

## HERODOTUS Book IX: Lines 1-79

~15K words (Read aloud time ~90 min + map pointing)

1. Mardonios, when Alexander had returned back and had signified to him that which was said by the Athenians, set forth from Thessaly and began to lead his army with all diligence towards Athens: and to whatever land he came, he took up with him the people of that land. The leaders of Thessaly meanwhile did not repent of all that which had been done already, but on the contrary they urged on the Persian yet much more; and Thorax of Larissa had joined in escorting Xerxes in his flight and at this time he openly offered Mardonios passage to invade Hellas..

2. Then when the army in its march came to Boeotia, the Thebans endeavoured to detain Mardonios, and counselled him saying that there was no region more convenient for him to have his encampment than that; and they urged him not to advance further, but to sit down there and endeavour to subdue to himself the whole of Hellas without fighting: for to overcome the Hellenes by open force when they were united, as at the former time they were of one accord together, [1](#) was a difficult task even for the whole world combined, "but," they proceeded, "if thou wilt do that which we advise, with little labour thou wilt have in thy power all their plans of resistance. [2](#) Send money to the men who have power in their cities, and thus sending thou wilt divide Hellas into two parties: after that thou wilt with ease subdue by the help of thy party those who are not inclined to thy side."

3. Thus they advised, but he did not follow their counsel; for there had instilled itself into him a great desire to take Athens for the second time, partly from obstinacy [3](#) and partly because he meant to signify to the king in Sardis that he was in possession of Athens by beacon-fires through the islands. However he did not even at this time find the Athenians there when he came to Attica; but he was informed that the greater number were either in Salamis or in the ships, and he captured the city finding it deserted. Now the capture of the city by the king had taken place ten months before the later expedition of Mardonios against it.

4. When Mardonios had come to Athens, he sent to Salamis Morychides a man of the Hellespont, bearing the same proposals as Alexander the Macedonian had brought over to the Athenians. These he sent for the second time, being aware beforehand that the dispositions of the Athenians were not friendly, but hoping that they would give way and leave their obstinacy, since the Attic land had been captured by the enemy and was in his power..

5. For this reason he sent Morychides to Salamis; and he came before the Council [4](#) and reported the words of Mardonios. Then one of the Councillors, Lykidas, expressed the opinion that it was better to receive the proposal which Morychides brought before them and refer it to the assembly of the people. [5](#) He, I say, uttered this opinion, whether because he had received money from Mardonios, or because this was his own inclination: however the Athenians forthwith, both those of the Council and those outside, when they heard of it, were very indignant, and they came about Lykidas and stoned him to death; but the Hellespontian Morychides they dismissed unhurt. Then when there had arisen much uproar in Salamis about Lykidas, the women of the Athenians heard of that which was being done, and one woman

passing the word to another and one taking another with her, they went of their own accord to the house of Lykidas and stoned his wife and his children to death.

6. The Athenians had passed over to Salamis as follows:—So long as they were looking that an army should come from the Peloponnese to help them, they remained in Attica; but as those in Peloponnesus acted very slowly and with much delay, while the invader was said to be already in Boeotia, they accordingly removed everything out of danger, and themselves passed over to Salamis; and at the same time they sent envoys to Lacedemon to reproach the Lacedemonians for having permitted the Barbarian to invade Attica and for not having gone to Boeotia to meet him in company with them, and also to remind them how many things the Persian had promised to give the Athenians if they changed sides; bidding the envoys warn them that if they did not help the Athenians, the Athenians would find some shelter [6](#) for themselves..

7. For the Lacedemonians in fact were keeping a feast during this time, and celebrating the Hyakinthia; and they held it of the greatest consequence to provide for the things which concerned the god, while at the same time their wall which they had been building at the Isthmus was just at this moment being completed with battlements. And when the envoys from the Athenians came to Lacedemon, bringing with them also envoys from Megara and Plataia, they came in before the Ephors and said as follows: "The Athenians sent us saying that the king of the Medes not only offers to give us back our land, but also desires to make us his allies on fair and equal terms without deceit or treachery, [7](#) and is desirous moreover to give us another land in addition to our own, whichever we shall ourselves choose. We however, having respect for Zeus of the Hellenes and disdaining to be traitors to Hellas, did not agree but refused, although we were unjustly dealt with by the other Hellenes and left to destruction, and although we knew that it was more profitable to make a treaty with the Persian than to carry on war: nor shall we make a treaty at any future time, if we have our own will. Thus sincerely is our duty done towards the Hellenes: [8](#) but as for you, after having come then to great dread lest we should make a treaty with the Persian, so soon as ye learnt certainly what our spirit was, namely that we should never betray Hellas, and because your wall across the Isthmus is all but finished, now ye make no account of the Athenians, but having agreed with us to come to Boeotia to oppose the Persian, ye have now deserted us, and ye permitted the Barbarian moreover to make invasion of Attica. For the present then the Athenians have anger against you, for ye did not do as was fitting to be done: and now they bid [9](#) you with all speed send out an army together with us, in order that we may receive the Barbarian in the land of Attica; for since we failed of Boeotia, the most suitable place to fight in our land is the Thriasian plain."

8. When the Ephors heard this they deferred their reply to the next day, and then on the next day to the succeeding one; and this they did even for ten days, deferring the matter from day to day, while during this time the whole body of the Peloponnesians were building the wall over the Isthmus with great diligence and were just about to complete it. Now I am not able to say why, when Alexander the Macedonian had come to Athens, they were so very anxious lest the Athenians should take the side of the Medes, whereas now they had no care about it, except indeed that their wall over the Isthmus had now been built, and they thought they had no need

of the Athenians any more; whereas when Alexander came to Attica the wall had not yet been completed, but they were working at it in great dread of the Persians..

9. At last however the answer was given and the going forth of the Spartans took place in the following manner:—on the day before that which was appointed for the last hearing of the envoys, Chileos a man of Tegea, who of all strangers had most influence in Lacedemon, heard from the Ephors all that which the Athenians were saying; and he, it seems, said to them these words: "Thus the matter stands, Ephors:—if the Athenians are not friendly with us but are allies of the Barbarian, then though a strong wall may have been built across the Isthmus, yet a wide door has been opened for the Persian into Peloponnesus. Listen to their request, however, before the Athenians resolve upon something else tending to the fall of Hellas."

10. Thus he counselled them, and they forthwith took his words to heart; and saying nothing to the envoys who had come from the cities, while yet it was night they sent out five thousand Spartans, with no less than seven of the Helots set to attend upon each man of them, [901](#) appointing Pausanias the son of Cleombrotos to lead them forth. Now the leadership belonged to Pleistarchos the son of Leonidas; but he was yet a boy, and the other was his guardian and cousin: for Cleombrotos, the father of Pausanias and son of Anaxandrides, was no longer alive, but when he had led home from the Isthmus the army which had built the wall, no long time after this he died. Now the reason why Cleombrotos led home the army from the Isthmus was this:—as he was offering sacrifice for fighting against the Persian, the sun was darkened in the heaven. And Pausanias chose as commander in addition to himself Euryanax the son of Dorieos, a man of the same house..

11. So Pausanias with his army had gone forth out of Sparta; and the envoys, when day had come, not knowing anything of this going forth, came in before the Ephors meaning to depart also, each to his own State: and when they had come in before them they said these words: "Ye, O Lacedemonians, are remaining here and celebrating this Hyakinthia and disporting yourselves, having left your allies to destruction; and the Athenians being wronged by you and for want of allies will make peace with the Persians on such terms as they can: and having made peace, evidently we become allies of the king, and therefore we shall join with him in expeditions against any land to which the Persians may lead us; and ye will learn then what shall be the issue for you of this matter." When the envoys spoke these words, the Ephors said and confirmed it with an oath, that they supposed by this time the men were at Orestheion on their way against the strangers: for they used to call the Barbarians "strangers." [10](#) So they, not knowing of the matter, asked the meaning of these words, and asking they learnt all the truth; so that they were struck with amazement and set forth as quickly as possible in pursuit; and together with them five thousand chosen hoplites of the Lacedemonian "dwellers in the country round" [11](#) did the same thing also.

12. They then, I say, were hastening towards the Isthmus; and the Argives so soon as they heard that Pausanias with his army had gone forth from Sparta, sent as a herald to Attica the best whom they could find of the long-distance runners, [12](#) because they had before of their own motion engaged for Mardonios that they would stop the Spartans from going forth: and the herald when he came to Athens spoke as follows: "Mardonios, the Argives sent me to tell thee that the young men have gone forth from Lacedemon, and that the Argives are not able to stop

them from going forth: with regard to this therefore may it be thy fortune to take measures well." [13](#).

13. He having spoken thus departed and went back; and Mardonios was by no means anxious any more to remain in Attica when he heard this message. Before he was informed of this he had been waiting, because he desired to know the news from the Athenians as to what they were about to do; and he had not been injuring or laying waste the land of Attica, because he hoped always that they would make a treaty with him; but as he did not persuade them, being now informed of everything he began to retire out of the country before the force of Pausanias arrived at the Isthmus, having first set fire to Athens and cast down and destroyed whatever was left standing of the walls, houses or temples. Now he marched away for this cause, namely first because Attica was not a land where horsemen could act freely, and also because, if he should be defeated in a battle in Attica, there was no way of retreat except by a narrow pass, so that a few men could stop them. He intended therefore to retreat to Thebes, and engage battle near to a friendly city and to a country where horsemen could act freely.

14. Mardonios then was retiring out of the way, and when he was already upon a road a message came to him saying that another body of troops in advance of the rest [14](#) had come to Megara, consisting of a thousand Lacedaemonians. Being thus informed he took counsel with himself, desiring if possible first to capture these. Therefore he turned back and proceeded to lead his army towards Megara, and the cavalry going in advance of the rest overran the Megaran land: this was the furthest land in Europe towards the sun-setting to which this Persian army came..

15. After this a message came to Mardonios that the Hellenes were assembled at the Isthmus; therefore he marched back by Dekeleia, for the chiefs of Boeotia [15](#) had sent for those of the Asopians who dwelt near the line of march, and these were his guides along the road to Sphendaleis and thence to Tanagra. So having encamped for the night at Tanagra and on the next day having directed his march to Scolos, he was within the land of the Thebans. Then he proceeded to cut down the trees in the lands of the Thebans, although they were on the side of the Medes, moved not at all by enmity to them, but pressed by urgent necessity both to make a defence for his camp, and also he was making it for a refuge, in case that when he engaged battle things should not turn out for him as he desired. Now the encampment of his army extended from Erythrai along by Hysiai and reached the river Asopos: he was not however making the wall to extend so far as this, but with each face measuring somewhere about ten furlongs. [16](#)

16. While the Barbarians were engaged upon this work, Attaginos the son of Phyrnon, a Theban, having made magnificent preparations invited to an entertainment Mardonios himself and fifty of the Persians who were of most account; and these being invited came; and the dinner was given at Thebes. Now this which follows I heard from Thersander, an Orchomenian and a man of very high repute in Orchomenos. This Thersander said that he too was invited by Attaginos to this dinner, and there were invited also fifty men of the Thebans, and their host did not place them to recline [17](#) separately each nation by themselves, but a Persian and a Theban upon every couch. Then when dinner was over, as they were drinking pledges to one another, [18](#) the Persian who shared a couch with him speaking in the Hellenic tongue asked him of what

place he was, and he answered that he was of Orchomenos. The other said: "Since now thou hast become my table-companion and the sharer of my libation, I desire to leave behind with thee a memorial of my opinion, in order that thou thyself also mayest know beforehand and be able to take such counsels for thyself as may be profitable. Dost thou see these Persians who are feasting here, and the army which we left behind encamped upon the river? Of all these, when a little time has gone by, thou shalt see but very few surviving." While the Persian said these words he shed many tears, as Thersander reported; and he marvelling at his speech said to him: "Surely then it is right to tell Mardonios and to those of the Persians who after him are held in regard." He upon this said: "Friend, that which is destined to come from God, it is impossible for a man to avert; for no man is willing to follow counsel, even when one speaks that which is reasonable. And these things which I say many of us Persians know well; yet we go with the rest being bound in the bonds of necessity: and the most hateful grief of all human griefs is this, to have knowledge of the truth but no power over the event." [19](#) These things I heard from Thersander of Orchomenos, and in addition to them this also, namely that he told them to various persons forthwith, before the battle took place at Plataia.

17. Mardonios then being encamped in Boeotia, the rest of the Hellenes who lived in these parts and took the side of the Medes were all supplying troops and had joined in the invasion of Attica, but the Phokians alone had not joined in the invasion,—the Phokians, I say, for these too were now actively [20](#) taking the side of the Medes, not of their own will however, but by compulsion. Not many days however after the arrival of Mardonios at Thebes, there came of them a thousand hoplites, and their leader was Harmokydes, the man who was of most repute among their citizens. When these too came to Thebes, Mardonios sent horsemen and bade the Phokians take up their position by themselves in the plain. After they had so done, forthwith the whole cavalry appeared; and upon this there went a rumour [21](#) through the army of Hellenes which was with the Medes that the cavalry was about to shoot them down with javelins, and this same report went through the Phokians themselves also. Then their commander Harmokydes exhorted them, speaking as follows: "Phokians, it is manifest that these men are meaning to deliver us to a death which we may plainly foresee, [22](#) because we have been falsely accused by the Thessalians, as I conjecture: now therefore it is right that every one of you prove himself a good man; for it is better to bring our lives to an end doing deeds of valour and defending ourselves, than to be destroyed by a dishonourable death offering ourselves for the slaughter. Let each man of them learn that they are Barbarians and that we, against whom they contrived murder, are Hellenes."

18. While he was thus exhorting them, the horsemen having encompassed them round were riding towards them as if to destroy them; and they were already aiming their missiles as if about to discharge them, nay some perhaps did discharge them: and meanwhile the Phokians stood facing them gathered together and with their ranks closed as much as possible every way. Then the horsemen turned and rode away back. Now I am not able to say for certain whether they came to destroy the Phokians at the request of the Thessalians, and then when they saw them turn to defence they feared lest they also might suffer some loss, and therefore rode away back, for so Mardonios had commanded them; or whether on the other hand he desired to make trial of them and to see if they had in them any warlike spirit. Then, when the horsemen had ridden

away back, Mardonios sent a herald and spoke to them as follows: "Be of good courage, Phokians, for ye proved yourselves good men, and not as I was informed. Now therefore carry on this way with zeal, for ye will not surpass in benefits either myself or the king." Thus far it happened as regards the Phokians.

19. When the Lacedemonians came to the Isthmus they encamped upon it, and hearing this the rest of the Peloponnesians who favoured the better cause, and some also because they saw the Spartans going out, did not think it right to be behind the Lacedemonians in their going forth. So from the Isthmus, when the sacrifices had proved favourable, they marched all together and came to Eleusis; and having performed sacrifices there also, when the signs were favourable they marched onwards, and the Athenians together with them, who had passed over from Salamis and had joined them at Eleusis. And then they had come to Erythrai in Boeotia, then they learnt that the Barbarians were encamping on the Asopos, and having perceived this they ranged themselves over against them on the lower slopes of Kithairon..

20. Then Mardonios, as the Hellenes did not descend into the plain, sent towards them all his cavalry, of which the commander was Masistios (by the Hellenes called Makistios), a man of reputation among the Persians, who had a Nesaian horse with a bridle of gold and in other respects finely caparisoned. So when the horsemen had ridden up to the Hellenes they attacked them by squadrons, and attacking [23](#) they did them much mischief, and moreover in contempt they called them women..

21. Now it happened by chance that the Megarians were posted in the place which was the most assailable of the whole position and to which the cavalry could best approach: so as the cavalry were making their attacks, the Megarians being hard pressed sent a herald to the commanders of the Hellenes, and the herald having come spoke these words: "The Megarians say:—we, O allies, are not able by ourselves to sustain the attacks of the Persian cavalry, keeping this position where we took post at the first; nay, even hitherto by endurance and valour alone have we held out against them, hard pressed as we are: and now unless ye shall send some others to take up our position in succession to us, know that we shall leave the position in which we now are." The herald brought report to them thus; and upon this Pausanias made trial of the Hellenes, whether any others would voluntarily offer to go to this place and post themselves there in succession to the Megarians: and when the rest were not desirous to go, the Athenians undertook the task, and of the Athenians those three hundred picked men of whom Olympidoros the son of Lampon was captain.

22. These they were who undertook the task and were posted at Erythrai in advance of the other Hellenes who ere there present, having chosen to go with them the bow-men also. For some time then they fought, and at last an end was set to the fighting in the following manner:—while the cavalry was attacking by squadrons, the horse of Masistios, going in advance of the rest, was struck in the side by an arrow, and feeling pain he reared upright and threw Masistios off; and when he had fallen, the Athenians forthwith pressed upon him; and his horse they took and himself, as he made resistance, they slew, though at first they could not, for his equipment was of this kind,—he wore a cuirass of gold scales underneath, and over the cuirass he had put on a crimson tunic. So as they struck upon the cuirass they could effect nothing, until some one, perceiving what the matter was, thrust into his eye. Then at length he

fell and died; and by some means the other men of the cavalry had not observed this take place, for they neither saw him when he had fallen from his horse nor when he was being slain, and while the retreat and the turn [24](#) were being made, they did not perceive that which was happening; but when they had stopped their horses, then at once they missed him, since there was no one to command them; and when they perceived what had happened, they passed the word to one another and all rode together, that they might if possible recover the body..

23. The Athenians upon that, seeing that the cavalry were riding to attack them no longer by squadrons but all together, shouted to the rest of the army to help them. Then while the whole number of those on foot were coming to their help, there arose a sharp fight for the body; and so long as the three hundred were alone they had much the worse and were about to abandon the body, but when the mass of the army came to their help, then the horsemen no longer sustained the fight, nor did they succeed in recovering the body; and besides him they lost others of their number also. Then they drew off about two furlongs away and deliberated what they should do; and it seemed good to them, as they had no commander, to ride back to Mardonios..

24. When the cavalry arrived at the camp, the whole army and also Mardonios made great mourning for Masistios, cutting off their own hair and that of their horses and baggage-animals and giving way to lamentation without stint; for all Boeotia was filled with the sound of it, because one had perished who after Mardonios was of the most account with the Persians and with the king..

25. The Barbarians then were paying honours in their own manner to Masistios slain: but the Hellenes, when they had sustained the attack of the cavalry and having sustained it had driven them back, were much more encouraged; and first they put the dead body in a cart and conveyed it along their ranks; and the body was a sight worth seeing for its size and beauty, wherefore also the men left their places in the ranks and went one after the other [25](#) to gaze upon Masistios. After this they resolved to come down further towards Plataia; for the region of Plataia was seen to be much more convenient for them to encamp in than that of Erythrai, both for other reasons and because it is better watered. To this region then and to the spring Gargaphia, which is in this region, they resolved that they must come, and encamp in their several posts. So they took up their arms and went by the lower slopes of Kithairon past Hysiai to the Plataian land; and having there arrived they posted themselves according to their several nations near the spring Gargaphia and the sacred enclosure of Androcrates the hero, over low hills or level ground.

26. Then in the arranging of the several posts there arose a contention of much argument [2501](#) between the Tegeans and the Athenians; for they each claimed to occupy the other wing of the army [26](#) themselves, alleging deeds both new and old. The Tegeans on the one hand said as follows: "We have been always judged worthy of this post by the whole body of allies in all the common expeditions which the Peloponnesians have made before this, whether in old times or but lately, ever since that time when the sons of Heracles endeavoured after the death of Eurystheus to return to the Peloponnesians. This honour we gained at that time by reason of the following event:—When with the Achaians and the Ionians who were then in Peloponnesus we had come out to the Isthmus to give assistance and were encamped opposite those who desired to return, then it is said that Hyllos made a speech saying that it was not right that the

one army should risk its safety by engaging battle with the other, and urging that that man of the army of the Peloponnesians whom they should judge to be the best of them should fight in single combat with himself on terms concerted between them. The Peloponnesians then resolved that this should be done; and they made oath with one another on this condition,—that if Hyllos should conquer the leader of the Peloponnesians, then the sons of Heracles should return to their father's heritage; but he should be conquered, then on the other hand the sons of Heracles should depart and lead away their army, and not within a hundred years attempt to return to the Peloponnese. There was selected then of all the allies, he himself making a voluntary offer, Echemos the son of Aëropos, the son of Phegeus, [27](#) who was our commander and king: and he fought a single combat and slew Hyllos. By reason of this deed we obtained among the Peloponnesians of that time, besides many other great privileges which we still possess, this also of always leading the other wing of the army, when a common expedition is made. To you, Lacedemonians, we make no opposition, but we give you freedom of choice, and allow you to command whichever wing ye desire; but of the other we say that it belongs to us to be the leaders as in former time: and apart from this deed which has been related, we are more worthy than the Athenians to have this post; for in many glorious contests have we contended against you, O Spartans, and in many also against others. Therefore it is just that we have the other wing rather than the Athenians; for they have not achieved deeds such as ours, either new or old."

27. Thus they spoke, and the Athenians replied as follows: "Though we know that this gathering was assembled for battle with the Barbarian and not for speech, yet since the Tegean has proposed to us as a task to speak of things both old and new, the deeds of merit namely which by each of our two nations have been achieved in all time, it is necessary for us to point out to you whence it comes that to us, who have been brave men always, it belongs as a heritage rather than to the Arcadians to have the chief place. First as to the sons of Heracles, whose leader they say that they slew at the Isthmus, these in the former time, when they were driven away by all the Hellenes to whom they came flying from slavery under those of Mykene, we alone received; and joining with them we subdued the insolence of Eurystheus, having conquered in fight those who then dwelt in Peloponnesus. Again when the Argives who with Polyneikes marched against Thebes, had been slain and were lying unburied, we declare that we marched an army against the Cadmeians and recovered the dead bodies and gave them burial in our own land at Eleusis. We have moreover another glorious deed performed against the Amazons who invaded once the Attic land, coming from the river Thermodon: and in the toils of Troy we were not inferior to any. But it is of no profit to make mention of these things; for on the one hand, though we were brave men in those times, we might now have become worthless, and on the other hand even though we were then worthless, yet now we might be better. Let it suffice therefore about ancient deeds; but if by us no other deed has been displayed (as many there have been and glorious, not less than by any other people of the Hellenes), yet even by reason of the deed wrought at Marathon alone we are worthy to have this privilege and others besides this, seeing that we alone of all the Hellenes fought in single combat with the Persian, and having undertaken so great a deed we overcame and conquered six-and-forty nations. [28](#) Are we not worthy then to have this post by reason of that deed alone? However, since at such a time as this it is not fitting to contend for post, we are ready to follow



your saying, O Lacedemonians, as to where ye think it most convenient that we should stand and opposite to whom; for wheresoever we are posted, we shall endeavour to be brave men. Prescribe to us therefore and we shall obey." They made answer thus; and the whole body of the Lacedemonians shouted aloud that the Athenians were more worthy to occupy the wing than the Arcadians. Thus the Athenians obtained the wing, and overcame the Tegeans.

28. After this the Hellenes were ranged as follows, both those of them who came in continually afterwards [29](#) and those who had come at the first. The right wing was held by ten thousand Lacedemonians; and of these the five thousand who were Spartans were attended by thirty-five thousand Helots serving as light-armed troops, seven of them appointed for each man. [30](#) To stand next to themselves the Spartans chose the Tegeans, both to do them honour and also because of their valour; and of these there were one thousand five hundred hoplites. After these were stationed five thousand Corinthians, and they had obtained permission from Pausanias that the three hundred who were present of the men of Potidaia in Pallene should stand by their side. Next to these were stationed six hundred Arcadians of Orchomenos; and to these three thousand Sikyonians. Next after these were eight hundred Epidaurians: by the side of these were ranged a thousand Troizenians: next to the Troizenians two hundred Lepreates: next to these four hundred of the men of Mikene and Tiryns; and then a thousand Phliasians. By the side of these stood three hundred Hermionians; and next to the Hermionians were stationed six hundred Eretrians and Styrians; next to these four hundred Chalkidians; and to these five hundred men of Amprakia. After these stood eight hundred Leucadians and Anactorians; and next to them two hundred from Pale in Kephallenia. After these were ranged five hundred Eginetans; by their side three thousand Megarians; and next to these six hundred Plataians. Last, or if you will first, were ranged the Athenians, occupying the left wing, eight thousand in number, and the commander of them was Aristeides the son of Lysimachos..

29. These all, excepting those who were appointed to attend the Spartans, seven for each man, were hoplites, being in number altogether three myriads eight thousand and seven hundred. [31](#) This was the whole number of hoplites who were assembled against the Barbarian; and the number of the light-armed was as follows:—of the Spartan division thirty-five thousand men, reckoning at the rate of seven for each man, and of these every one was equipped for fighting; and the light-armed troops of the rest of the Lacedemonians and of the other Hellenes, being about one for each man, amounted to thirty-four thousand five hundred..

30. Of the light-armed fighting men the whole number then was six myriads nine thousand and five hundred; [32](#) and of the whole Hellenic force which assembled at Plataia the number (including both the hoplites and the light-armed fighting men) was eleven myriads [33](#) all but one thousand eight hundred men; and with the Thespians who were present the number of eleven myriads was fully made up; for there were present also in the army those of the Thespians who survived, being in number about one thousand eight hundred, and these too were without heavy arms. [34](#) These then having been ranged in order were encamped on the river Asopos.

31. Meanwhile the Barbarians with Mardonios, when they had sufficiently mourned for Masistios, being informed that the Hellenes were at Plataia came themselves also to that part of the Asopos which flows there; and having arrived there, they were ranged against the enemy by Mardonios thus:—against the Lacedemonians he stationed the Persians; and since the

Persians were much superior in numbers, they were arrayed in deeper ranks than those, and notwithstanding this they extended in front of the Tegeans also: and he ranged them in this manner,—all the strongest part of that body he selected from the rest and stationed it opposite to the Lacedaemonians, but the weaker part he ranged by their side opposite to the Tegeans. This he did on the information and suggestion of the Thebans. Then next to the Persians he ranged the Medes; and these extended in front of the Corinthians, Potidaeans, Orchomenians and Sikyonians. Next to the Medes he ranged the Bactrians; and these extended in front of the Epidaurians, Troizenians, Lepreates, Tirynthians, Mykenians and Phliasians. After the Bactrians he stationed the Indians; and these extended in front of the Hermionians, Eretrians, Styrians and Chalkidians. Next to the Indians he ranged the Sacans, who extended in front of the men of Amprakia, the Anactorians, Leucadians, Palians and Eginetans. Next to the Sacans and opposite to the Athenians, Plataians and Megarians, he ranged the Boeotians, Locrians, Malians, Thessalians, and the thousand men of the Phokians: for not all the Phokians had taken the side of the Medes, but some of them were even supporting the cause of the Hellenes, being shut up in Parnassos; and setting out from thence they plundered from the army of Mardonios and from those of the Hellenes who were with him. He ranged the Macedonians also and those who dwell about the borders of Thessaly opposite to the Athenians..

32. These which have been named were the greatest of the nations who were arrayed in order by Mardonios, those, I mean, which were the most renowned and of greatest consideration: but there were in his army also men of several other nations mingled together, of the Phrygians, Thracians, Mysians, Paionians, and the rest; and among them also some Ethiopians, and of the Egyptians those called Hermotybians and Calasirians, [35](#) carrying knives, [36](#) who of all the Egyptians are the only warriors. These men, while he was yet at Phaleron, he had caused to disembark from the ships in which they served as fighting-men; for the Egyptians had not been appointed to serve in the land-army which came with Xerxes to Athens. Of the Barbarians then there were thirty myriads, [37](#) as has been declared before; but of the Hellenes who were allies of Mardonios no man knows what the number was, for they were not numbered; but by conjecture I judge that these were assembled to the number of five myriads. These who were placed in array side by side were on foot; and the cavalry was ranged apart from them in a separate body.

33. When all had been drawn up by nations and by divisions, then on the next day they offered sacrifice on both sides. For the Hellenes Tisamenos the son of Antiochos was he who offered sacrifice, for he it was who accompanied this army as diviner. This man the Lacedaemonians had made to be one of their own people, being an Eleian and of the race of the lamidai: [38](#) for when Tisamenos was seeking divination at Delphi concerning issue, the Pythian prophetess made answer to him that he should win five of the greatest contests. He accordingly, missing the meaning of the oracle, began to attend to athletic games, supposing that he should win contests of athletics; and he practised for the "five contests" [39](#) and came within one fall of winning a victory at the Olympic games, [40](#) being set to contend with Hieronymos of Andros. The Lacedaemonians however perceived that the oracle given to Tisamenos had reference not to athletic but to martial contests, and they endeavoured to persuade Tisamenos by payment of money, and to make him a leader in their wars together with the kings of the race of Heracles.

He then, seeing that the Spartans set much store on gaining him over as a friend, having perceived this, I say, he raised his price and signified to them that he would do as they desired, if they would make him a citizen of their State and give him full rights, but for no other payment. The Spartans at first when they heard this displayed indignation and altogether gave up their request, but at last, when great terror was hanging over them of this Persian armament, they gave way [41](#) and consented. He then perceiving that they had changed their minds, said that he could not now be satisfied even so, nor with these terms alone; but it was necessary that his brother Hegias also should be made a Spartan citizen on the same terms as he himself became one..

34. By saying this he followed the example of Melampus in his request, [42](#) if one may compare royal power with mere citizenship; for Melampus on his part, when the women in Argos had been seized by madness, and the Argives endeavoured to hire him to come from Pylos and to cause their women to cease from the malady, proposed as payment for himself the half of the royal power; and the Argives did not suffer this, but departed: and afterwards, when more of their women became mad, at length they accepted that which Melampus had proposed, and went to offer him this: but he then seeing that they had changed their minds, increased his demand, and said that he would not do that which they desired unless they gave to his brother Bias also the third share in the royal power. [43](#) And the Argives, being driven into straits, consented to this also. 35. Just so the Spartans also, being very much in need of Tisamenos, agreed with him on any terms which he desired: and when the Spartans had agreed to this demand also, then Tisamenos the Eleian, having become a Spartan, had part with them in winning five of the greatest contests as their diviner: and these were the only men who ever were made fellow-citizens of the Spartans. Now the five contests were these: one and the first of them was this at Plataia; and after this the contest at Tegea, which took place with the Tegeans and the Argives; then that at Dipaieis against all the Arcadians except the Mantineians; after that the contest with the Messenians at Ithome; [44](#) and last of all that which took place at Tanagra against the Athenians and Argives. This, I say, was accomplished last of the five contests.

36. This Tisamenos was acting now as diviner for the Hellenes in the Plataian land, being brought by the Spartans. Now to the Hellenes the sacrifices were of good omen if they defended themselves only, but not if they crossed the Asopos and began a battle;.

37, and Mardonios too, who was eager to begin a battle, found the sacrifices not favourable to this design, but they were of good omen to him also if he defended himself only; for he too used the Hellenic manner of sacrifice, having as diviner Hegesistratos an Eleian and the most famous of the Telliadai, whom before these events the Spartans had taken and bound, in order to put him to death, because they had suffered much mischief from him. He then being in this evil case, seeing that he was running a course for his life and was likely moreover to suffer much torment before his death, had done a deed such as may hardly be believed. Being made fast on a block bound with iron, he obtained an iron tool, which in some way had been brought in, and contrived forthwith a deed the most courageous of any that we know: for having first calculated how the remaining portion of his foot might be got out of the block, he cut away the flat of his own foot, [45](#) and after that, since he was guarded still by warders, he broke through the wall and

so ran away to Tegea, travelling during the nights and in the daytime entering a wood and resting there; so that, though the Lacedemonians searched for him in full force, he arrived at Tegea on the third night; and the Lacedemonians were possessed by great wonder both at his courage, when they saw the piece of the foot that was cut off lying there, and also because they were not able to find him. So he at that time having thus escaped them took refuge at Tegea, which then was not friendly with the Lacedemonians; and when he was healed and had procured for himself a wooden foot, he became an open enemy of the Lacedemonians. However in the end the enmity into which he had fallen with the Lacedemonians was not to his advantage; for he was caught by them while practising divination in Zakynthos, and was put to death.

38. However the death of Hegesistratos took place later than the events at Plataia, and he was now at the Asopos, having been hired by Mardonios for no mean sum, sacrificing and displaying zeal for his cause both on account of his enmity with the Lacedemonians and on account of the gain which he got: but as the sacrifices were not favourable for a battle either for the Persians themselves or for those Hellenes who were with them (for these also had a diviner for themselves, Hippomachos a Leucadian), and as the Hellenes had men constantly flowing in and were becoming more in number, Timagenides the son of Herpys, a Theban, counselled Mardonios to set a guard on the pass of Kithairon, saying that the Hellenes were constantly flowing in every day and that he would thus cut off large numbers..

39. Eight days had now passed while they had been sitting opposite to one another, when he gave this counsel to Mardonios; and Mardonios, perceiving that the advice was good, sent the cavalry when night came on to the pass of Kithairon leading towards Plataia, which the Boeotians call the "Three Heads" [46](#) and the Athenians the "Oak Heads." [47](#) Having been thus sent, the cavalry did not come without effect, for they caught five hundred baggage-animals coming out into the plain, which were bearing provisions from Peloponnesus to the army, and also the men who accompanied the carts: and having taken this prize the Persians proceeded to slaughter them without sparing either beast or man; and when they were satiated with killing they surrounded the rest and drove them into the camp to Mardonios.

40. After this deed they spent two days more, neither side wishing to begin a battle; for the Barbarians advanced as far as the Asopos to make trial of the Hellenes, but neither side would cross the river. However the cavalry of Mardonios made attacks continually and did damage to the Hellenes; for the Thebans, being very strong on the side of the Medes, carried on the war with vigour, and always directed them up to the moment of fighting; and after this the Persians and Medes took up the work and were they who displayed valour in their turn.

41. For ten days then nothing more was done than this; but when the eleventh day had come, while they still sat opposite to one another at Plataia, the Hellenes having by this time grown much more numerous and Mardonios being greatly vexed at the delay of action, then Mardonios the son of Gobryas and Artabazos the son of Pharnakes, who was esteemed by Xerxes as few of the Persians were besides, came to speech with one another; and as they conferred, the opinions they expressed were these,—that of Artabazos, that they must put the whole army in motion as soon as possible and go to the walls of the Thebans, whither great stores of corn had been brought in for them and fodder for their beasts; and that they should settle there quietly

and get their business done as follows:—they had, he said, great quantities of gold, both coined and uncoined, and also of silver and of drinking-cups; and these he advised they should send about to the Hellenes without stint, more especially to those of the Hellenes who were leaders in their several cities; and these, he said, would speedily deliver up their freedom: and he advised that they should not run the risk of a battle. His opinion then was the same as that of the Thebans, [48](#) for he as well as they had some true foresight: but the opinion of Mardonios was more vehement and more obstinate, and he was by no means disposed to yield; for he said that he thought their army far superior to that of the Hellenes, and he gave as his opinion that they should engage battle as quickly as possible and not allow them to assemble in still greater numbers than were already assembled; and as for the sacrifices of Hegesistratos, they should leave them alone and not endeavour to force a good sign, but follow the custom of the Persians and engage battle..

42. When he so expressed his judgment, none opposed him, and thus his opinion prevailed; for he and not Artabazos had the command of the army given him by the king. He summoned therefore the commanders of the divisions and the generals of those Hellenes who were with him, and asked whether they knew of any oracle regarding the Persians, which said that they should be destroyed in Hellas; and when those summoned to council [49](#) were silent, some not knowing the oracles and others knowing them but not esteeming it safe to speak, Mardonios himself said: "Since then ye either know nothing or do not venture to speak, I will tell you, since I know very well. There is an oracle saying that the Persians are destined when they come to Hellas to plunder the temple at Delphi, and having plundered it to perish every one of them. We therefore, just because we know this, will not go to that temple nor will we attempt to plunder it; and for this cause we shall not perish. So many of you therefore as chance to wish well to the Persians, have joy so far as regards this matter, and be assured that we shall overcome the Hellenes." Having spoken to them thus, he next commanded to prepare everything and to set all in order, since at dawn of the next day a battle would be fought.

43. Now this oracle, which Mardonios said referred to the Persians, I know for my part was composed with reference with the Illyrians and the army of the Enchelians, and not with reference to the Persians at all. However, the oracle which was composed by Bakis with reference to this battle,

*"The gathering of Hellenes together and cry of Barbarian voices,  
Where the Thermodon flows, by the banks of grassy Asopos;  
Here very many shall fall ere destiny gave them to perish,  
Medes bow-bearing in fight, when the fatal day shall approach them,"—*

these sayings, and others like them composed by Musaios, I know had reference to the Persians. Now the river Thermodon flows between Tanagra and Glisas.

44. After the inquiry about the oracles and the exhortation given by Mardonios night came on and the guards were set: and when night was far advanced, and it seemed that there was quiet everywhere in the camps, and that the men were in their deepest sleep, then Alexander the son of Amyntas, commander and king of the Macedonians, rode his horse up to the guard-posts of the Athenians and requested that he might have speech with their generals. So while the

greater number of the guards stayed at their posts, some ran to the generals, and when they reached them they said that a man had come riding on a horse out of the camp of the Medes, who discovered nothing further, but only named the generals and said that he desired to have speech with them..

45. Having heard this, forthwith they accompanied the men to the guard-posts, and when they had arrived there, Alexander thus spoke to them: "Athenians, I lay up these words of mine as a trust to you, charging you to keep them secret and tell them to no one except only to Pausanias, lest ye bring me to ruin: for I should not utter them if I did not care greatly for the general safety of Hellas, seeing that I am a Hellene myself by original descent and I should not wish to see Hellas enslaved instead of free. I say then that Mardonios and his army cannot get the offerings to be according to their mind, [50](#) for otherwise ye would long ago have fought. Now however he has resolved to let the offerings alone and to bring on a battle at dawn of day; for, as I conjecture, he fears lest ye should assemble in greater numbers. Therefore prepare yourselves; and if after all Mardonios should put off the battle and not bring it on, stay where ye are and hold out patiently; for they have provisions only for a few days remaining. And if this way shall have its issue according to your mind, then each one of you ought to remember me also concerning liberation, [51](#) since I have done for the sake of the Hellenes so hazardous a deed by reason of my zeal for you, desiring to show you the design of Mardonios, in order that the Barbarians may not fall upon you when ye are not as yet expecting them: and I am Alexander the Macedonian." Thus having spoken he rode away back to the camp and to his own position.

46. Then the generals of the Athenians came to the right wing and told Pausanias that which they had heard from Alexander. Upon this saying he being struck with fear of the Persians spoke as follows: "Since then at dawn the battle comes on, it is right that ye, Athenians, should take your stand opposite to the Persians, and we opposite to the Boeotians and those Hellenes who are now posted against you; and for this reason, namely because ye are acquainted with the Medes and with their manner of fighting, having fought with them at Marathon, whereas we have had no experience of these men and are without knowledge of them; for not one of the Spartans has made trial of the Medes in fight, but of the Boeotians and Thessalians we have had experience. It is right therefore that ye should take up your arms and come to this wing of the army, and that we should go to the left wing." In answer to this the Athenians spoke as follows: "To ourselves also long ago at the very first, when we saw that the Persians were being ranged opposite to you, it occurred to us to say these very things, which ye now bring forward before we have uttered them; but we feared lest these words might not be pleasing to you. Since however ye yourselves have made mention of this, know that your words have caused us pleasure, and that we are ready to do this which ye say."

47. Both then were content to do this, and as dawn appeared they began to change their positions with one another: and the Boeotians perceiving that which was being done reported it to Mardonios, who, when he heard it, forthwith himself also endeavoured to change positions, bringing the Persians along so as to be against the Lacedemonians: and when Pausanias learnt that this was being done, he perceived that he was not unobserved, and he led the Spartans back again to the right wing; and just so also did Mardonios upon his left.

48. When they had been thus brought to their former positions, Mardonios sent a herald to the Spartans and said as follows: "Lacedemonians, ye are said forsooth by those who are here to be very good men, and they have admiration for you because ye do not flee in war nor leave your post, but stay there and either destroy your enemies or perish yourselves. In this however, as it now appears, there is no truth; for before we engaged battle and came to hand-to-hand conflict we saw you already flee and leave your station, desiring to make the trial with the Athenians first, while ye ranged yourselves opposite to our slaves. These are not at all the deeds of good men in war, but we were deceived in you very greatly; for we expected by reason of your renown that ye would send a herald to us, challenging us and desiring to fight with the Persians alone; but though we on our part were ready to do this, we did not find that ye said anything of this kind, but rather that ye cowered with fear. Now therefore since ye were not the first to say this, we are the first. Why do we not forthwith fight, [52](#) ye on behalf of the Hellenes, since ye have the reputation of being the best, and we on behalf of the Barbarians, with equal numbers on both sides? and if we think it good that the others should fight also, then let them fight afterwards; and if on the other hand we should not think it good, but think it sufficient that we alone should fight, then let us fight it out to the end, and whichever of us shall be the victors, let these be counted as victorious with their whole army."

49. The herald having thus spoken waited for some time, and then, as no one made him any answer, he departed and went back; and having returned he signified to Mardonios that which had happened to him. Mardonios then being greatly rejoiced and elated by his empty [53](#) victory, sent the cavalry to attack the Hellenes: and when the horsemen had ridden to attack them, they did damage to the whole army of the Hellenes by hurling javelins against them and shooting with bows, being mounted archers and hard therefore to fight against: and they disturbed and choked up the spring Gargaphia, from which the whole army of the Hellenes was drawing its water. Now the Lacedemonians alone were posted near this spring, and it was at some distance from the rest of the Hellenes, according as they chanced to be posted, while the Asopos was near at hand; but when they were kept away from the Asopos, then they used to go backwards and forwards to this spring; for they were not permitted by the horsemen and archers to fetch water from the river..

50. Such then being the condition of things, the generals of the Hellenes, since the army had been cut off from its water and was being harassed by the cavalry, assembled to consult about these and other things, coming to Pausanias upon the right wing: for other things too troubled them yet more than these of which we have spoken, since they no longer had provisions, and their attendants who had been sent to Peloponnese for the purpose of getting them had been cut off by the cavalry and were not able to reach the camp..

51. It was resolved then by the generals in council with one another, that if the Persians put off the battle for that day, they would go to the Island. This is distant ten furlongs [54](#) from the Asopos and the spring Gargaphia, where they were then encamped, and is in front of the city of the Plataians: and if it be asked how there can be an island on the mainland, thus it is [55](#):—the river parts in two above, as it flows from Kithairon down to the plain, keeping a distance of about three furlongs between its streams, and after that it joins again in one stream; and the name of it is Oëroe, said by the natives of the country to be the daughter of Asopos. To this place of which

I speak they determined to remove, in order that they might be able to get an abundant supply of water and that the cavalry might not do them damage, as now when they were right opposite. And they proposed to remove when the second watch of the night should have come, so that the Persians might not see them set forth and harass them with the cavalry pursuing. They proposed also, after they had arrived at this place, round which, as I say, Oëroe the daughter of Asopos flows, parting into two streams [56](#) as she runs from Kithairon, to send half the army to Kithairon during this same night, in order to take up their attendants who had gone to get the supplies of provisions; for these were cut off from them in Kithairon.

52. Having thus resolved, during the whole of that day they had trouble unceasingly, while the cavalry pressed upon them; but when the day drew to a close and the attacks of the cavalry had ceased, then as it was becoming night and the time had arrived at which it had been agreed that they should retire from their place, the greater number of them set forth and began to retire, not however keeping it in mind to go to the place which had been agreed upon; but on the contrary, when they had begun to move, they readily took occasion to flee [57](#) from the cavalry towards the city of the Plataians, and in their flight they came as far as the temple of Hera, which temple is in front of the city of the Plataians at a distance of twenty furlongs from the spring Gargaphia; and when they had there arrived they halted in front of the temple.

53. These then were encamping about the temple of Hera; and Pausanias, seeing that they were retiring from the camp, gave the word to the Lacedaemonians also to take up their arms and go after the others who were preceding them, supposing that these were going to the place to which they had agreed to go. Then, when all the other commanders were ready to obey Pausanias, Amompharetos the son of Poliades, the commander of the Pitanate division, [58](#) said that he would not flee from the strangers, nor with his own will would he disgrace Sparta; and he expressed wonder at seeing that which was being done, not having been present at the former discussion. And Pausanias and Euryanax were greatly disturbed that he did not obey them and still more that they should be compelled to leave the Pitanate division behind, since he thus refused; [59](#) for they feared that if they should leave it in order to do that which they had agreed with the other Hellenes, both Amompharetos himself would perish being left behind and also the men with him. With this thought they kept the Lacedaemonian force from moving, and meanwhile they endeavoured to persuade him that it was not right for him to do so..

54. They then were exhorting Amompharetos, who had been left behind alone of the Lacedaemonians and Tegeans; and meanwhile the Athenians were keeping themselves quiet in the place where they had been posted, knowing the spirit of the Lacedaemonians, that they were apt to say otherwise than they really meant; [60](#) and when the army began to move, they sent a horseman from their own body to see whether the Spartans were attempting to set forth, or whether they had in truth no design at all to retire; and they bade him ask Pausanias what they ought to do. 55. So when the herald came to the Lacedaemonians, he saw that they were still in their place and that the chiefs of them had come to strife with one another: for when Euryanax and Pausanias both exhorted Amompharetos not to run the risk of remaining behind with his men, alone of all the Lacedaemonians, they did not at all persuade him, and at last they had come to downright strife; and meanwhile the herald of the Athenians had arrived and was standing by them. And Amompharetos in his contention took a piece of rock in both his hands



and placed it at the feet of Pausanias, saying that with this pebble he gave his vote not to fly from the strangers, meaning the Barbarians. [61](#) Pausanias then, calling him a madman and one who was not in his right senses, bade tell the state of their affairs to the Athenian herald, [62](#) who was asking that which he had been charged to ask; and at the same time he requested the Athenians to come towards the Lacedemonians and to do in regard to the retreat the same as they did..

56. He then went away back to the Athenians; and as the dawn of day found them yet disputing with one another, Pausanias, who had remained still throughout all this time, gave the signal, and led away all the rest over the low hills, supposing that Amompharetos would not stay behind when the other Lacedemonians departed (in which he was in fact right); and with them also went the Tegeans. Meanwhile the Athenians, following the commands which were given them, were going in the direction opposite to that of the Lacedemonians; for these were clinging to the hills and the lower slope of Kithairon from fear of the cavalry, while the Athenians were marching below in the direction of the plain..

57. As for Amompharetos, he did not at first believe that Pausanias would ever venture to leave him and his men behind, and he stuck to it that they should stay there and not leave their post; but when Pausanias and his troops were well in front, then he perceived that they had actually left him behind, and he made his division take up their arms and led them slowly towards the main body. This, when it had got away about ten furlongs, stayed for the division of Amompharetos, halting at the river Moloeis and the place called Argiopion, where also there stands a temple of the Eleusinian Demeter: and it stayed there for this reason, namely in order that of Amompharetos and his division should not leave the place where they had been posted, but should remain there, it might be able to come back to their assistance. So Amompharetos and his men were coming up to join them, and the cavalry also of the Barbarians was at the same time beginning to attack them in full force: for the horsemen did on this day as they had been wont to do every day; and seeing the place vacant in which the Hellenes had been posted on the former days, they rode their horses on continually further, and as soon as they came up with them they began to attack them.

58. Then Mardonios, when he was informed that the Hellenes had departed during the night, and when he saw their place deserted, called Thorax of Larissa and his brothers Eurypylos and Thrasydeios, and said: "Sons of Aleuas, will ye yet say anything, [63](#) now that ye see these places deserted? For ye who dwell near them were wont to say that the Lacedemonians did not fly from a battle, but were men unsurpassed in war; and these men ye not only saw before this changing from their post, but now we all of us see that they have run away during the past night; and by this they showed clearly, when the time came for them to contend in battle with those who were in truth the best of all men, that after all they were men of no worth, who had been making a display of valour among Hellenes, a worthless race. As for you, since ye had had no experience of the Persians, I for my part was very ready to excuse you when ye praised these, of whom after all ye knew something good; but much more I marvelled at Artabazos that *he* should have been afraid of the Lacedemonians, and that having been afraid he should have uttered that most cowardly opinion, namely that we ought to move our army away and go to the city of the Thebans to be besieged there,—an opinion about which the king shall yet be

informed by me. Of these things we will speak in another place; now however we must not allow them to act thus, but we must pursue them until they are caught and pay the penalty to us for all that they did to the Persians in time past."

59. Thus having spoken he led on the Persians at a run, after they had crossed the Asopos, on the track of the Hellenes, supposing that these were running away from him; and he directed his attack upon the Lacedemonians and Tegeans only, for the Athenians, whose march was towards the plain, he did not see by reason of the hills. Then the rest of the commanders of the Barbarian divisions, seeing that the Persians had started to pursue the Hellenes, forthwith all raised the signals for battle and began to pursue, each as fast as they could, not arranged in any order or succession of post..

60. These then were coming on with shouting and confused numbers, thinking to make short work of [64](#) the Hellenes; and Pausanias, when the cavalry began to attack, sent to the Athenians a horseman and said thus: "Athenians, now that the greatest contest is set before us, namely that which has for its issue the freedom or the slavery of Hellas, we have been deserted by our allies, we Lacedemonians and ye Athenians, seeing that they have run away during the night that is past. Now therefore it is determined what we must do upon this, namely that we must defend ourselves and protect one another as best we may. If then the cavalry had set forth to attack you at the first, we and the Tegeans, who with us refuse to betray the cause of Hellas, should have been bound to go to your help; but as it is, since the whole body has come against us, it is right that ye should come to that portion of the army which is hardest pressed, to give aid. If however anything has happened to you which makes it impossible for you to come to our help, then do us a kindness by sending to us the archers; and we know that ye have been in the course of this present war by far the most zealous of all, so that ye will listen to our request in this matter also."

61. When the Athenians heard this they were desirous to come to their help and to assist them as much as possible; and as they were already going, they were attacked by those of the Hellenes on the side of the king who had been ranged opposite to them, so that they were no longer able to come to the help of the Lacedemonians, for the force that was attacking them gave them much trouble. Thus the Lacedemonians and Tegeans were left alone, being in number, together with light-armed men, the former fifty thousand and the Tegeans three thousand; for these were not parted at all from the Lacedemonians: and they began to offer sacrifice, meaning to engage battle with Mardonios and the force which had come against them. Then since their offerings did not prove favourable, and many of them were being slain during this time and many more wounded,—for the Persians had made a palisade of their wicker-work shields [65](#) and were discharging their arrows in great multitude and without sparing,—Pausanias, seeing that the Spartans were hard pressed and that the offerings did not prove favourable, fixed his gaze upon the temple of Hera of the Plataians and called upon the goddess to help, praying that they might by no means be cheated of their hope:.

62, and while he was yet calling upon her thus, the Tegeans started forward before them and advanced against the Barbarians, and forthwith after the prayer of Pausanias the offerings proved favourable for the Lacedemonians as they sacrificed. So when this at length came to pass, then they also advanced against the Persians; and the Persians put away their bows and

came against them. Then first there was fighting about the wicker-work shields, and when these had been overturned, after that the fighting was fierce by the side of the temple of Demeter, and so continued for a long time, until at last they came to justling; for the Barbarians would take hold of the spears and break them off. Now in courage and in strength the Persians were not inferior to the others, but they were without defensive armour, [66](#) and moreover they were unversed in war and unequal to their opponents in skill; and they would dart out one at a time or in groups of about ten together, some more and some less, and fall upon the Spartans and perish..

63. In the place where Mardonios himself was, riding on a white horse and having about him the thousand best men of the Persians chosen out from the rest, here, I say, they pressed upon their opponents most of all: and so long as Mardonios survived, they held out against them, and defending themselves they cast down many of the Lacedemonians; but when Mardonios was slain and the men who were ranged about his person, which was the strongest portion of the whole army, had fallen, then the others too turned and gave way before the Lacedemonians; for their manner of dress, without defensive armour, was a very great cause of destruction to them, since in truth they were contending light-armed against hoplites..

64. Then the satisfaction for the murder of Leonidas was paid by Mardonios according to the oracle given to the Spartans, [67](#) and the most famous victory of all those about which we have knowledge was gained by Pausanias the son of Cleombrotos, the son of Anaxandrides; of his ancestors above this the names have been given for Leonidas, [68](#) since, as it happens, they are the same for both. Now Mardonios was slain by Arimnestos, [69](#) a man of consideration in Sparta, who afterwards, when the Median wars were over, with three hundred men fought a battle against the whole army of the Messenians, then at war with the Lacedemonians, at Stenycleros, and both he was slain and also the three hundred..

65. When the Persians were turned to flight at Plataia by the Lacedemonians, they fled in disorder to their own camp and to the palisade which they had made in the Theban territory: [70](#) and it is a marvel to me that, whereas they fought by the side of the sacred grove of Demeter, not one of the Persians was found to have entered the enclosure or to have been slain within it, but round about the temple in the unconsecrated ground fell the greater number of the slain. I suppose (if one ought to suppose anything about divine things) that the goddess herself refused to receive them, because they had set fire to the temple, that is to say the "palace" [71](#) at Eleusis.

66. Thus far then had this battle proceeded: but Artabazos the son of Pharnakes had been displeased at the very first because Mardonios remained behind after the king was gone; and afterwards he had been bringing forward objections continually and doing nothing, but had urged them always not to fight a battle: and for himself he acted as follows, not being pleased with the things which were being done by Mardonios.—The men of whom Artabazos was commander (and he had with him no small force but one which was in number as much as four myriads [72](#) of men), these, when the fighting began, being well aware what the issue of the battle would be, he led carefully, [73](#) having first given orders that all should go by the way which he should lead them and at the same pace at which they should see him go. Having given these orders he led his troops on pretence of taking them into battle; and when he was well on his

way, he saw the Persians already taking flight. Then he no longer led his men in the same order as before, but set off at a run, taking flight by the quickest way not to the palisade nor yet to the wall of the Thebans, but towards Phokis, desiring as quickly as possible to reach the Hellespont..

67. These, I say, were thus directing their march: and in the meantime, while the other Hellenes who were on the side of the king were purposely slack in the fight, [74](#) the Boeotians fought with the Athenians for a long space; for those of the Thebans who took the side of the Medes had no small zeal for the cause, and they fought and were not slack, so that three hundred of them, the first and best of all, fell there by the hands of the Athenians: and when these also turned to flight, they fled to Thebes, not to the same place as the Persians: and the main body of the other allies fled without having fought constantly with any one or displayed any deeds of valour..

68. And this is an additional proof to me that all the fortunes of the Barbarians depended upon the Persians, namely that at that time these men fled before they had even engaged with the enemy, because they saw the Persians doing so. Thus all were in flight except only the cavalry, including also that of the Boeotians; and this rendered service to the fugitives by constantly keeping close to the enemy and separating the fugitives of their own side from the Hellenes..

69. The victors then were coming after the troops of Xerxes, both pursuing them and slaughtering them; and during the time when this panic arose, the report was brought to the other Hellenes who had posted themselves about the temple of Hera and had been absent from the battle, that a battle had taken place and that the troops of Pausanias were gaining the victory. When they heard this, then without ranging themselves in any order the Corinthians and those near them turned to go by the skirts of the mountain and by the low hills along the way which led straight up to the temple of Demeter, while the Megarians and Phliasians and those near them went by the plain along the smoothest way. When however the Megarians and Phliasians came near to the enemy, the cavalry of the Thebans caught sight of them from a distance hurrying along without any order, and rode up to attack them, the commander of the cavalry being Asopodoros the son of Timander; and having fallen upon them they slew six hundred of them, and the rest they pursued and drove to Kithairon.

70. These then perished thus ingloriously; [75](#) and meanwhile the Persians and the rest of the throng, having fled for refuge to the palisade, succeeded in getting up to the towers before the Lacedemonians came; and having got up they strengthened the wall of defence as best they could. Then when the Lacedemonians [76](#) came up to attack it, there began between them a vigorous [77](#) fight for the wall: for so long as the Athenians were away, they defended themselves and had much the advantage over the Lacedemonians, since these did not understand the art of fighting against walls; but when the Athenians came up to help them, then there was a fierce fight for the wall, lasting for a long time, and at length by valour and endurance the Athenians mounted up on the wall and made a breach in it, through which the Hellenes poured in. Now the Tegeans were the first who entered the wall, and these were they who plundered the tent of Mardonios, taking, besides the other things which were in it, also the manger of his horse, which was all of bronze and a sight worth seeing. This manger of Mardonios was dedicated by the Tegeans as an offering in the temple of Athene Alea, [78](#) but all

the other things which they took, they brought to the common stock of the Hellenes. The Barbarians however, after the wall had been captured, no longer formed themselves into any close body, nor did any of them think of making resistance, but they were utterly at a loss, [79](#) as you might expect from men who were in a panic with many myriads of them shut up together in a small space: and the Hellenes were able to slaughter them so that out of an army of thirty myriads, [80](#) if those four be subtracted which Artabazos took with him in his flight, of the remainder not three thousand men survived. Of the Lacedemonians from Sparta there were slain in the battle ninety-one in all, of the Tegeans sixteen, and of the Athenians two-and-fifty.

71. Among the Barbarians those who proved themselves the best men were, of those on foot the Persians, and of the cavalry the Sacans, and for a single man Mardonios it is said was the best. Of the Hellenes, though both the Tegeans and the Athenians proved themselves good men, yet the Lacedemonians surpassed them in valour. Of this I have no other proof (for all these were victorious over their opposites), but only this, that they fought against the strongest part of the enemy's force and overcame it. And the man who proved himself in my opinion by much the best was that Aristodemos who, having come back safe from Thermopylai alone of the three hundred, had reproach and dishonour attached to him. After him the best were Poseidonios and Philokyon and Amompharetos the Spartan. [81](#) However, when there came to be conversation as to which of them had proved himself the best, the Spartans who were present gave it as their opinion that Aristodemos had evidently wished to be slain in consequence of the charge which lay against him, and so, being as it were in a frenzy and leaving his place in the ranks, he had displayed great deeds, whereas Poseidonios had proved himself a good man although he did not desire to be slain; and so far he was the better man of the two. This however they perhaps said from ill-will; and all these whose names I mentioned among the men who were killed in this battle, were specially honoured, except Aristodemos; but Aristodemos, since he desired to be slain on account of the before-mentioned charge, was not honoured.

72. These obtained the most renown of those who fought at Plataia, for as for Callicrates, the most beautiful who came to the camp, not of the Lacedemonians alone, but also of all the Hellenes of his time, he was not killed in the battle itself; but when Pausanias was offering sacrifice, he was wounded by an arrow in the side, as he was sitting down in his place in the ranks; and while the others were fighting, he having been carried out of the ranks was dying a lingering death: and he said to Arimnestos [82](#) a Plataian that it did not grieve him to die for Hellas, but it grieved him only that he had not proved his strength of hand, and that no deed of valour had been displayed by him worthy of the spirit which he had in him to perform great deeds. [83](#)

73. Of the Athenians the man who gained most glory is said to have been Sophanes the son of Eutyichides of the deme of Dekeleia,—a deme of which the inhabitants formerly did a deed that was of service to them for all time, as the Athenians themselves report. For when of old the sons of Tyndareus invaded the Attic land with a great host, in order to bring home Helen, and were laying waste the demes, not knowing to what place of hiding Helen had been removed, then they say that the men of Dekeleia, or as some say Dekelos himself, being aggrieved by the insolence of Theseus and fearing for all the land of the Athenians, told them the whole matter

and led them to Aphidnai, which Titakos who was sprung from the soil delivered up by treachery to the sons of Tyndareus. In consequence of this deed the Dekeleians have had continually freedom from dues in Sparta and front seats at the games, [84](#) privileges which exist still to this day; insomuch that even in the war which many years after these events arose between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians, when the Lacedemonians laid waste all the rest of Attica, they abstained from injury to Dekeleia..

74. To this deme belonged Sophanes, who showed himself the best of all the Athenians in this battle; and of him there are two different stories told: one that he carried an anchor of iron bound by chains of bronze to the belt of his corslet; and this he threw whensoever he came up with the enemy, in order, they say, that the enemy when they came forth out of their ranks might not be able to move him from his place; and when a flight of his opponents took place, his plan was to take up the anchor first and then pursue after them. This story is reported thus; but the other of the stories, disputing the truth of that which has been told above, is reported as follows, namely that upon his shield, which was ever moving about and never remaining still, he bore an anchor as a device, and not one of iron bound to his corslet.

75. There was another illustrious deed done too by Sophanes; for when the Athenians besieged Egina he challenged to a fight and slew Eurybates the Argive, [85](#) one who had been victor in the five contests [86](#) at the games. To Sophanes himself it happened after these events that when he was general of the Athenians together with Leagros the son of Glaucon, he was slain after proving himself a good man by the Edonians at Daton, fighting for the gold mines.

76. When the Barbarians had been laid low by the Hellenes at Plataia, there approached to these a woman, the concubine of Pharandates the son of Teaspis a Persian, coming over of her own free will from the enemy, who when she perceived that the Persians had been destroyed and that the Hellenes were the victors, descended from her carriage and came up to the Lacedemonians while they were yet engaged in the slaughter. This woman had adorned herself with many ornaments of gold, and her attendants likewise, and she had put on the fairest robe of those which she had; and when she saw that Pausanias was directing everything there, being well acquainted before with his name and with his lineage, because she had heard it often, she recognised Pausanias and taking hold of his knees she said these words: "O king of Sparta, deliver me thy suppliant from the slavery of the captive: for thou hast also done me service hitherto in destroying these, who have regard neither for demigods nor yet for gods. [87](#) I am by race of Cos, the daughter of Hegetorides the son of Antagoras; and the Persian took me by force in Cos and kept me a prisoner." He made answer in these words: "Woman, be of good courage, both because thou art a suppliant, and also if in addition to this it chances that thou art speaking the truth and art the daughter of Hegetorides the Coan, who is bound to me as a guest-friend more than any other of the men who dwell in those parts." Having thus spoken, for that time he gave her in charge to those Ephors who were present, and afterwards he sent her away to Egina, whither she herself desired to go.

77. After the arrival of the woman, forthwith upon this arrived the Mantineians, when all was over; and having learnt that they had come too late for the battle, they were greatly grieved, and said that they deserved to be punished: and being informed that the Medes with Artabazos were in flight, they pursued after them as far as Thessaly, though the Lacedemonians endeavoured to

prevent them from pursuing after fugitives. [88](#) Then returning back to their own country they sent the leaders of their army into exile from the land. After the Mantineians came the Eleians; and they, like the Mantineians, were greatly grieved by it and so departed home; and these also when they had returned sent their leaders into exile. So much of the Mantineians and Eleians.

78. At Plataia among the troops of the Eginetans was Lampon the son of Pytheas, one of the leading men of the Eginetans, who was moved to go to Pausanias with a most impious proposal, and when he had come with haste, he said as follows: "Son of Cleombrotos, a deed has been done by thee which is of marvellous greatness and glory, and to thee God has permitted by rescuing Hellas to lay up for thyself the greatest renown of all the Hellenes about whom we have any knowledge. Do thou then perform also that which remains to do after these things, in order that yet greater reputation may attach to thee, and also that in future every one of the Barbarians may beware of being the beginner of presumptuous deeds towards the Hellenes. For when Leonidas was slain at Thermopylai, Mardonios and Xerxes cut off his head and crucified him: to him therefore do thou repay like with like, and thou shalt have praise first from all the Spartans and then secondly from the other Hellenes also; for if thou impale the body of Mardonios, thou wilt then have taken vengeance for Leonidas thy father's brother."

79. He said this thinking to give pleasure; but the other made him answer in these words: "Stranger of Egina, I admire thy friendly spirit and thy forethought for me, but thou hast failed of a good opinion nevertheless: for having exalted me on high and my family and my deed, thou didst then cast me down to nought by advising me to do outrage to a dead body, and by saying that if I do this I shall be better reported of. These things it is more fitting for Barbarians to do than for Hellenes; and even with them we find fault for doing so. However that may be, I do not desire in any such manner as this to please either Eginetans or others who like such things; but it is enough for me that I should keep from unholy deeds, yea and from unholy speech also, and so please the Spartans. As for Leonidas, whom thou biddest me avenge, I declare that he has been greatly avenged already, and by the unnumbered lives which have been taken of these men he has been honoured, and not he only but also the rest who brought their lives to an end at Thermopylai. As for thee however, come not again to me with such a proposal, nor give me such advice; and be thankful moreover that thou hast no punishment for it now."