."

58. This advice very much commended itself to Themistocles; and without making any answer he went to the ship of Eurybiades. Having come thither he said that he desired to communicate to him a matter which concerned the common good; and Eurybiades bade him come into his ship and speak, if he desired to say anything. Then Themistocles sitting down beside him repeated to him all those things which he had heard Mnesiphilos say, making as if they were his own thoughts, and adding to them many others; until at last by urgent request he persuaded him to come out of his ship and gather the commanders to the council.

59. So when they were gathered together, before Eurybiades proposed the discussion of the things for which he had assembled the commanders, Themistocles spoke with much vehemence [36](#) being very eager to gain his end; and as he was speaking, the Corinthian commander, Adeimantos the son of Okytos, said: "Themistocles, at the games those who stand

forth for the contest before the due time are beaten with rods." He justifying himself said: "Yes, but those who remain behind are not crowned."

60. At that time he made answer mildly to the Corinthian; and to Eurybiades he said not now any of those things which he had said before, to the effect that if they should set sail from Salamis they would disperse in different directions; for it was not seemly for him to bring charges against the allies in their presence: but he held to another way of reasoning, saying: "Now it is in thy power to save Hellas, if thou wilt follow my advice, which is to stay here and here to fight a sea-battle, and if thou wilt not follow the advice of those among these men who bid thee remove the ships to the Isthmus. For hear both ways, and then set them in comparison. If thou engage battle at the Isthmus, thou wilt fight in an open sea, into which it is by no means convenient for us that we go to fight, seeing that we have ships which are heavier and fewer in number than those of the enemy. Then secondly thou wilt give up to destruction Salamis and Megara and Egina, even if we have success in all else; for with their fleet will come also the land-army, and thus thou wilt thyself lead them to the Peloponnese and wilt risk the safety of all Hellas. If however thou shalt do as I say, thou wilt find therein all the advantages which I shall tell thee of:—in the first place by engaging in a narrow place with few ships against many, if the fighting has that issue which it is reasonable to expect, we shall have very much the better; for to fight a sea-fight in a narrow space is for our advantage, but to fight in a wide open space is for theirs. Then again Salamis will be preserved, whither our children and our wives have been removed for safety; and moreover there is this also secured thereby, to which ye are most of all attached, namely that by remaining here thou wilt fight in defence of the Peloponnese as much as if the fight were at the Isthmus; and thou wilt not lead the enemy to Peloponnese, if thou art wise. Then if that which I expect come to pass and we gain a victory with our ships, the Barbarians will not come to you at the Isthmus nor will they advance further than Attica, but they will retire in disorder; and we shall be the gainers by the preservation of Megara and Egina and Salamis, at which place too an oracle tells us that we shall get the victory over our enemies. [37](#) Now when men take counsel reasonably for themselves, reasonable issues are wont as a rule to come, but if they do not take counsel reasonably, then God is not wont generally to attach himself to the judgment of men."

61. When Themistocles thus spoke, the Corinthian Adeimantos inveighed against him for the second time, bidding him to be silent because he had no native land, and urging Eurybiades not to put to the vote the proposal of one who was a citizen of no city; for he said that Themistocles might bring opinions before the council if he could show a city belonging to him, but otherwise not. This objection he made against him because Athens had been taken and was held by the enemy. Then Themistocles said many evil things of him and of the Corinthians both, and declared also that he himself and his countrymen had in truth a city and a land larger than that of the Corinthians, so long as they had two hundred ships fully manned; for none of the Hellenes would be able to repel the Athenians if they came to fight against them.

62. Signifying this he turned then to Eurybiades and spoke yet more urgently: "If thou wilt remain here, and remaining here wilt show thyself a good man, well; but if not, thou wilt bring about the overthrow of Hellas, for upon the ships depends all our power in the war. Nay, but do as I advise. If, however, thou shalt not do so, we shall forthwith take up our households and

voyage to Siris in Italy, which is ours already of old and the oracles say that it is destined to be colonised by us; and ye, when ye are left alone and deprived of allies such as we are, will remember my words."

63. When Themistocles thus spoke, Eurybiades was persuaded to change his mind; and, as I think, he changed his mind chiefly from fear lest the Athenians should depart and leave them, if he should take the ships to the Isthmus; for if the Athenians left them and departed, the rest would be no longer able to fight with the enemy. He chose then this counsel, to stay in that place and decide matters there by a sea-fight.

64. Thus those at Salamis, after having skirmished with one another in speech, were making preparations for a sea-fight there, since Eurybiades had so determined: and as day was coming on, at the same time when the sun rose there was an earthquake felt both on the land and on the sea: and they determined to pray to the gods and to call upon the sons of Aiacos to be their helpers. And as they had determined, so also they did; for when they had prayed to all the gods, they called Ajax and Telamon to their help from Salamis, where the fleet was, [38](#) and sent a ship to Egina to bring Aiacos himself and the rest of the sons of Aiacos.

65. Moreover Dicaeos the son of Theokydes, an Athenian, who was an exile and had become of great repute among the Medes at this time, declared that when the Attic land was being ravaged by the land-army of Xerxes, having been deserted by the Athenians, he happened then to be in company with Demaratos the Lacedemonian in the Thriasian plain; and he saw a cloud of dust going up from Eleusis, as if made by a company of about thirty thousand men, and they wondered at the cloud of dust, by what men it was caused. Then forthwith they heard a sound of voices, and Dicaeos perceived that the sound was the mystic cry *lacchos*; but Demaratos, having no knowledge of the sacred rites which are done at Eleusis, asked him what this was that uttered the sound, and he said: "Demaratos, it cannot be but that some great destruction is about to come to the army of the king: for as to this, it is very manifest, seeing that Attica is deserted, that this which utters the sound is of the gods, and that it is going from Eleusis to help the Athenians and their allies: if then it shall come down in the Peloponnese, there is danger for the king himself and for the army which is upon the mainland, but if it shall direct its course towards the ships which are at Salamis, the king will be in danger of losing his fleet. This feast the Athenians celebrate every year to the Mother and the Daughter; [39](#) and he that desires it, both of them and of the other Hellenes, is initiated in the mysteries; and the sound of voices which thou hearest is the cry *lacchos* which they utter at this feast." To this Demaratos said: "Keep silence and tell not this tale to any other man; for if these words of thine be reported to the king, thou wilt surely lose thy head, and neither I nor any other man upon earth will be able to save thee: but keep thou quiet, and about this expedition the gods will provide." He then thus advised, and after the cloud of dust and the sound of voices there came a mist which was borne aloft and carried towards Salamis to the camp of the Hellenes: and thus they learnt (said he) that the fleet of Xerxes was destined to be destroyed. Such was the report made by Dicaeos the son of Theodykes, appealing to Demaratos and others also as witnesses.

66. Meanwhile those who were appointed to serve in the fleet of Xerxes, having gazed in Trachis upon the disaster of the Lacedemonians and having passed over from thence to Histiaia, after staying three days sailed through Euripos, and in other three days they had

reached Phaleron. And, as I suppose, they made their attack upon Athens not fewer in number both by land and sea than when they had arrived at Sepias and at Thermopylai: for against those of them who perished by reason of the storm and those who were slain at Thermopylai and in the sea-fights at Artemision, I will set those who at that time were not yet accompanying the king, the Malians, Dorians, Locrians, and Boeotians (who accompanied him in a body, except the Thespians and Plataians), and moreover those of Carystos, Andros, and Tenos, with all the other islanders except the five cities of which I mentioned the names before; for the more the Persian advanced towards the centre of Hellas, the more nations accompanied him.

67. So then, when all these had come to Athens except the Parians (now the Parians had remained behind at Kythnos waiting to see how the war would turn out),—when all the rest, I say, had come to Phaleron, then Xerxes himself came down to the ships desiring to visit them and to learn the opinions of those who sailed in them: and when he had come and was set in a conspicuous place, then those who were despots of their own nations or commanders of divisions being sent for came before him from their ships, and took their seats as the king had assigned rank to each one, first the king of Sidon, then he of Tyre, and after them the rest: and when they were seated in due order, Xerxes sent Mardonios and inquired, making trial of each one, whether he should fight a battle by sea.

68. So when Mardonios went round asking them, beginning with the king of Sidon, the others gave their opinions all to the same effect, advising him to fight a battle by sea, but Artemisia spoke these words:—(a) "Tell the king I pray thee, Mardonios, that I, who have proved myself not to be the worst in the sea-fights which have been fought near Euboea, and have displayed deeds not inferior to those of others, speak to him thus: Master, it is right that I set forth the opinion which I really have, and say that which I happen to think best for thy cause: and this I say,—spare thy ships and do not make a sea-fight; for the men are as much stronger than thy men by sea, as men are stronger than women. And why must thou needs run the risk of sea-battles? Hast thou not Athens in thy possession, for the sake of which thou didst set forth on thy march, and also the rest of Hellas? and no man stands in thy way to resist, but those who did stand against thee came off as it was fitting that they should. (b) Now the manner in which I think the affairs of thy adversaries will have their issue, I will declare. If thou do not hasten to make a sea-fight, but keep thy ships here by the land, either remaining here thyself or even advancing on to the Peloponnese, that which thou hast come to do, O master, will easily be effected; for the Hellenes are not able to hold out against thee for any long time, but thou wilt soon disperse them and they will take flight to their several cities: since neither have they provisions with them in this island, as I am informed, nor is it probable that if thou shalt march thy land-army against the Peloponnese, they who have come from thence will remain still; for these will have no care to fight a battle in defence of Athens. (c) If however thou hasten to fight forthwith, I fear that damage done to the fleet may ruin the land-army also. Moreover, O king, consider also this, that the servants of good men are apt to grow bad, but those of bad men good; and thou, who art of all men the best, hast bad servants, namely those who are reckoned as allies, Egyptians and Cyprians and Kilikians and Pamphylians, in whom there is no profit."

69. When she thus spoke to Mardonios, those who were friendly to Artemisia were grieved at her words, supposing that she would suffer some evil from the king because she urged him not

to fight at sea; while those who had envy and jealousy of her, because she had been honoured above all the allies, were rejoiced at the opposition, [40](#) supposing that she would now be ruined. When however the opinions were reported to Xerxes, he was greatly pleased with the opinion of Artemisia; and whereas even before this he thought her excellent, he commended her now yet more. Nevertheless he gave orders to follow the advice of the greater number, thinking that when they fought by Euboea they were purposely slack, because he was not himself present with them, whereas now he had made himself ready to look on while they fought a sea-battle.

70. So when they passed the word to put out to sea, they brought their ships out to Salamis and quietly ranged themselves along the shore in their several positions. At that time the daylight was not sufficient for them to engage battle, for night had come on; but they made their preparations to fight on the following day. Meanwhile the Hellenes were possessed by fear and dismay, especially those who were from Peloponnese: and these were dismayed because remaining in Salamis they were to fight a battle on behalf of the land of the Athenians, and being defeated they would be cut off from escape and blockaded in an island, leaving their own land unguarded. And indeed the land-army of the Barbarians was marching forward during that very night towards the Peloponnese.

71. Yet every means had been taken that the Barbarians might not be able to enter Peloponnesus by land: for as soon as the Peloponnesians heard that Leonidas and his company had perished at Thermopylai, they came together quickly from the cities and took post at the Isthmus, and over them was set as commander Cleombrotos, the son of Anaxandrides and brother of Leonidas. These being posted at the Isthmus had destroyed the Skironian way, and after this (having so determined in counsel with one another) they began to build a wall across the Isthmus; and as they were many myriads [41](#) and every man joined in the work, the work proceeded fast; for stones and bricks and pieces of timber and baskets full of sand were carried to it continually, and they who had thus come to help paused not at all in their work either by night or by day.

72. Now those of the Hellenes who came in full force to the Isthmus to help their country were these,—the Lacedaemonians, the Arcadians of every division, the Eleians, Corinthians, Sikyonians, Epidaurians, Phliasians, Troizenians and Hermionians. These were they who came to the help of Hellas in her danger and who had apprehension for her, while the rest of the Peloponnesians showed no care: and the Olympic and Carneian festivals had by this time gone by.

73. Now Peloponnesus is inhabited by seven races; and of these, two are natives of the soil and are settled now in the place where they dwelt of old, namely the Arcadians and the Kynurians; and one race, that of the Achaians, though it did not remove from the Peloponnese, yet removed in former time from its own land and dwells now in that which was not its own. The remaining races, four in number, have come in from without, namely the Dorians, Aitolians, Dryopians and Lemnians. Of the Dorians there are many cities and of great renown; of the Aitolians, Elis alone; of the Dryopians, Hermion [42](#) and Asine, which latter is opposite Cardamyle in the Laconian land; and of the Lemnians, all the Paroreatai. The Kynurians, who are natives of the soil, seem alone to be Ionians, but they have become Dorians completely because they are subject to the Argives and by lapse of time, being originally citizens of Orneai



or the dwellers in the country round Orneai. [43](#) Of these seven nations the remaining cities, except those which I enumerated just now, stood aside and did nothing; and if one may be allowed to speak freely, in thus standing aside they were in fact taking the side of the Medes.

74. Those at the Isthmus were struggling with the labour which I have said, since now they were running a course in which their very being was at stake, and they did not look to have any brilliant success with their ships: while those who were at Salamis, though informed of this work, were yet dismayed, not fearing so much for themselves as for Peloponnesus. For some time then they spoke of it in private, one man standing by another, and they marvelled at the ill-counsel of Eurybiades; but at last it broke out publicly. A meeting accordingly was held, and much was spoken about the same points as before, some saying that they ought to sail away to Peloponnesus and run the risk in defence of that, and not stay and fight for a land which had been captured by the enemy, while the Athenians, Eginetans and Megarians urged that they should stay there and defend themselves.

75. Then Themistocles, when his opinion was like to be defeated by the Peloponnesians, secretly went forth from the assembly, and having gone out he sent a man to the encampment of the Medes in a boat, charging him with that which he must say: this man's name was Sikinnos, and he was a servant of Themistocles and tutor to his children; and after these events Themistocles entered him as a Thespian citizen, when the Thespians were admitting new citizens, and made him a wealthy man. He at this time came with a boat and said to the commanders of the Barbarians these words: "The commander of the Athenians sent me privately without the knowledge of the other Hellenes (for, as it chanced, he is disposed to the cause of the king, and desires rather that your side should gain the victory than that of the Hellenes), to inform you that the Hellenes are planning to take flight, having been struck with dismay; and now it is possible for you to execute a most noble work, if ye do not permit them to flee away: for they are not of one mind with one another and they will not stand against you in fight, but ye shall see them fighting a battle by sea with one another, those who are disposed to your side against those who are not."

76. He then having signified to them this, departed out of the way; and they, thinking that the message deserved credit, landed first a large number of Persians in the small island of Psyttaleia, which lies between Salamis and the mainland; and then, as midnight came on, they put out the Western wing of their fleet to sea, circling round towards Salamis, and also those stationed about Keos and Kynosura put out their ships to sea; and they occupied all the passage with their ships as far as Munychia. And for this reason they put out their ships, namely in order that the Hellenes might not even be permitted to get away, but being cut off in Salamis might pay the penalty for the contests at Artemision: and they disembarked men of the Persians on the small island called Psyttaleia for this reason, namely that when the fight should take place, these might save the men of one side and destroy those of the other, since there especially it was likely that the men and the wrecks of ships would be cast up on shore, for the island lay in the way of the sea-fight which was to be. These things they did in silence, that the enemy might not have information of them.

77. They then were making their preparations thus in the night without having taken any sleep at all: and with regard to oracles, I am not able to make objections against them that they are

not true, for I do not desire to attempt to overthrow the credit of them when they speak clearly, looking at such matters as these which here follow:

*"But when with ships they shall join the sacred strand of the goddess,  
Artemis golden-sword-girded, and thee, wave-washed Kynosura,  
Urged by a maddening hope, [44](#) having given rich Athens to plunder,  
Then shall Justice divine quell Riot, of Insolence first-born, [45](#)  
Longing to overthrow all things [46](#) and terribly panting for bloodshed:  
Brass shall encounter with brass, and Ares the sea shall empurple,  
Tinging its waves with the blood: then a day of freedom for Hellas  
Cometh from wide-seeing Zeus [47](#) and from Victory, lady and mother." [48](#)*

Looking to such things as this, and when Bakis speaks so clearly, I do not venture myself to make any objections about oracles, nor can I admit them from others.

78. Now between the commanders that were at Salamis there came to be great contention of speech and they did not yet know that the Barbarians were surrounding them with their ships, but they thought that they were still in their place as they saw them disposed in the day.

79. Then while the commanders were engaged in strife, there came over from Egina Aristides the son of Lysimachos, an Athenian who had been ostracised by the people, a man whom I hold (according to that which I hear of his character) to have been the best and most upright of all Athenians. This man came into the council and called forth Themistocles, who was to him not a friend, but an enemy to the last degree; but because of the greatness of the present troubles he let those matters be forgotten and called him forth, desiring to communicate with him. Now he had heard beforehand that the Peloponnesians were pressing to take the ships away to the Isthmus. So when Themistocles came forth to him, Aristides spoke these words: "Both at other times when occasion arises, and also especially at this time we ought to carry on rivalry as to which of us shall do more service to our country. And I tell thee now that it is indifferent whether the Peloponnesians say many words or few about sailing away from hence; for having been myself an eye-witness I tell thee that now not even if the Corinthians and Eurybiades himself desire to sail out, will they be able; for we are encompassed round by the enemy. Go thou in then, and signify this to them."

80. He made answer as follows: "Thou advisest very well, [49](#) and also the news which thou hast brought is good, since thou art come having witnessed with thine own eyes that which I desired might come to pass: for know that this which is being done by the Medes is of my suggestion; because, when the Hellenes would not come to a battle of their own will, it was necessary to bring them over to us against their will. Do thou however, since thou art come bearing good news, thyself report it to them; for if I say these things, I shall be thought to speak that which I have myself invented, and I shall not persuade them, but they will think that the Barbarians are not doing so. Do thou thyself however come forward to speak, and declare to them how things are; and when thou hast declared this, if they are persuaded, that will be the best thing, but if this is not credible to them, it will be the same thing so far as concerns us, for they will no longer be able to take to flight, if we are encompassed on all sides, as thou sayest."

81. Aristides accordingly came forward and told them this, saying that he had come from Egina and had with difficulty escaped without being perceived by those who were blockading

them; for the whole encampment of the Hellenes was encompassed by the ships of Xerxes; and he counselled them to get ready to defend themselves. He then having thus spoken retired, and among them again there arose dispute, for the greater number of the commanders did not believe that which was reported to them:

82. and while these were doubting, there came a trireme manned by Tenians, deserting from the enemy, of which the commander was Panaitios the son of Sosimenes, which brought them the whole truth. For this deed the Tenians were inscribed at Delphi on the tripod among those who had conquered the Barbarians. With the ship which deserted at Salamis and the Lemnian ship which deserted before and came to Artemision, the naval force of the Hellenes was completed to the number of three hundred and eighty ships, for before this two ships were yet wanting to make up this number.

83. The Hellenes then, since they believed that which was said by the Tenians, were preparing for a sea-fight: and as the dawn appeared, they made an assembly of those who fought on board the ships [50](#) and addressed them, Themistocles making a speech which was eloquent beyond the rest; and the substance of it was to set forth all that is better as opposed to that which is worse, of the several things which arise in the nature and constitution of man; and having exhorted them to choose the better, [51](#) and thus having wound up his speech, he bade them embark in their ships. These then proceeded to embark, and there came in meanwhile the trireme from Egina which had gone away to bring the sons of Aiacos.

84. Then the Hellenes put out all their ships, and while they were putting out from shore, the Barbarians attacked them forthwith. Now the other Hellenes began backing their ships and were about to run them aground, but Ameinias of Pallene, an Athenian, put forth with his ship and charged one of the enemy; and his ship being entangled in combat and the men not being able to get away, the others joined in the fight to assist Ameinias. The Athenians say that the beginning of the battle was made thus, but the Eginetans say that the ship which went away to Egina to bring the sons of Aiacos was that which began the fight. It is also reported that an apparition of a woman was seen by them, and that having appeared she encouraged them to the fight so that the whole of the army of the Hellenes heard it, first having reproached them in these words: "Madmen, [52](#) how far will ye yet back your ships?"

85. Opposite the Athenians had been ranged the Phenicians, for these occupied the wing towards Eleusis and the West, and opposite the Lacedemonians were the Ionians, who occupied the wing which extended to the East and to Piræus. Of them however a few were purposely slack in the fight according to the injunctions of Themistocles, [53](#) but the greater number were not so. I might mention now the names of many captains of ships who destroyed ships of the Hellenes, but I will make no use of their names except in the case of Theomestor, the son of Androdamas and Phylacos the son of Histiaios, of Samos both: and for this reason I make mention of these and not of the rest, because Theomestor on account of this deed became despot of Samos, appointed by the Persians, and Phylacos was recorded as a benefactor of the king and received much land as a reward. Now the benefactors of the king are called in the Persian tongue *orosangai*.

86. Thus it was with these; but the greater number of their ships were disabled at Salamis, being destroyed some by the Athenians and others by the Eginetans: for since the Hellenes

fought in order and ranged in their places, while the Barbarians were no longer ranged in order nor did anything with design, it was likely that there would be some such result as in fact followed. Yet on this day they surpassed themselves much more than when they fought by Euboea, every one being eager and fearing Xerxes, and each man thinking that the king was looking especially at him.

87. As regards the rest I cannot speak of them separately, or say precisely how the Barbarians or the Hellenes individually contended in the fight; but with regard to Artemisia that which happened was this, whence she gained yet more esteem than before from the king.—When the affairs of the king had come to great confusion, at this crisis a ship of Artemisia was being pursued by an Athenian ship; and as she was not able to escape, for in front of her were other ships of her own side, while her ship, as it chanced, was furthest advanced towards the enemy, she resolved what she would do, and it proved also much to her advantage to have done so. While she was being pursued by the Athenian ship she charged with full career against a ship of her own side manned by Calyndians and in which the king of the Calyndians Damasithyros was embarked. Now, even though it be true that she had had some strife with him before, while they were still about the Hellespont, yet I am not able to say whether she did this by intention, or whether the Calyndian ship happened by chance to fall in her way. Having charged against it however and sunk it, she enjoyed good fortune and got for herself good in two ways; for first the captain of the Athenian ship, when he saw her charge against a ship manned by Barbarians, turned away and went after others, supposing that the ship of Artemisia was either a Hellenic ship or was deserting from the Barbarians and fighting for the Hellenes,

88,—first, I say, it was her fortune to have this, namely to escape and not suffer destruction; and then secondly it happened that though she had done mischief, she yet gained great reputation by this thing with Xerxes. For it is said that the king looking on at the fight perceived that her ship had charged the other; and one of those present said: "Master, dost thou see Artemisia, how well she is fighting, and how she sank even now a ship of the enemy?" He asked whether this was in truth the deed of Artemisia, and they said that it was; for (they declared) they knew very well the sign of her ship: and that which was destroyed they thought surely was one of the enemy; for besides other things which happened fortunately for her, as I have said, there was this also, namely that not one of the crew of the Calyndian ship survived to become her accuser. And Xerxes in answer to that which was said to him is reported to have uttered these words: "My men have become women, and my women men." Thus it is said that Xerxes spoke.

89. And meanwhile in this struggle there was slain the commander Ariabignes, son of Dareios and brother of Xerxes, and there were slain too many others of note of the Persians and Medes and also of the allies; and of the Hellenes on their part a few; for since they knew how to swim, those whose ships were destroyed and who were not slain in hand-to-hand conflict swam over to Salamis; but of the Barbarians the greater number perished in the sea, not being able to swim. And when the first ships turned to flight, then it was that the largest number perished, for those who were stationed behind, while endeavouring to pass with their ships to the front in order that they also might display some deed of valour for the king to see, ran into the ships of their own side as they fled.

90. It happened also in the course of this confusion that some of the Phenicians, whose ships had been destroyed, came to the king and accused the Ionians, saying that by means of them their ships had been lost, and that they had been traitors to the cause. Now it so came about that not only the commanders of the Ionians did not lose their lives, but the Phenicians who accused them received a reward such as I shall tell. While these men were yet speaking thus, a Samothrakian ship charged against an Athenian ship: and as the Athenian ship was being sunk by it, an Eginetan ship came up against the Samothrakian vessel and ran it down. Then the Samothrakians, being skilful javelin-throwers, by hurling cleared off the fighting-men from the ship which had wrecked theirs and then embarked upon it and took possession of it. This event saved the Ionians from punishment; for when Xerxes saw that they had performed a great exploit, he turned to the Phenicians (for he was exceedingly vexed and disposed to find fault with all) and bade cut off their heads, in order that they might not, after having been cowards themselves, accuse others who were better men than they. For whensoever Xerxes (sitting just under the mountain opposite Salamis, which is called Aigaleos) saw any one of his own side display a deed of valour in the sea-fight, he inquired about him who had done it, and the scribes recorded the name of the ship's captain with that of his father and the city from whence he came. Moreover also Ariaramnes, a Persian who was present, shared [54](#) the fate of the Phenicians, being their friend. They [55](#) then proceeded to deal with the Phenicians.

91. In the meantime, as the Barbarians turned to flight and were sailing out towards Phaleron, the Eginetans waited for them in the passage and displayed memorable actions: for while the Athenians in the confused tumult were disabling both those ships which resisted and those which were fleeing, the Eginetans were destroying those which attempted to sail away; and whenever any escaped the Athenians, they went in full course and fell among the Eginetans.

92. Then there met one another the ship of Themistocles, which was pursuing a ship of the enemy, and that of Polycritos the son of Crios the Eginetan. This last had charged against a ship of Sidon, the same that had taken the Eginetan vessel which was keeping watch in advance at Skiathos, [56](#) and in which sailed Pytheas the son of Ischenoös, whom the Persians kept in their ship, all cut to pieces as he was, making a marvel of his valour. The Sidonian ship then was captured bearing with it this man as well as the Persians of whom I spoke, so that Pytheas thus came safe to Egina. Now when Polycritos looked at the Athenian vessel he recognised when he saw it the sign of the admiral's ship, and shouting out he addressed Themistocles with mockery about the accusation brought against the Eginetans of taking the side of the Medes, [57](#) and reproached him. This taunt Polycritos threw out against Themistocles after he had charged against the ship of Sidon. And meanwhile those Barbarians whose ships had escaped destruction fled and came to Phaleron to be under cover of the land-army.

93. In this sea-fight the Eginetans were of all the Hellenes the best reported of, and next to them the Athenians; and of the individual men the Eginetan Polycritos and the Athenians Eumenes of Anagyrus and Ameinias of Pallene, the man who had pursued after Artemisia. Now if he had known that Artemisia was sailing in this ship, he would not have ceased until either he had taken her or had been taken himself; for orders had been given to the Athenian captains, and moreover a prize was offered of ten thousand drachmas for the man who should take her alive; since they thought it intolerable that a woman should make an expedition against Athens.

She then, as has been said before, had made her escape; and the others also, whose ships had escaped destruction, were at Phaleron.

94. As regards Adeimantos the commander of the Corinthians, the Athenians say that forthwith at the beginning when the ships were engaging in the fight, being struck with panic and terror he put up his sails and fled away; and the Corinthians, when they saw the admiral's ship fleeing, departed likewise: and after this, as the story goes, when they came in their flight opposite to the temple of Athene Skiras in the land of Salamis, there fell in with them by divine guidance a light vessel, [58](#) which no one was ever found to have sent, and which approached the Corinthians at a time when they knew nothing of that which was happening with the fleet. And by this it is conjectured [59](#) that the matter was of the Deity; for when they came near to the ships, the men in the light vessel said these words: "Adeimantos, thou hast turned thy ships away and hast set forth to flee, deserting the cause of the Hellenes, while they are in truth gaining a victory and getting the better of their foes as much as they desired." When they said this, since Adeimantos doubted of it, they spoke a second time and said that they might be taken as hostages and slain, if the Hellenes should prove not to be gaining the victory. Then he turned his ship back, he and the others with him, and they reached the camp when the work was finished. Such is the report spread by the Athenians against these: the Corinthians however do not allow this to be so, but hold that they were among the first in the sea-fight; and the rest of Hellas also bears witness on their side.

95. Aristeides moreover the son of Lysimachos, the Athenian, of whom I made mention also shortly before this as a very good man, he in this tumult which had arisen about Salamis did as follows:—taking with him a number of the hoplites of Athenian race who had been ranged along the shore of the land of Salamis, with them he disembarked on the island of Psyttaleia; and these slew all the Persians who were in this islet.

96. When the sea-fight had been broken off, the Hellenes towed in to Salamis so many of the wrecks as chanced to be still about there, and held themselves ready for another sea-fight, expecting that the king would yet make use of the ships which remained unhurt; but many of the wrecks were taken by the West Wind and borne to that strand in Attica which is called Colias; so as to fulfil [60](#) not only all that other oracle which was spoken about this sea-fight by Bakis and Musaios, but also especially, with reference to the wrecks cast up here, that which had been spoken in an oracle many years before these events by Lysistratos, an Athenian who uttered oracles, and which had not been observed by any of the Hellenes:

*"Then shall the Colian women with firewood of oars roast barley." [61](#)*

This was destined to come to pass after the king had marched away.

97. When Xerxes perceived the disaster which had come upon him, he feared lest some one of the Ionians should suggest to the Hellenes, or they should themselves form the idea, to sail to the Hellespont and break up the bridges; and so he might be cut off in Europe and run the risk of perishing utterly: therefore he began to consider about taking flight. He desired however that his intention should not be perceived either by the Hellenes or by those of his own side; therefore he attempted to construct a mole going across to Salamis, and he bound together Phœnician merchant vessels in order that they might serve him both for a bridge and a wall, and

made preparations for fighting as if he were going to have another battle by sea. Seeing him do so, all the rest made sure that he had got himself ready in earnest and intended to stay and fight; but Mardonios did not fail to perceive the true meaning of all these things, being by experience very well versed in his way of thinking.

98. While Xerxes was doing thus, he sent a messenger to the Persians, to announce the calamity which had come upon them. Now there is nothing mortal which accomplishes a journey with more speed than these messengers, so skilfully has this been invented by the Persians: for they say that according to the number of days of which the entire journey consists, so many horses and men are set at intervals, each man and horse appointed for a day's journey. These neither snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness of night prevents from accomplishing each one the task proposed to him, with the very utmost speed. The first then rides and delivers the message with which he is charged to the second, and the second to the third; and after that it goes through them handed from one to the other, [62](#) as in the torch-race among the Hellenes, which they perform for Hephaistos. This kind of running of their horses the Persians call *angareion*.

99. The first message then which came to Susa, announcing that Xerxes had Athens in his possession, so greatly rejoiced the Persians who had been left behind, that they strewed all the ways with myrtle boughs and offered incense perpetually, and themselves continued in sacrifices and feasting. The second message however, which came to them after this, so greatly disturbed them that they all tore their garments and gave themselves up to crying and lamentation without stint, laying the blame upon Mardonios: and this the Persians did not so much because they were grieved about the ships, as because they feared for Xerxes himself.

100. As regards the Persians this went on for all the time which intervened, until the coming of Xerxes himself caused them to cease: and Mardonios seeing that Xerxes was greatly troubled by reason of the sea-fight, and suspecting that he was meaning to take flight from Athens, considered with regard to himself that he would have to suffer punishment for having persuaded the king to make an expedition against Hellas, and that it was better for him to run the risk of either subduing Hellas or ending his own life honourably, placing his safety in suspense for a great end, [63](#) though his opinion was rather that he would subdue Hellas;—he reckoned up these things, I say, and addressed his speech to the king as follows: "Master, be not thou grieved, nor feel great trouble on account of this thing which has come to pass; for it is not upon a contest of timbers that all our fortunes depend, but of men and of horses: and none of these who suppose now that all has been achieved by them will attempt to disembark from the ships and stand against thee, nor will any in this mainland do so; but those who did stand against us paid the penalty. If therefore thou thinkest this good to do, let us forthwith attempt the Peloponnese, or if thou thinkest good to hold back, we may do that. Do not despond however, for there is no way of escape for the Hellenes to avoid being thy slaves, after they have first given an account of that which they did to thee both now and at former times. Thus it were best to do; but if thou hast indeed resolved to retire thyself and to withdraw thy army, I have another counsel to offer for that case too. Do not thou, O king, let the Persians be an object of laughter to the Hellenes; for none of thy affairs have suffered by means of the Persians, nor wilt thou be able to mention any place where we proved ourselves cowards: but if Phenicians or Egyptians or Cyprians or Kilikians proved themselves cowards, the calamity which followed does not

belong to the Persians in any way. Now therefore, since it is not the Persians who are guilty towards thee, follow my counsel. If thou hast determined not to remain here, retire thou to thine own abode, taking with thee the main body of the army, and it must then be for me to deliver over to thee Hellas reduced to subjection, choosing for this purpose thirty myriads [64](#) from the army."