TALANTA XLVI-XLVI (2014-2015), 165 - 236

THERMOPYLAE 480 BC: ANCIENT ACCOUNTS OF A BATTLE*

Jan P. Stronk

Fig. 1. The current site of Thermopylae, more or less looking in a west-north-westerly direction. The road to the right approximately follows the ancient coast line. The picture was taken from the so-called Colonus [i.e. hill], according to Herodotus the place of the last stand of the Spartans (cf., though, Schliemann 1883, 149). In the middle, remnants of the so-called Phocian wall are still discernable. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

* I am indebted to Jona Lendering, Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, and Clio Stronk. They read the text and provided welcome advice. The same is valid for the anonymous reviewer, whose comments considerably improved the paper. Lendering also gave permission to reproduce three photos from the Livius website (<http://www.livius/org>) in this paper. All views expressed – and remaining errors – are, obviously, my responsibility.

Few battles in the history of warfare have aroused so much emotion and spurred so much imagination, lasting to the present day, as the Battle of Thermopylae in, probably, August or September of 480 BC (the date still is a matter of contention, not to be discussed in this paper). 'Thermopylae', thereby, has become one of the defining images of ancient Greek history, carefully modelled by generations of classical authors, the most notable among them being Herodotus, to serve the purpose of their work. There are, however, more accounts of the battle than Herodotus´ and, moreover, the versions do not match with each other. It seems, therefore, useful to discuss this battle once again and look how and, perhaps even more important, why authors described the events at Thermopylae as they did. Doing so, we shall take into account the geographical situation, Achaemenid sources, and, naturally, the sources of the authors we discuss.

For the visitor with an untrained eye, not used to interpret a site as it has been in the past, the current view of the plain of Thermopylae may well come as a surprise. Almost nothing there resembles the description of the location as (s)he may have understood it from reading Herodotus or any other classical author dedicating some space to this battle in his work – or even the graphic (and improbable and largely incorrect) images in modern movies. The site as it is today is the result of twenty-five hundred odd years of geological activity. This has led, *inter alia*, to an increase of alluvial lands, at places up to 20 metres deep, bordering the site of the battle, stretching at least several kilometres far into the former sea[1]. Heinrich Schliemann, on his way from Athens to Çanakkale in 1883, also visited this site and describes it, amongst others observing that "(...) der Reisende Zeit braucht, um sich zu orientiren und auszufinden, wo denn eigentlich der berühmte Engpass gewesen ist, der nach Herodot nur eine Wagenbreite hatte. (…) Durch die Alluvia aber ist im Laufe von 2363 Jahren das Meer um mehr als 10 *km* zurückgedrängt" (Schliemann 1883, 148)[2].

Geography

The geography of the pass of Thermopylae in the times of the battle is expounded by Herodotus (Hdt. 7.176.2-5; another description is in Str. 9.4.13-14/C 428). Reading Herodotus' report we should take into account that (as Godley phrased it) "Herodotus' points of the compass are wrong throughout in his description of Thermopylae; the road runs east and west, not north and south as he supposes; so 'west' here should be 'south' and 'east' 'north'. 'In front' and 'behind' are equivalent to 'west' and 'east' respectively" (Godley 1971, 492-493, note 2). Herodotus' account runs as follows:

[1] For a geological assessment of the site, see Kraft *et alii* 1987 and Rapp 2013. In 2010, Vouva-lidis *et alii* (2010) concluded that their research largely confirms Herodotus' description as correct.

[2] As regards the distance the sea has been pushed back, Schliemann overestimates: in fact the sea is at present between about one and eight kilometres (the alluvial soil has not spread evenly) further out than in the times of the battle in 480 BC.

Herodotus 7.176.2-5[3]:

[176.2] ἡ δὲ αὖ διὰ Τρηχῖνος ἔσοδος ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐστὶ τῇ στεινοτάτη ἡμίπλεθρον. οὐ μέντοι κατὰ τοῦτό γε ἐστὶ τὸ στεινότατον τῆς χώρης τῆς ἄλλης, ἀλλ᾽ ἔμπροσθέ τε Θερμοπυλέων καὶ ὄπισθε, κατὰ τε Ἀλπηνοὺς ὄπισθε ἐόντας ἐοῦσα ἁμαξιτὸς μούνη, καὶ ἔμπροσθε κατὰ Φοίνικα ποταμὸν ἀγχοῦ Ἀνθήλης πόλιος ἄλλη ἁμαξιτὸς μούνη. [3] τῶν δὲ Θερμοπυλέων τὸ μὲν πρὸς ἑσπέρης ὄρος ἄβατόν τε καὶ ἀπόκρημνον, ὑψηλόν, ἀνατεῖνον ἐς τὴν Οἴτην· τὸ δὲ πρὸς τὴν ἠῶ τῆς ὁδοῦ θάλασσα ὑποδέκεται καὶ τενάγεα. ἔστι δὲ ἐν τῇ ἐσόδῳ ταύτῃ θερμὰ λουτρά, τὰ Χύτρους καλέουσι οἱ ἐπιχώριοι, καὶ βωμὸς ἵδρυται Ἡρακλέος ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῖσι. ἐδέδμητο δὲ τεῖχος κατὰ ταύτας τὰς ἐσβολάς, καὶ τό γε παλαιὸν πύλαι ἐπῆσαν. [4] ἔδειμαν δὲ Φωκέες τὸ τεῖχος δείσαντες, ἐπεὶ Θεσσαλοὶ ἦλθον ἐκ Θεσπρωτῶν οἰκήσοντες γῆν τὴν Αἰολίδα τήν νῦν ἐκτέαται. … . [5] τὸ μέν νυν τεῖχος τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἐκ παλαιοῦ τε ἐδέδμητο καὶ τὸ πλέον αὐτοῦ ἤδη ὑπὸ χρόνου ἔκειτο: τοῖσι δὲ αὖτις ὀρθώσασι ἔδοξε ταύτῃ ἀπαμύνειν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος τὸν βάρβαρον. κώμη δὲ ἐστὶ ἀγχοτάτω τῆς ὁδοῦ Ἀλπηνοὶ οὔνομα· ἐκ ταύτης δὲ ἐπισιτιεῖσθαι ἐλογίζοντο οἱ Ἕλληνες.

[176.2] The pass through Trachis into Hellas is half a *plethron* [sc. *ca.* 15 m] wide at its narrowest point. It is not here, however, but elsewhere that the way is narrowest, both in front of Thermopylae and behind it; at Alpeni, which lies behind, it is only the breadth of a cart-way, and it in front at the Phoenix stream, near the town of Anthele, as well only one cart-way wide. [3] To the west of Thermopylae rises a high mountain, inaccessible and precipitous, extending to the Oeta; to the east of the road there is nothing but marshes and sea. In this pass are warm springs for bathing, called "The Tubs" by the people of the country, and an altar of Heracles stands nearby. Across this entry a wall had been built, and formerly there was a gate in it. [4] The Phocians built the wall out of fear, when the Thessalians came from Thesprotia to dwell in the Aeolian land, the region which they now possess. … . [5] The ancient wall had been built long ago and most of it lay in ruins; those who built it up again thought that they would in this way bar the Persian from Hellas. Very near the road is a village called Alpeni; from here the Greeks expected to obtain provisions.

and Herodotus 7.199-201:

[199] τοῦ δὲ ὄρεος τὸ περικληίει τὴν γῆν τὴν Τρηχινίην ἐστὶ διασφὰξ πρὸς μεσαμβρίην Τρηχῖνος, διὰ δὲ τῆς διασφάγος Ἀσωπὸς ποταμὸς ῥέει παρὰ τὴν ὑπωρείαν τοῦ ὄρεος. [200.1] ἔστι δὲ ἄλλος Φοῖνιξ ποταμὸς οὐ μέγας πρὸς μεσαμβρίην τοῦ Ἀσωποῦ, ὃς ἐκ τῶν ὀρέων τούτων ῥέων ἐς τὸν Ἀσωπὸν ἐκδιδοῖ. κατὰ δὲ τὸν Φοίνικα ποταμὸν στεινότατον ἐστί· ἁμαξιτὸς γὰρ μούνη δεδμηται. ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ Φοίνικος ποταμοῦ πεντεκαίδεκα στάδια ἐστὶ ἐς Θερμοπύλας. [2] ἐν δὲ τῷ μεταξὺ Φοίνικος ποταμοῦ καὶ Θερμοπυλέων κώμη τε ἐστὶ τῇ οὔνομα Ἀνθήλη κεῖται, παρ᾽ ἣν δὴ παραρρέων ὁ Ἀσωπὸς ἐς θάλασσαν ἐκδιδοῖ, καὶ χῶρος περὶ αὐτὴν εὐρύς, ...

[199] In the mountain that encloses the Trachinian land is a ravine to the south of Trachis, through which the river Asopus flows past the lower slopes of the mountain. [200.1] There is another small river south of the Asopus, the Phoenix, that flowing from those mountains empties into the Asopus. Near this stream is the narrowest place; there is only space for a single cart-way. From the River Phoenix it is fifteen stadia [sc. *ca.* 2.750 m] to Thermopylae. [2] Between the River Phoenix and Thermopylae there is a village named Anthele, past which the Asopus flows out into the sea, and there is a wide space around it... .

[3] Unless indicated otherwise, the translations are by the author.

[201] βασιλεὺς μὲν δὴ Ξέρξης ἐστρατοπεδεύετο τῆς Μηλίδος ἐν τῇ Τρηχινίῃ, οἱ δὲ δὴ Ἕλληνες ἐν τῇ διόδῳ. καλέεται δὲ ὁ χῶρος οὗτος ὑπὸ μὲν τῶν πλεόνων Ἑλλήνων Θερμοπύλαι, ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων καὶ περιοίκων Πύλαι. ἐστρατοπεδεύοντο μέν νυν ἑκάτεροι ἐν τούτοισι χωρίοισι, ἐπεκράτεε δὲ ὃ μὲν τῶν πρὸς βορέην ἄνεμον ἐχόντων πάντων μέχρι Τρηχῖνος, οἳ δὲ τῶν πρὸς νότον καὶ μεσαμβρίην φερόντων τὸ ἐπὶ ταύτης τῆς ἠπείρου.

[201] King Xerxes had pitched camp in Trachis in Malis and the Hellenes in the pass. This place is called Thermopylae by most of the Hellenes, but by the natives and their neighbours Pylae. Each lay encamped in these positions. Xerxes was master of everything north of Trachis, and the Hellenes of all that lay toward the south on the mainland.

To obtain a better impression of the situation, Godley provides his readers with the following map, in which a *stadion* roughly represents 185 m):

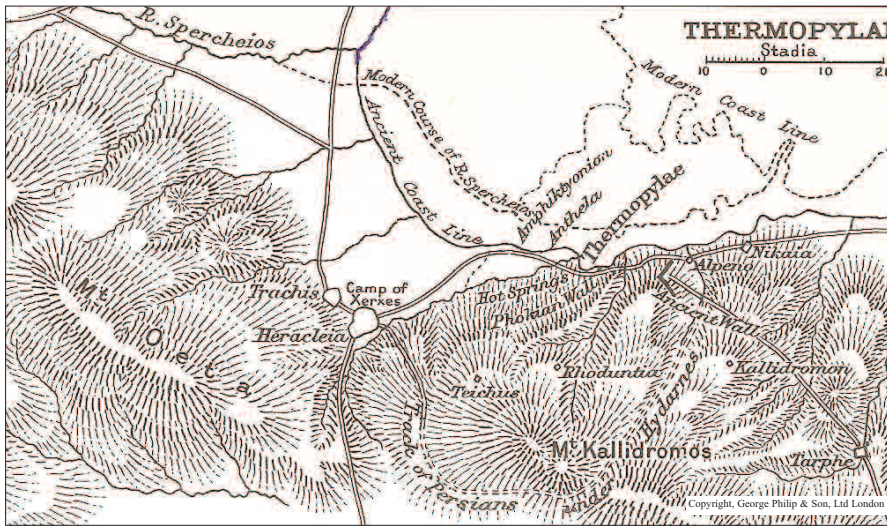

Fig. 2. Map of Thermopylae and surroundings, from Godley 1971, opposite 493.

From Herodotus' geographical descriptions regarding Thermopylae and surroundings it seems that he – or his source – was intimately familiar with the site. His knowledge, however, was not perfect, as already Schliemann (Schliemann 1883, 149) and more recently, e.g., Burn (Burn 1962, 414), Wallace (Wallace 1980, 21), and Pritchett (Pritchett 1982, 176-210) noticed. Nevertheless, as Pritchett observes: "On the basis of the Herodotean record, most of the features [sc. at Thermopylae] have been securely identified" (Pritchett 1982, 177). Some features, though, are as yet not identified with sufficient certainty. This is especially true for the so-called ἀτραπός ("short cut", "path") over the Anopaea (cf.

Hdt. 7.216-8; see also below). The path started in close proximity of the Persian campsite (near the village of Heracleia?), directly after crossing the Asopus River, and ended (cf. Hdt. 7.216) at the village of Alpeni (see Godley's map, Fig. 2). Though Wallace's attempt to identify the path, certainly at first sight, seems convincing, I feel inclined to support the objections by Pritchett (Pritchett 1982, *passim*), especially because 1) Wallace has paid insufficient attention to classical references regarding the people inhabiting the village of Oete and 2) the time it took him to complete the route, in spite of him hiking unimpeded.

Up to now no reconstruction seems to be completely beyond suspicion, if only because it appears that there may well have been more than a single byway, though I believe Pritchett's suggestion (1982, 176-210) comes close. Green (1996, 114-116), on the other hand, believes that Pritchett's reconstruction of the course of the track is the right one. As it is, I think that any credible reconstruction will have to deal satisfactory with the words of Pausanias (Paus. 10.22.8): περὶ δὲ τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ χρόνῳ τοὺς ἐν Θερμοπύλαις συνέβαινεν ἄλλα τοιαῦτα. ἀτραπός ἐστι διὰ τοῦ ὄρους τῆς Οἴτης, μία μὲν ἡ ὑπὲρ Τραχῖνος ἀπότομός τε τὰ πλείω καὶ ὄρθιος δεινῶς, ἑτέρα δὲ ἡ διὰ τῆς Αἰνιάνων ὁδεῦσαι στρατῷ ῥᾴων, δι᾽ ἧς καὶ Ὑδάρνης ποτὲ Μῆδος κατὰ νώτου τοῖς περὶ Λεωνίδην ἐπέθετο Ἕλλησι ("Meantime the Greeks at Thermopylae were faring as follows. There are two paths across Mount Oeta: the one above Trachis is very steep, and for the most part precipitous; the other, through the territory of the Aenianians, is easier for an army to cross. It was through this that on a former occasion Hydarnes the Persian passed to attack in the rear the Greeks under Leonidas"[4]: translation Jones, Loeb Classical Library). In spite of Pritchett's critical remarks on Pausanias' assertions (Pritchett 1982, 202-205), who, indeed unfortunately, appears to overlook some problems connected with this issue (like, e.g., the fact that the Persian troops were experienced in mountain warfare, see below), it is a source that is, as we write, not yet disproven beyond doubt.

In 1985, Pritchett underlined the (strategic) importance of the Thermopylae pass against attempts to minimise it (Pritchett 1985a, 190-216). As evidence he adduces, *inter alia*, the major battles fought there, not only that of 480 BC, but also those of 279 BC (against the Gauls) and of 191 BC (against the Romans): "In each case the Greeks assembled large armies of defense against forces invading Greece" (Pritchett 1985a, 191). Apart from these major events, there was a variety of other incidents at Thermopylae as well (Pritchett 1985a, 191-193; cf. also Stählin 1934, 2418-2423). How and Wells, in their by now obsolete commentary on Herodotus, phrase the importance of Thermopylae during the

[4] This observation might well be in contradiction with the remarks by Diodorus of Sicily (11.8.4), see below, that the Persian army followed a "narrow and precipitous path". It all depends on the definition of "easier", but underlines the problems facing those trying to reconstruct the path.

Persian advance of 480 BC as follows: "Herodotus clearly means to insist on three points of advantage at Thermopylae: 1) there was only one pass and that was both 2) narrower than Tempe [sc. the Vale of Tempe, in northern Thessaly, first intended as a suitable place to fight the Persians], and 3) nearer home [sc. nearer the Peloponnese, home of most of the Greek forces at Thermopylae]" (How/Wells 1964, vol. 2, 206; cf. also Green 1996, 113-117).

In line with the observation made by How and Wells, Pritchett clearly points out that Thermopylae was technically the most suited place to try and stop the Persian advance (Pritchett 1985a, 197-199). The passageway there was at the entrance and exit only a cart-way wide (i.e. probably no more than two to three metres), in the middle at its narrowest half a *plethron* [sc. *ca.* 15 m], at its widest *sexaginta passus* [sc. *ca.* 90 m] (as Livy remarks describing the battle of 191 BC: Liv. 36.15.10). This combination of features made Thermopylae an ideal place for a relatively small force to confront an opponent many times more numerous[5], especially because the strongest part of the Persian army, its cavalry, could not be used there to decide the battle. Though Pritchett admits there were routes in the region that evaded the Thermopylae pass, he adds that the odds for an invading army there were/would be even worse than at Thermopylae and therefore, probably, in advance unattractive for the Persian king (cf. Pritchett 1985a, 212-216; Green 1996, 114-115). The latter, as it appears, opted for the obvious route.

Even 750-odd years after the battle discussed on these pages, the route through the Thermopylae pass was, indeed, a difficult one for an army to enter that part of Greece to the south-west of it. It is indicated in a recently published palimpsest of the "*Dexippus Vindobinensis*" an eye-witness account by one Dexippus (not the historian Publius Dexippus) of the battle that took place in 267/268 AD[6]. In the text the situation at Thermopylae is described as follows: [Folio 192^{V} (Untere Schrift), lines 21-30]:
…ἐδόκει δὲ τὸ χωρίον καὶ ἄλλως | ἀσφαλέστατον εἶναι· οἷα δὴ τῆς ὁδοῦ διὰ δυσχωρί-|αν στενῆς οὔσης καὶ ἀπόρου· ἣ φέρει ἐπι τὴν | εἰσω πυλῶν ἑλλάδα· παρατείνουσα γὰρ ἐπι μή-|κιστον ἡ επ εὐβοιάς θάλασσα τά τε αγχοῦ των | ορῶν δ****δ****δυσεμβολώταταδια πηλὸν | ἐργάζεται· καὶ επιλαμβάνουσα τούτοις ἡ οἵτη | τὸ ὄρ(ος)· **********α· πεζῇ τὲ καὶ ἱππικῇ. | διὰ της εγγυτητος

[5] An advantage also acknowledged by Frontinus: *Lacedaemonii CCC contra innumerabilem multitudinem Persarum Thermopylas occupaverunt, quarum angustiae non amplius quam parem numerum comminus pugnaturum poterant admittere. Eaque ratione, quantum ad congressus facultatem, aequati numero barbarorum, virtute autem praestantes, magnam eorum partem ceciderunt* ("Against a countless horde of Persians, three hundred Spartans occupied the pass of Thermopylae that was so narrow that it only admitted a like number of hand-to-hand opponents. Therefore, [the Spartans] became numerically equal to the barbarians, so far as opportunity for fighting was concerned, but being superior to them in valour, they killed large numbers of them": Fron. *Str.* 2.13).

[6] Martin/Grusková 2014.

Fig. 3. Xerxes' invasion route, 480 BC, after passing the Vale of Tempe. Persian army in dark grey, Persian fleet in light grey. From: Keaveney 2011, 50.

τῳ̣πετρων· ἀπορώτατον ερ-|γαζεται το χωρι̣ογ·...[7] ("Die Gegend schien auch sonst die größte Sicherheit zu bieten, weil der Weg, der in den Teil Griechenlands innerhalb der Thermopylen führt, durch die Schwierigkeit des Geländes eng und unwegsam ist: Das Meer bei Euböa erstreckt sich nämlich sehr weit und macht damit das Gebiet nahe den Bergen wegen des Sumpfes ... für einen Einfall äußerst ungeeignet, und daran schließt sich das Oitagebirge an und macht so durch die Enge der Felsen die Gegend für Fußheer und Reiterei äußerst schwer zu durchqueren": translation Gunther Martin).

Classical Greek and Roman sources

Preliminary remarks

As indicated above in the summary, Herodotus is until the present day the best known – and most frequently referred to – classical source for the Battle of Thermopylae[8]. It is even possible that he was the earliest Greek author to write

[7] Accentuation and word picture as on the manuscript.

[8] Even Amélie Kuhrt, in her monumental *The Persian Empire* (2007), refers to Herodotus as the source for Xerxes' expedition to Greece. The same statement is valid for Briant 2003. Nevertheless, Stephanie West (West, S. 2002, at 15-16) rightly observed: "...for a continuous narrative of events we rely on Herodotus, and modern handbooks largely reproduce his account, occasionally warning the reader that his standards were not those of a modern historian (...). We thus become familiar with Herodotus' version of events before we realise that it is his, and it is difficult to view his narrative with properly detachment".

on the Persian Wars (as we have come used to call the struggle between the Persian Empire and the Greek *poleis*), *at least in their entirety* (my italics). M.A. Flower observes: "In any case, it is doubtful whether any fifth-century historical writer either published before Herodotus or gave a detailed narrative of the Persian Wars: *contra* R.L. Fowler, 'Herodotos and His Contemporaries', *JHS* [viz. *Journal of Hellenic Studies*] 116 (1996), 62-87, who maintains, against Jacoby, that some of the so-called 'local' historians were known to Herodotus, among whom he includes Charon (but not Damastes). For the standard view that all such historians were later than Herodotus, see F. Jacoby, *Abhandlungen zur griechischen Geschichtsschreibung*, H. Bloch (ed.), (Leiden, 1956), pp. 16-64; and note S. Hornblower, *Thucydides* (Baltimore, 1987), p. 19, n. 14" (cf. Flower 1998, 368 note 23). As it is, I rather go with the view of Robert Fowler here, especially because of the statement by Dionysius of Halicarnassus[9], and suggest that Herodotus based the *Histories* not merely upon ὄψις, "observation" (Hdt. 2.99, 147), and ἀκοή, "hearsay" (Hdt. 2.123.1, 7.152.3), but also upon written sources, either in prose or in poetry (cf. also Macan 1908, vol. 2, 4). Whether or not those written sources also have paid attention to the wars between Greeks and Persians, either in their entirety or on specific events, is another matter: evidence therefore largely lacks but is not altogether absent.

---

[9] The remarks by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in my view, support the views of Fowler: ἀρχαῖοι μὲν οὖν συγγραφεῖς πολλοὶ καὶ κατὰ πολλοὺς τόπους ἐγένοντο πρὸ τοῦ Πελοποννησιακοῦ πολέμου· ἐν οἷς ἐστιν Εὐγέων τε ὁ Σάμιος καὶ Δηίοχος ὁ Προκοννήσιος καὶ Εὔδημος ὁ Πάριος καὶ Δημοκλῆς ὁ Φυγελεὺς καὶ Ἑκαταῖος ὁ Μιλήσιος, ὅ τε Ἀργεῖος Ἀκουσίλαος καὶ ὁ Λαμψακηνὸς Χάρων καὶ ὁ Χαλκηδόνιος Ἀμελησαγόρας, ὀλίγῳ δὲ πρεσβύτεροι τῶν Πελοποννησιακῶν καὶ μέχρι τῆς Θουκυδίδου παρεκτείναντες ἡλικίας Ἑλλάνικός τε ὁ Λέσβιος καὶ Δαμάστης ὁ Σιγειεὺς καὶ Ξενομήδης ὁ Χῖος καὶ Ξάνθος ὁ Λυδὸς καὶ ἄλλοι συχνοί ("There were, then, many ancient historians and from many places before the Peloponnesian War: among them we find Eugeon of Samos, Deiochus of Proconnesus, Eudemus of Paros, Democles of Phygele, Hecataeus of Miletus, the Argive Acusilaus, the Lampsacene Charon, the Chalcedonian Amelesagoras; born a little before the Peloponnesian War and living down to the time of Thucydides were Hellanicus of Lesbos, Damastes of Sigeion, Xenomedes of Ceos, Xanthus the Lydian and many others": D.H. *Th*. 5). Admittedly their works ("some on Greek history, others on foreign": *ibidem*) not all predated Herodotus' work (Hellanicus, e.g., was a contemporary), but certainly that of Hecataeus of Miletus did. His *Periegesis* or *Periodos* and *Genealogies* are generally regarded as one of Herodotus' chief literary sources (in spite of the fact that the latter frequently tries to discredit Hecataeus): cf. also, e.g., Usher 1985[2], 2-3, 25; Zahrnt 2011, 768. Cf. also *FGrH/BNJ* 1 T1 = *Suda* s.v. Ἑκαταῖος Ἡγησάνδρου Μιλήσιος (ed. Adler, vol. 2: 213 *s.v.* epsilon,360: Ἑκαταῖος Ἡγησάνδρου Μιλήσιος· γέγονε κατὰ τοὺς Δαρείου χρόνους τοῦ μετὰ Καμβύσην βασιλεύσαντος, ὅτε καὶ Διονύσιος ἦν ὁ Μιλήσιος, ἐπὶ τῆς ξε΄ ὀλυμπιάδος· ἱστοριογράφος. Ἡρόδοτος δὲ ὁ Ἁλικαρνασεὺς ὠφέληται τούτου, νεώτερος ὤν. καὶ ἦν ἀκουστὴς Πυθαγόρου[?] ὁ Ἑκαταῖος. πρῶτος δὲ ἱστορίαν πεζῶς ἐξήνεγκε, συγγραφὴν δὲ Φερεκύδης. τὰ γὰρ Ἀκουσιλάου νοθεύεται ("Hecataeus, son of Hegesander, from Miletus. He lived at the time of Darius, who ruled after Cambyses, as did also Dionysius of Miletus, in the sixty-fifth Olympiad [sc. 520-516 BC]. He was a historian. Herodotus of Halicarnassus was influenced by him, inasmuch as he is younger. Hecataeus was a student of Pythagoras [?]. *He was the first to compose history in prose* [my italics], while Pherecydes was the first to write in prose; the works of Acusilaus are spurious").

Fig. 4. Comprehensive view of Thermopylae today, looking in a west-north-westerly direction. The road, more or less, follows the ancient coastline. Photo: Jona Lendering, <http://www.livius.org/pictures/greece/thermopylae/thermopylae-view-from-electricity-mast/>.

In spite of the fact that he is our oldest surviving comprehensive source, Herodotus is by no means our *only* transmitted source for the Battle of Thermopylae. The battle also featured in, amongst others, the works of Diodorus of Sicily (11.4.1-10.4; below, pp. 186-187), of Ctesias of Cnidus (F. 13 §§ 27-28; below, pp. 218-219), of Isocrates (*Panegyricus* 90-92, *Archidamus* 99-100; below, pp. 208-211), of Justin (*Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 2.11.2-18; below, pp. 200-201), and of Plutarch of Chaeronea (*De Herodoti Malignitate* 864E-867B; below, pp. 195-197). Next to these, some accounts of the battle are (almost) completely lost or merely survive indirectly, like (probably this list is not at all exhaustive) those of Ephorus of Cyme (below, pp. 203-205) and, probably, Simonides of Ceos (who dedicated (part of) a lyric poem to the battle: cf., e.g., Flower 1998, 370; also below, pp. 212-216). I am not sure whether also the logographer Hellanicus of Lesbos, *ca*. 490-*ca*. 405 BC, in one of his about

thirty works has written anything regarding the Battle of Thermopylae: if so, it, too, has been lost[10]. The same is also valid, e.g., for the part of the *Universal History* by Nicolaus of Damascus dealing with the battle[11].

Of the accounts that have been transmitted, completely or not, the work of Herodotus appears to represent a, more or less, autonomous version: to the best of my knowledge no identifiable sources have, as yet, been assigned in his story on 'Thermopylae', apart from references to an (apocryphal) oracle from Delphi (Hdt. 7.220.4) and epigrams by Simonides (Hdt. 7. 228). Diodorus, Justin, and Plutarch appear to have based their stories, entirely or at least partially, either on the work of Ephorus (cf., e.g., Hammond 1996, 2-4; Flower 1998, 365-366; Haillet 2002, xv; lately M. Trundle, Thermopylae, in: Matthew/Trundle 2013, 27-38 at 29) or the common source(s) of Isocrates and Ephorus, perhaps authors like Charon of Lampsacus or Damastes of Sigeum (cf. Barber 1935, 121-122; Hammond 1996, 10) or the poet Simonides (Flower 1998, 369-372). As regards Ctesias, finally, it seems that his work must be discussed separately. First, however, we shall discuss some incompatibilities between the works of Herodotus and Diodorus, the author who devoted (after Herodotus) the most (preserved) attention to the battle of Thermopylae.

Herodotus and Diodorus compared

The composition of the Greek forces[12]

One of the first peculiarities that strikes the eye of the reader are the differences

---

[10] It appears that Hellanicus wrote at least an *Atthis* and a *Persica* (cf. *FGrH/BNJ* 4 FF 59-63; also *BNJ* 323a F 28 – a commentary on Plu. *Herod. Malign*. 869A). A remark on the Battle of Thermopylae could fit in either account. As to the scope of Hellanicus´ work, e.g. Thucydides is rather vague. Discussing the development of the Delian League, Thucydides (1.97.2) states: ἔγραψα δὲ αὐτὰ καὶ τὴν ἐκβολὴν τοῦ λόγου ἐποιησάμην διὰ τόδε, ὅτι τοῖς πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἅπασιν ἐκλιπὲς τοῦτο ἦν τὸ χωρίον καὶ ἢ τὰ πρὸ τῶν Μηδικῶν Ἑλληνικὰ ξυνετίθεσαν ἢ αὐτὰ τὰ Μηδικά· τούτων δὲ ὅσπερ καὶ ἥψατο ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ ξυγγραφῇ Ἑλλάνικος, βραχέως τε καὶ τοῖς χρόνοις οὐκ ἀκριβῶς ἐπεμνήσθη· ("I have made a digression to write of these matters for the reason that this period has been omitted by *all my predecessors, who have confined their narratives either to Hellenic affairs before the Persian Wars or to the Persian Wars themselves* [my italics: the context makes in my view clear that τὰ Μηδικά can only be translated here as "Persian Wars" and not as "Persian history"]; and Hellanicus, the only one of these predecessors who has ever touched upon this period, has in his *Attic History* treated of it briefly, and with inaccuracy as regards his chronology"). What this passage at least does appear to confirm is that Herodotus was not the only author living in the 5th century BC to discuss the so-called Persian Wars.

[11] Nicolaus of Damascus wrote a so-called *Universal History* in 144 books, of which books 19-95 – that may have included an account of the Greco-Persian Wars, perhaps including information on the Battle of Thermopylae – are completely lost: cf. Parmentier-Morin 1998, 168. For the term 'Universal History', see below p. 203.

[12] I have made no effort here to estimate the number of Persian troops present at Thermopylae. Normally, the figures presented for Persian armies in Greek literature are hugely exaggerated. The cause for this is a basic misconception of, e.g., the structure of Persian armies: see, e.g., Barkworth 1993; Keaveney 2011, 38-39.

between both authors as regards the strength and composition of the Greek troops. For clarity's sake, I have tried to fit the numbers both authors present in a table, stating the number of each of the Greek states contributing soldiers to the force commanded by the Spartan King Leonidas. Regrettably, not all numbers are beyond discussion, largely due to the numbers as presented by the authors themselves. Herodotus 7.202, e.g., mentions that there were 3,100 Peloponnesians, but in Herodotus 7.228 that number is given as 4,000. The difference is not explained in Herodotus' text (see also below).

Group	Numbers – Herodotus (7.202-203.1)	Numbers – Diodorus (11.4.2-7)	(11.4.6)	combined
Lacedaemonians/ *Perioeci*	900?	1,000		
Spartan hoplites	300	300		
Mantineans	500	--		
Tegeans	500	--		
Arcadian Orchomenos	120	--		
Other Arcadians	1,000	--		
Corinthians	400[13]	--		
Phlians	200	--		
Mycenaeans	80	--		
Peloponnesians (not specified)		3,000		
Total Peloponnesians	**3,000 or 4,000**	**1,000 or 1,300**		**4,000 or 4,300**
Thespians	700	In 11.8.5 Diodorus mentions the presence of Thespians, originally probably over 200 men		
Malians	--	1,000		
Thebans	400	400		
Phocians	1,000	1,000		
Opuntian Locrians	"All they had"	1,000		
Grand Total	**5,200 (or 6,100) plus the Opuntian Locrians**	**7,400 (or 7,700) plus Thespians**		

Table I. Composition of the Greek troops at the Battle of Thermopylae.

[13] Cf. also D. Chr. 37.17: μισοβάρβαροι μὲν γὰρ οὕτως ἦσαν, ὥστε εἰς Θερμοπύλας τετρακοσίους σφῶν αὐτῶν ἀπέστειλαν, ὅτεπερ καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι τριακοσίους ("They were such haters of Persians that they sent to Thermopylae four hundred of their own troops, on the same occasion on which the Spartans sent three hundred").

Elsewhere in literature (see below, *passim*), the most frequently mentioned number of Peloponnesians is 4,000, of the Spartans 1,000. Therefore, I think we should accept these as the more or less 'established' data[14]. As a matter of fact, as regards the strength of the Opuntian Locrians, Pausanias remarks that they were no more than 6,000 in number (Paus. 10.20.2); as regards the other troops collected at Thermopylae, Pausanias presents the same numbers as Herodotus.

The Spartan mission

All authors agree that the command of the force to defend Greece at Thermopylae was given to the Spartan King Leonidas and that he had 300 Spartiates with him. Herodotus refers to them as ἐπιλεξάμενος ἄνδρας τε τοὺς καταστεῶτας τριηκοσίους καὶ τοῖσι ἐτύγχανον παῖδες ἐόντες (Hdt. 7.205.2). Godley translates this, in the Loeb Classical Library, as: "with a picked force of the customary three hundred, and those that had sons", explaining in a note (Godley 1971, 520-521 note 1) that 300 was the regular number of the Spartan's king bodyguard[15] (as well as the received tradition of only 300 Spartans at Thermopylae). He adds that the sentence cannot be explained, unless "ἐπιλεξάμενος could mean 'selecting from' …; but I do not think it can". Under the circumstances and based upon *LSJ* s.v. ἐπιλέγω *ad* II, I believe we have as yet to consider such a translation of the word as a definite possibility here[15a]. Whether there were – in Herodotus' perception – also some 900 other Lacedaemonians (*perioeci* or *neodamodeis*) is a matter of contention, based both upon the total number of soldiers mentioned in Hdt. 7.228 and also adducing the reference of Diodorus 11.4.5 (cf. for this passage also the remarks of Macan 1908, vol. 1.1, 307 numbers 8 and 9).

A problem in the latter paragraph is the phrase καὶ σὺν αὐτοῖς [sc. the Lacedaemonians] Σπαρτιᾶται τριακόσιοι[16], where σὺν is generally understood as

[14] Demosthenes still mentions another force: πάλιν δὲ Ξέρξου ἰόντος ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα, Θηβαίων μηδισάντων, οὐκ ἐτόλμησαν ἀποστῆναι τῆς ὑμετέρας φιλίας, ἀλλὰ μόνοι τῶν ἄλλων Βοιωτῶν οἱ μὲν ἡμίσεις αὐτῶν μετὰ Λακεδαιμονίων καὶ Λεωνίδου ἐν Θερμοπύλαις παραταξάμενοι τῷ βαρβάρῳ ἐπιόντι συναπώλοντο ("When Xerxes marched against Greece and the Thebans medised, the Plataeans refused to withdraw from their alliance with us [sc. Athens], but, unsupported by any others of the Boeotians, half of them positioned themselves in Thermopylae against the advancing Persian together with the Lacedaemonians and Leonidas, and perished with them": D. **59**.95). Demosthenes seems to overlook the Thespians (as well as the 400 Thebans).

[15] Elsewhere in Herodotus, viz. Hdt. 6.56, is mentioned that Spartan kings had a body of 100 selected men as bodyguards with them in war. Ruffing stipulates that 300 was, in classical literature, a highly symbolic number, not necessarily very precise: Ruffing, K. 2013: 300, in: Dunsch/Ruffing 2013, 201-221 at 211 and note 41. Also see Dillery 1996, 235 note 55.

[15a] In his new edition of Herodotus (Oxford 2015a) N.G. Wilson suggests to delete τους: Leonidas now has a picked force of 300 men who already fathered children. Also see Wilson 2015b: 150 ad 7.205.2.

[16] "And together with them three hundred Spartiates" or "And among them three hundred Spartiates".

"together with", but might as well be meant here – in view of the context of D.S. 11.4.2 – as "including" or "among them". Both the Greek itself and the context are not helping here to determine the meaning. Therefore, the interpretation of σὺν marks the difference expressed in the table as regards the total number of Peloponnesians present at Thermopylae, sc. 4,000 or 4,300: in the light of what I referred to above as so-called established data, though, I think we preferably should go here for the meaning of σὺν as "including".

Another feature in Diodorus, absent in Herodotus' account, is the reason adduced by Leonidas to take only a limited number of Lacedaemonians with him. In spite of the urge of the *ephors*, Leonidas believed – according to Diodorus (11.4.2-4) – that the number was amply sufficient, indicating that the expedition was, in fact, a mere 'suicide mission'[17]: ἀπεκρίθη δὲ ὅτι τῷ λόγῳ μὲν ἐπὶ τὴν φυλακὴν ἄγει τῶν παρόδων, τῷ δ' ἔργῳ περὶ τῆς κοινῆς ἐλευθερίας ἀποθανουμένους ("he replied that in name he led them to guard the passes, but in fact to be killed for the common freedom"). Whether Diodorus' representation reflects actual considerations or is merely an *interpretatio post eventum* can, regrettably, not be determined any more. We can, though, conclude that Diodorus' representation of the facts contradicts Herodotus' statements. Herotodus' remarks in 7.206 suggest that Leonidas' force only was meant to be a vanguard, sent out to prevent more defection to the Persians among Sparta's Greek allies, and that the main force of the Spartans was due to arrive later, after the festival of the *Carnea*[18]. The Persians, however, apparently advanced quicker than anticipated. It may have been a scenario, but we lack evidence to prove or disprove either account. As it is, the versions of the two authors are incompatible.

The position of the Thebans, part 1

One of the most noteworthy contingents in the army of Leonidas was that of the Thebans. Both Diodorus and Herodotus acknowledge in their accounts that Thebes was a city divided in itself, some citizens medising (i.e. favouring

---

[17] For this term cf., e.g., Matthew 2013, in: Matthew/Trundle 2013, 60-99, e.g., at 60. As a matter of fact, Matthew does not believe it was one: cf. 67 and the conclusion, 99.

[18] One of the great national festivals of Sparta, held in honour of Apollo *Carneus*. The *Carnea* took place every year from the 7th to the 15th of the month *Carneus* (i.e. *Metageitnion*, August). During this period all military operations were suspended. Cf., e.g., Farnell 1907, 131-135. Moreover, 480 BC also was an Olympic year, celebrating the 75th games, with Astyalus of Croton winning the *stadion*-run for the 3rd time in succession: cf. Eus. *Chron*. *ad loc*. Apart from Herodotus 7.206.2, no other source mentions any effect of the Olympics on the preparations for the defense of Greece against the Persians; Lazenby 1964, 270 follows Herodotus. Must we, though, assume there has been such an effect, or did it serve only as a pretext? Matthew 2013, in: Matthew/Trundle 2013, 60-99 at 68 calculates that the Olympic festival of 480 BC concluded around July 21: the Battle of Thermopylae took place at least a month later, in itself providing for many *poleis* (admittedly not for all) sufficient time for more than even a basic preparation, even more so because the Persian advance was known well beforehand. See also Keaveney 2011, 56 (with note 4 on 119), 90.

Persia), others supporting the Greek cause. Both Diodorus and Herodotus state that there were (some) four hundred Thebans in the army led by Leonidas. Diodorus reports it as a matter of fact: ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Θηβαίων ἀπὸ τῆς ἑτέρας μερίδος ὡς τετρακόσιοι· διεφέροντο γὰρ οἱ τὰς Θήβας κατοικοῦντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους περὶ τῆς πρὸς τοὺς Πέρσας συμμαχίας ("Likewise about four hundred Thebans of the other party [sc. the anti-Persians]; the inhabitants of Thebes were divided amongst themselves as regards the alliance with the Persians": D.S. 11.4.7). Also Herodotus at first sight seems to report factually, but he ends with a Parthian shot: [7.205.2] ... παραλαβὼν δὲ ἀπίκετο καὶ Θηβαίων τοὺς ἐς τὸν ἀριθμὸν λογισάμενος εἶπον, τῶν ἐστρατήγεε Λεοντιάδης ὁ Εὐρυμάχου. [3] τοῦδε δὲ εἵνεκα τούτους σπουδὴν ἐποιήσατο Λεωνίδης μούνους Ἑλλήνων παραλαβεῖν, ὅτι σφέων μεγάλως κατηγόρητο μηδίζειν· παρεκάλεε ὧν ἐς τὸν πόλεμον, θέλων εἰδέναι εἴτε συμπέμψουσι εἴτε καὶ ἀπερέουσι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμφανέος τὴν Ἑλλήνων συμμαχίην. *οἳ δὲ ἀλλοφρονέοντες ἔπεμπον* ("[7.205.2] … He [sc. Leonidas] arrived [sc. at Thermopylae] and brought with him as well those Thebans that I reported in the counting, led by Leontiades the son of Eurymachus. [3] Leonidas made more effort to bring these with him than any other of the Greeks, because they were heavily charged to favour the Persians; therefore he summoned them to the war, wishing to see whether either they would send a force with him or clearly defy the Greek alliance. *They sent the men, though they had other sympathies* [my italics, here and in the Greek]". Such, after all depreciating, remarks as regards the Thebans earned Herodotus the anger of Plutarch, as we shall discuss later.

Herodotus' negative view regarding Thebes emerges once again in 7.222: … Θεσπιέες δὲ καὶ Θηβαῖοι κατέμειναν μοῦνοι παρὰ Λακεδαιμονίοισι. *τούτων δὲ Θηβαῖοι μὲν ἀέκοντες ἔμενον καὶ οὐ βουλόμενοι· κατεῖχε γὰρ σφέας Λεωνίδης ἐν ὁμήρων λόγῳ ποιεύμενος* ("The Thespians and Thebans alone remained by the Lacedaemonians. *Of these, the Thebans stayed involuntary and unwilling; in fact, Leonidas detained them, treating them as hostages* [my italics, here and in the Greek]"). Herodotus adds that the Thespians stayed willingly and died fighting, like the Lacedaemonians. Though Herodotus' remarks of 7.222 imply that also the Thebans had to stay and fight, he later remarks: οἱ δὲ Θηβαῖοι, τῶν ὁ Λεοντιάδης ἐστρατήγεε, τέως μὲν μετὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐόντες ἐμάχοντο ὑπ᾽ ἀναγκαίης ἐχόμενοι πρὸς τὴν βασιλέος στρατιήν· ὡς δὲ εἶδον κατυπέρτερα τῶν Περσέων γινόμενα τὰ πρήγματα, οὕτω δή, τῶν σὺν Λεωνίδῃ Ἑλλήνων ἐπειγομένων ἐπὶ τὸν κολωνόν, ἀποσχισθέντες τούτων χεῖράς τε προέτεινον καὶ ἤισαν ἅσσον τῶν βαρβάρων, λέγοντες τὸν ἀληθέστατον τῶν λόγων, ὡς καὶ μηδίζουσι καὶ γῆν τε καὶ ὕδωρ ἐν πρώτοισι ἔδοσαν βασιλέι, ὑπὸ δὲ ἀναγκαίης ἐχόμενοι ἐς Θερμοπύλας ἀπικοίατο καὶ ἀναίτιοι εἶεν τοῦ τρώματος τοῦ γεγονότος βασιλέι. [2] ὥστε ταῦτα λέγοντες περιεγίνοντο: εἶχον γὰρ καὶ Θεσσαλοὺς τούτων τῶν λόγων μάρτυρας ("As for the Thebans, commanded by Leontiades, while being with the Greeks they were forced by necessity to fight against the king's army. However, when they saw that the Persians' affairs fared better, at the very moment, when the Greeks with Leonidas were retreating to-

wards the Colonus [i.e. the hill], separating themselves from them [sc. the Greeks] they both held out their hands and went nearer to the Persians, saying the truest of words, that they not only medised but also among the first had given earth and water to the king, but had come to Thermopylae forced by necessity and were not guilty of the harm done to the king. [2] As a result, they saved their lives by this plea; in fact, they had the Thessalians as well as witnesses of their words": Hdt. 7.233.1-2). As it happened, Herodotus continues (apparently with some delight), they did not escape completely unscathed: most of them, from Leontiades downward, were, on Xerxes' command, branded with the king's marks.

The negative tenor regarding the Thebans we find in Herodotus' account (whether it is his own attitude or inspired by a source as Macan believes: Macan 1908, 328 *ad* 7.222 nr. 3: "the Greek critic [i.e. Plutarch] is too hasty in ascribing to Hdt. himself the κακοήθεια which undoubtedly belongs to Hdt.'s sources") is completely absent in Diodorus' version of the events[19]. In 11.8.5 Diodorus tells us that a deserter from Xerxes' camp, one Tyrrhastiadas of Cyme, φιλόκαλος δὲ καὶ τὸν τρόπον ὢν ἀγαθός ("honourable and upright in attitude"), warned Leonidas that the Persian king had found himself a man who had been ready to guide a Persian force to behind Leonidas' army. Leonidas ordered the other contingents of the Greeks to leave and fight the Persians another day, but he himself with the rest of the Lacedaemonians as well as the men from Thespiae (like Thebes a city in Boeotia) remained at Thermopylae to defend the pass, altogether no more than five hundred men. As regards this passage, Michael Flower (rather defiantly) wrote: "This account, nearly all would agree, derives from Ephorus (himself a Cymaean)[20], but where did he find it? The *communis opinio* is that Ephorus simply made up the night attack[21] whole cloth. Only one scholar, Peter Green, has conceded that it may contain 'a substratum of truth'[22], and suggests that Leonidas

---

[19] This needs not surprise us. As we shall discuss below (under Ephorus, pp. 203-205), Ephorus – one of Diodorus' sources – was impartial towards Thebes; moreover Diodorus mentions both the *Greek Histories* of Dionysodorus and Anaxis the Boeotians among his sources (D.S. 15.95.4): it appears to me not at all impossible that they may have had some (further) mitigating influence on Diodorus' view on Thebes and/or Thebans. Regrettably, the works of Dionysodorus and Anaxis the Boeotians are completely lost.

[20] To the best of my knowledge, however, there is no single conclusive evidence, like a reference that the account really did derive from Ephorus but only circumstantial evidence that might support such an assumption.

[21] See for the night attack below, *sub* The final encounter, part 1, pp. 182-190. Trundle, in: Matthew/Trundle 2013, 176 note 27 lists a variety of modern authors stating Ephorus made the night attack up. Flower (1998, 369-371) suggests that the poetry of Simonides may have been the original source for the story of the night attack, but as his work is largely lost (apart from some epigrams and a fragment preserved by Diodorus) this can be adduced as suggestion at best but certainly not as evidence.

[22] Green (2006, 61, note 43) writes that it is "not necessarily to be dismissed as a fabrication" simply because it is absent in Herodotus: see further below under The final encounter, part 1, pp. 182-190. It is noteworthy that Green in his 1996 book pays no attention to a night attack.

might have sent a determined group of men to attempt the assassination of the Great King. It is easy enough to imagine why Ephorus would have wanted to give a different account than did Herodotus; in order to make his own account authoritative he needed to say something that was new, and not just stylistically more modern" (Flower 1998, 366). As mentioned above (note 19), Flower suggests Simonides might well be the source for this tradition and he does not appear to assume from the start, like, e.g., Hignett before (cf. Hignett 1963, 15), that only Herodotus' version is of any value and that Ephorus (almost consequently) must be demonstrably wrong[23]. On the danger to be accused of a biased view against one or in favour of another source, I find the *a priori* position as held by (*inter alios*) Hignett, irrespective of all of this author's qualities, untenable.

The atrapos

As early in his story as Hdt. 7.175.2, Herodotus mentions the existence of a byway to avoid the pass of Thermopylae: τὴν δὲ ἀτραπόν, δι᾽ ἣλωσαν οἱ ἁλόντες Ἑλλήνων ἐν Θερμοπύλῃσι, οὐδὲ ἤδεσαν ἐοῦσαν πρότερον ἢ περ ἀπικόμενοι ἐς Θερμοπύλας ἐπύθοντο Τρηχινίων ("As regards the path that caused the fall of the fallen of the Greeks at Thermopylae, they [sc. the Spartans] did not know its existence before they heard of it from the Trachinians upon arrival at Thermopylae"). The byway itself was, as it appears, an ancient one: τὴν δὲ ἀτραπὸν ταύτην ἐξεῦρον μὲν οἱ ἐπιχώριοι Μηλιέες, ἐξευρόντες δὲ Θεσσαλοῖσι κατηγήσαντο ἐπὶ Φωκέας, τότε ὅτε οἱ Φωκέες φράξαντες τείχεϊ τὴν ἐσβολὴν ἦσαν ἐν σκέπῃ τοῦ πολέμου ("This path, then, had been discovered by the native Malians, who, finding it, acted as guides for the Thessalians against Phocis, at the time when the Phocians, fortifying the pass with a wall, were in shelter from the war [sc. with the Thessalians]": Hdt. 7.215). However, as it was, the path must have offered quite some problems to follow, as the vicissitudes of Cato there in 191 BC demonstrate (see Plu. *Cat.Ma.* 13). For a more detailed review of the *atrapos* see above, pp. 168-169, for the pass of Thermopylae above pp. 169-171 and below, p. 183, Fig. 5, pp.193-194.

In Herodotus' version, Xerxes was approached, during the stalemate that ensued after the Greeks in the pass had repelled the Persians during two days, by either Epialtes[24], son of Eurydemus, a Malian (Hdt. 7.213), Herodotus' favourite trai-

---

[23] Cf. the remarks of Fornara 1983, note 63: "No ancient writer could withstand the combined assaults of Wilamowitz, Schwartz, and Jacoby, who made Ephorus the incarnation of all that was objectionable in Greek historiography". Also elsewhere we have seen that notably the views of Jacoby and Schwartz have (had) a tremendous impact on later generations of historians: cf., e.g., Jacoby 1922, 2047 for the view as regards Ctesias (see also Stronk 2010, 51-54); Schwartz 1905, 663-664 for that on Diodorus (see also Green 2006, 33-34). Also see Luraghi 2014, 147-148.

[24] The (form of the) name as rendered by Herodotus: cf., e.g., Hude (ed.) 1958 and Wilson 2015a at 7.213.3 and Macan. Strabo, on the other hand, like many modern authors, uses the name Ἐφιάλτης "Ephialtes": cf., e.g., Str. 1.1.17/C 10.

tor, or Onetes, son of Phanagoras, of Carystus and Corydallus of Anticyra. He (or they, of course) disclosed the existence of the path to the Persian king. As it seems (cf. Hdt. 7.215), Epialtes (we shall follow Herodotus' main version) promised to guide a Persian force over the path. The king charged Hydarnes[25], the commander of the so-called Immortals[26] – the elite unit of the Persian army –, and his men with the task at hand[27]. As Herodotus states: ὁρμέατο δὲ περὶ λύχνων ἁφᾶς ἐκ τοῦ στρατοπέδου ("He [sc. Hydarnes] set forth from the camp about the time the lamps are lit"). They marched all night, ἐν δεξιῇ μὲν ἔχοντες ὄρεα τὰ Οἰταίων, ἐν ἀριστερῇ δὲ τὰ Τρηχινίων ("keeping the mountains of the Oetaeans to their right, those of the Trachinians to their left"). At dawn they reached the summit of the pass. As regards the Greek force and the *atrapos*, Hdt. 7.212.2 remarks that the Phocians "had been sent to the mountain to guard the path". Hdt. 7.218 tells the sequel: the Phocians were surprised by Hydarnes and his men, were attacked, fled to the top of the mountain, and left the path open for the Persian elite force to descend and position themselves behind the force of Leonidas that had, up to then, allegedly fought in relays in their national contingents (see Hdt. 7.220.2), if only to avoid to become too fatigued too soon.

As might be expected under the circumstances, Diodorus' story, much more condensed than Herodotus', deviates from the latter's. Diodorus informs his audience that: [4] ἀπορουμένου δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ νομίζοντος μηδένα τολμήσειν ἔτι μάχεσθαι, ἦκε πρὸς αὐτὸν Τραχίνιός τις τῶν ἐγχωρίων, ἔμπειρος ὢν τῆς ὀρεινῆς χώρας. οὗτος τῷ Ξέρξῃ προσελθὼν ἐπηγγείλατο διά τινος ἀτραποῦ στενῆς καὶ παρακρήμνου τοὺς Πέρσας ὁδηγήσειν, ὥστε γενέσθαι τοὺς συνελθόντας αὐτῷ κατόπιν τῶν περὶ τὸν Λεωνίδην, καὶ τούτῳ τῷ τρόπῳ περιληφθέντας αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ μέσον ῥᾳδίως ἀναιρεθήσεσθαι. [5] ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς περιχαρὴς ἐγένετο, καὶ τιμήσας δωρεαῖς τὸν Τραχίνιον συνεξέπεμψεν αὐτῷ στρατιώτας δισμυρίους νυκτός ("[4] While the king was dismayed and believed that no man would dare to go into battle again, there came to him a Trachinian, someone of the natives, who was familiar with the mountainous area. This man, approaching Xerxes, promised to lead the Persians by way of a narrow and pre-

---

[25] Hydarnes (Pers.: *Vidarna*: Kent 1953, 208 *s.v.*) was the **hazāra-patiš* ("master of a thousand") or *chiliarch.* He commanded the royal bodyguard and all court security and enjoyed the complete confidence of the ruler, controlling access to his personage through the protocol of the royal audience. See: Keaveney 2010, 499-508; see also Llewellyn-Jones (forthcoming).

[26] Cf. Hdt. 7.211.1. The name 'Immortals' for the elite unit in the Persian army (probably a standing force, serving simultaneously as the king's guard), we notably find in Herodotus, just like their number (10,000 men), but in few other classical authors. Perhaps Herodotus has misunderstood his source (or the source himself/herself was mistaken) and understood *anauša* (from *a[n]*, negating prefix, and *auša*, "death", hence →) "immortal" instead of *anušiya* "companion", a much more common denomination for such units in literature. See: Dandamaev 1989, 227-228. Cf. also Kent 1953, 168 s.v. *Anušiya*.

[27] As Keaveney 2011, 29 stresses, "the Persians were skilled in mountain warfare". This may have greatly facilitated their commission.

cipitous path, in order to get those who accompanied him behind the forces of Leonidas and, having surrounded them in this manner, these would be easily annihilated. [5] The king was delighted and, after honouring the Trachinian with presents, he sent with him twenty thousand soldiers under cover of night": D.S. 11.8.4).

As I have referred to above, Diodorus tells us in 11.8.5 that a deserter from Xerxes' camp, one Tyrrhastiadas of Cyme, warned Leonidas of the danger that threatened him and his men. It is noteworthy that also Herodotus (Hdt. 7.219.1) refers to deserters, apparently from the Persians, warning Leonidas ἔτι νυκτὸς ("while it was still night") of the circuit made by Hydarnes and his men. There is, though, no reference whatsoever to a guard of the Greeks on the byway in Diodorus' account. In fact, Diodorus' version might be read, on this point, as criticism, though it is not worded in any way, on Leonidas' qualities as a strategist. Leonidas had, as it seems, not assured himself of the safety of his position through either a physical reconnaissance of the surroundings and/or the gathering of local knowledge, nor did he send, once informed about the intentions of the Persians, a force to the path, if only to slow down the Persians' advance. Naturally, the way it is described here, Leonidas' attitude does add to the heroic image painted of both him and his men in the sequel, but that is hardly the point (though it may well have been an important point for Diodorus' goal of the *Bibliotheca*: see below, pp. 192-193)[28].

The final encounter, part 1

Herodotus recounts, in 7.219.2, that, after their situation had become clear, among the Greeks οἳ μὲν ἀπαλλάσσοντο καὶ διασκεδασθέντες κατὰ πόλις ἕκαστοι ἐτράποντο ("some took their leave and dispersing, each parted to his own *polis*"). In 7.220-222, however, Herodotus informs us that "rumour goes that" (λέγεται) Leonidas sent the other Greeks away (obviously apart from the Thebans and those who wanted to stay, notably the Thespians,) and remained on his post with the Spartiates – both for the sake of honour and (at least as important, seemingly) to fulfil an (apocryphal) prophecy uttered by the Pythia at Delphi that either Sparta or its king must fall (Hdt. 7.220.3-4: Herodotus does not present this as a fact but as a γνώμη ("opinion")). In Herodotus' version the Persian attack of the forces with Xerxes himself started somewhere between nine and ten A.M. (χρόνον ἐς ἀγορῆς "about the market hour": Hdt. 7.223; see also Green 2006, 61 note 43), to allow Hydarnes and his men sufficient time to descend from the mountain and position themselves behind the Greek forces. What follows is a memorable battle.

---

[28] One might argue that the absence of such information may be caused by the fact that Diodorus is likely to have abridged his source. It is, however, critical information that Diodorus, if it was present in his source, ought to have retained in his version to inform his audience adequately: I strongly doubt, however, whether the providing of such information really would have served Diodorus' purpose.

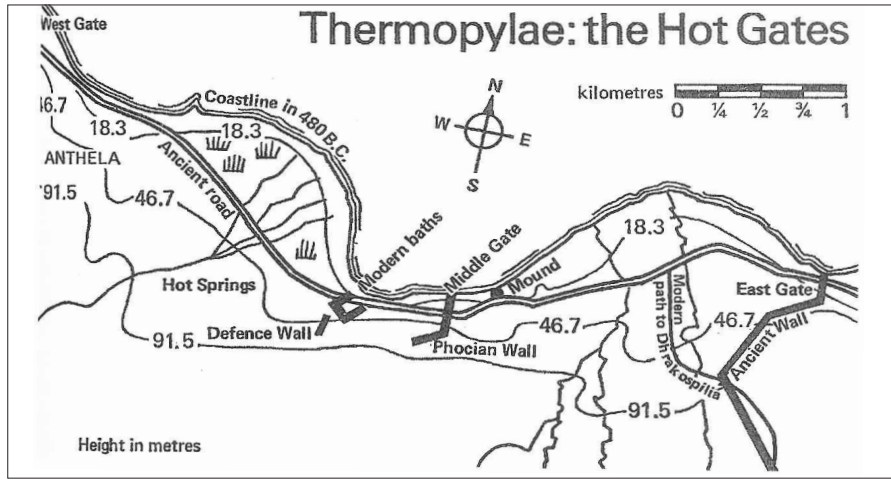

Fig. 5. Thermopylae, from Green 1996, 113 (who refers to the Colonus as the 'Mound'). Cf. also: www.cambridge.org/9781108009706 > resources > Thermopylae for the map in Macan, 1908, vol. 2, facing p. 261, based upon the observations by G.B. Grundy.

Herodotus 7.223.2-225.3

[7.223.2] οἵ τε δὴ βάρβαροι οἱ ἀμφὶ Ξέρξην προσήισαν, καὶ οἱ ἀμφὶ Λεωνίδην Ἕλληνες, ὡς τὴν ἐπὶ θανάτῳ ἔξοδον ποιεύμενοι, ἤδη πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἢ κατ᾽ ἀρχὰς ἐπεξήισαν ἐς τὸ εὐρύτερον τοῦ αὐχένος. τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἔρυμα τοῦ τείχεος ἐφυλάσσετο, οἵ δὲ ἀνὰ τὰς προτέρας ἡμέρας ὑπεξιόντες ἐς τὰ στεινόπορα ἐμάχοντο. [3] τότε δὲ συμμίσγοντες ἔξω τῶν στεινῶν ἔπιπτον πλήθεϊ πολλοὶ τῶν βαρβάρων· ὄπισθε γὰρ οἱ ἡγεμόνες τῶν τελέων ἔχοντες μάστιγας ἐρράπιζον πάντα ἄνδρα, αἰεὶ ἐς τὸ πρόσω ἐποτρύνοντες. πολλοὶ μὲν δὴ ἐσέπιπτον αὐτῶν ἐς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ διεφθείροντο, πολλῷ δ᾽ ἔτι πλεῦνες κατεπατέοντο ζωοὶ ὑπ᾽ ἀλλήλων· ἦν δὲ λόγος οὐδεὶς τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου. [4] ἅτε γὰρ ἐπιστάμενοι τὸν μέλλοντα σφίσι ἔσεσθαι θάνατον ἐκ τῶν περιιόντων τὸ ὄρος, ἀπεδείκνυντο ῥώμης ὅσον εἶχον μέγιστον ἐς τοὺς βαρβάρους, παραχρεώμενοί τε καὶ ἀτέοντες. [224.1] δόρατα μέν νυν τοῖσι πλέοσι αὐτῶν τηνικαῦτα ἤδη ἐτύγχανε κατεηγότα, οἵ δὲ τοῖσι ξίφεσι διεργάζοντο τοὺς Πέρσας. καὶ Λεω-

[7.223.2] Xerxes' Persians attacked, but the Greeks around Leonidas, knowing they were going to their deaths, now advanced much farther than before into the wider part of the pass. In fact, they had been used to guard the breast-work of the wall [sc. the so-called Phocian wall], all the previous days sallying out into the narrow way and fighting there. [3] Now, however, joining battle outside the narrows, many of the Persians fell; in fact, the leaders of the companies with their whips struck everyone from behind, urging them ever forward. Many of them were pushed into the sea and drowned, far more were trampled alive by each other; no one had any regard for who perished[29]. [4] Since they [sc. the Greeks] knew that they were to die at the hands of those who had come around the mountain, they displayed the greatest strength they had against the Persians, fighting recklessly and desperately. [224.1] By this time most of them happened to have their spears broken and were killing the Persians with

[29] Herodotus (Hdt. 8.24.1) mentions that in total 20,000 Persians died at Thermopylae.

νίδης τε ἐν τούτῳ τῷ πόνῳ πίπτει ἀνὴρ γενόμενος ἄριστος καὶ ἕτεροι μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ ὀνομαστοὶ Σπαρτιητέων, τῶν ἐγὼ ὡς ἀνδρῶν ἀξίων γενομένων ἐπυθόμην τὰ οὐνόματα, ἐπυθόμην δὲ καὶ ἁπάντων τῶν τριηκοσίων. [2] καὶ δὴ Περσέων πίπτουσι ἐνθαῦτα ἄλλοι τε πολλοὶ καὶ ὀνομαστοί, ἐν δὲ δὴ καὶ Δαρείου δύο παῖδες Ἀβροκόμης τε καὶ Ὑπεράνθης, ἐκ τῆς Ἀρτάνεω θυγατρὸς Φραταγούνης γεγονότες Δαρείῳ. ... . [225.1] Ξέρξεώ τε δὴ δύο ἀδελφεοὶ ἐνθαῦτα πίπτουσι μαχόμενοι, καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ νεκροῦ τοῦ Λεωνίδεω Περσέων τε καὶ Λακεδαιμονίων ὠθισμὸς ἐγίνετο πολλός, ἐς ὃ τοῦτόν τε ἀρετῇ οἱ Ἕλληνες ὑπεξείρυσαν καὶ ἐτρέψαντο τοὺς ἐναντίους τετράκις. τοῦτο δὲ συνεστήκεε μέχρι οὗ οἱ σὺν Ἐπιάλτῃ παρεγένοντο. [2] ὡς δὲ τούτους ἤκειν ἐπύθοντο οἱ Ἕλληνες, ἐνθεῦτεν ἤδη ἑτεροιοῦτο τὸ νεῖκος· ἔς τε γὰρ τὸ στεινὸν τῆς ὁδοῦ ἀνεχώρεον ὀπίσω, καὶ παραμειψάμενοι τὸ τεῖχος ἐλθόντες ἵζοντο ἐπὶ τὸν κολωνὸν πάντες ἀλέες οἱ ἄλλοι πλὴν Θηβαίων. ὁ δὲ κολωνὸς ἐστὶ ἐν τῇ ἐσόδῳ, ὅκου νῦν ὁ λίθινος λέων ἕστηκε ἐπὶ Λεωνίδῃ. [3] ἐν τούτῳ σφέας τῷ χώρῳ ἀλεξομένους μαχαίρῃσι, τοῖσι αὐτῶν ἐτύγχανον ἔτι περιεοῦσαι, καὶ χερσὶ καὶ στόμασι κατέχωσαν οἱ βάρβαροι βάλλοντες, οἳ μὲν ἐξ ἐναντίης ἐπισπόμενοι καὶ τὸ ἔρυμα τοῦ τείχεος συγχώσαντες, οἳ δὲ περιελθόντες πάντοθεν περισταδόν.

swords. Leonidas, proving himself extremely valiant, fell in that struggle and with him other famous Spartiates, whose names I have learned by asking because they were worthy men: indeed, I have learned [the names] of all three hundred. [2] Many other famous Persians also fell there, including two sons of Darius, Abrocomes and Hyperanthes, born to Darius by Phratagune daughter of Artanes. … .
[225.1] Thus, two brothers of Xerxes fell there fighting and there was a great struggle over Leonidas' body between the Persians and Lacedaemonians, until the Greeks by their aretê[30] dragged it away and repelled their enemies four times. The battle went on until the men with Epialtes had arrived. [2] When the Greeks learned that they had come, from then the battle turned, for they retired backwards to the narrow part of the way, passed behind the wall, and took their position crowded together on the Colonus [i.e. the hill], all except the Thebans. The hill is at the mouth of the pass, where the stone lion in honour of Leonidas now stands. [3] In that place they defended themselves with swords, if they still happened to have them, and with hands and teeth. The Persians poured missiles down on them, some attacking from the front and throwing down the defensive wall, others surrounding them on all sides.

Thus, according to Herodotus, the Lacedaemonians and Thespians died[31]. There is one element in Herodotus' statement that I cannot comprehend, i.e. his remark that ὁ δὲ κολωνὸς ἐστὶ ἐν τῇ ἐσόδῳ ("the hill is at the mouth of the pass"). As the photographs and the drawing by Green make unmistakably clear, the hill was situated more or less at the centre of the configuration that made up the whole of Thermopylae. Also How and Wells (vol. 2, 230 *ad* 7.225) do not explain it, though they mention that the hill was well designed for a last stand, its rear being

[30] I have left the word *aretê* untranslated, as the traditional translation "virtue" does not suffice in my view. *Aretê* not merely implies the moral component that is usually stressed in translations, but has, apart from a certain attitude also a wider, including a materialistic, connotation: cf., e.g., Stronk 1995, 83 on X. *An.* 6.4.8 and note 21.

[31] Apparently Hdt. 7.225.3 inspired Philostratus to write, regarding the use of *Pancration*: δεύτερον δὲ τὸ ἐν Θερμοπύλαις, ὅτε Λακεδαιμόνιοι κλασθέντων αὐτοῖς ξιφῶν τε καὶ δοράτων πολλὰ ταῖς χερσὶ γυμναῖς ἔπραξαν ("Secondly from the events at Thermopylae, where the Spartans, when their swords and spears were broken, accomplished much with their bare hands": Philostr. *Gym.* 11).

protected by a small but deep valley. The comments by R.W. Macan (1908, vol. 1.1, 333 *ad* 7.225 nr. [10]) offer no help either on this point. Noteworthy is the fight over Leonidas' body, of which How and Wells surmise, rightly I think, that it was intended by Herodotus to remind his audience of the battle over the body of Patroclus as described by Homer (Hom. *Il*. 17.233-761). Leonidas' body was initially buried at Thermopylae, though his head was cut off and impaled on Xerxes' orders. Ultimately, Leonidas' remains were buried at Sparta in 440 BC and a stele was erected on his grave, bearing the names of the three hundred. It is feasible that Herodotus indirectly refers to this stele when he mentions (7.224.1 above) that he knew the name of all 300 Spartans killed at Thermopylae.

Pausanias tells it as follows: τοῦ θεάτρου δὲ ἀπαντικρὺ Παυσανίου τοῦ Πλαταιᾶσιν ἡγησαμένου μνῆμά ἐστι, τὸ δὲ ἕτερον Λεωνίδου. καὶ λόγους κατὰ ἔτος ἕκαστον ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῖς λέγουσι καὶ τιθέασιν ἀγῶνα, ἐν ᾧ πλὴν Σπαρτιατῶν ἄλλῳ γε οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγωνίζεσθαι. τὰ δὲ ὀστᾶ τοῦ Λεωνίδου τεσσαράκοντα ἔτεσιν ὕστερον ἀνελομένου ἐκ Θερμοπυλῶν τοῦ Παυσανίου. κεῖται δὲ καὶ στήλη πατρόθεν τὰ ὀνόματα ἔχουσα οἳ πρὸς Μήδους τὸν ἐν Θερμοπύλαις ἀγῶνα ὑπέμειναν ("Opposite the theatre [sc. in Sparta] are two tombs; the first is that of Pausanias, the general at Plataea, the second is that of Leonidas. Every year they deliver speeches over them, and hold a contest in which none may compete except Spartans. The bones of Leonidas were taken by [King] Pausanias from Thermopylae forty years after the battle. There is set up a slab with the names, and their fathers' names, of those who endured the fight at Thermopylae against the Persians": Paus. 3.14.1; translation Jones/Ormerod, Loeb Classical Library; also see *Inscriptiones Graecae* V.1.660)[32].

Previously, Pausanias already had recounted the story of Leonidas in general terms, as it seems at least partially following Diodorus' version of it (he refers to "the man of Trachis" as the one who helped Xerxes): Ξέρξῃ γὰρ βασιλέων, ὁπόσοι Μήδοις καὶ Πέρσαις ἐγένοντο ὕστερον, παρασχομένῳ μέγιστον φρόνημα καὶ ἀποδειξαμένῳ λαμπρὰ οὕτω, κατὰ τὴν πορείαν Λεωνίδας σὺν ὀλίγοις, οὓς ἠγάγετο ἐς Θερμοπύλας, ἐγένετο ἂν ἐμποδὼν μηδὲ ἀρχὴν τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἰδεῖν αὐτὸν μηδὲ Ἀθηναίων ποτὲ ἐμπρῆσαι τὴν πόλιν, εἰ μὴ κατὰ τὴν ἀτραπὸν τὴν διὰ τῆς Οἴτης τείνουσαν περιαγαγὼν τὴν μετὰ Ὑδάρνου στρατιὰν ὁ Τραχίνιος κυκλώσασθαί σφισι τοὺς Ἕλληνας παρέσχε καὶ οὕτω κατεργασθέντος Λεωνίδου παρῆλθον ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα οἱ βάρβαροι ("Xerxes, the proudest of all who have reigned over the Medes, or over the Persians who suc-

[32] Jung argues that this reinterment occurred on the eve of the Peloponnesian War and explains the act in the context of Athenian and Spartan competition over the memories of their participation in the Persian Wars. Spartan claims to sacrifice at Thermopylae responded to Athenian claims to leadership at Marathon. The burial of Leonidas next to Pausanias transformed the sanctuary into an *Erinnerungsort* for the Persian Wars centred on Spartan sacrifice at Thermopylae and Spartan vengeance and victory at Plataea: Jung 2011, xx.

ceeded them, the achiever of such brilliant exploits, was met on his march by Leonidas and the handful of men he led to Thermopylae, and they would have prevented him from even seeing Greece at all, and from ever burning Athens, if the man of Trachis had not guided the army with Hydarnes by the path that stretches across Oeta, and enabled the enemy to surround the Greeks; so Leonidas was overwhelmed and the foreigners passed along into Greece": Paus. 3.4.8; translation Jones/Ormerod, Loeb Classical Library).

As might be expected, the version of the final encounter as presented by Diodorus seriously differs from Herodotus'. It reads as follows:

Diodorus 11.9.1-10.4:

[11.9.1] ἀκούσαντες δ' οἱ Ἕλληνες συνήδρευσαν περὶ μέσας νύκτας καὶ ἐβουλεύοντο περὶ τῶν ἐπιφερομένων κινδύνων. ἔνιοι μὲν οὖν ἔφασαν δεῖν παραχρῆμα καταλιπόντας τὰς παρόδους διασώζεσθαι πρὸς τοὺς συμμάχους· ἀδύνατον γὰρ εἶναι τοῖς μείνασι τυχεῖν σωτηρίας· Λεωνίδης δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων φιλοτιμούμενος αὐτῷ τε δόξαν περιθεῖναι μεγάλην καὶ τοῖς Σπαρτιάταις, προσέταξε τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους Ἕλληνας ἅπαντας ἀπιέναι καὶ σώζειν ἑαυτούς, ἵνα κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας μάχας συναγωνίζωνται τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, αὐτοὺς δὲ τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους ἔφησε δεῖν μένειν καὶ τὴν φυλακὴν τῶν παρόδων μὴ λιπεῖν· πρέπειν γὰρ τοὺς ἡγουμένους τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὑπὲρ τῶν πρωτείων ἀγωνιζομένους ἀποθνήσκειν ἑτοίμως. [2] εὐθὺς οὖν οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι πάντες ἀπηλλάγησαν, ὁ δὲ Λεωνίδης μετὰ τῶν πολιτῶν ἡρωικὰς πράξεις καὶ παραδόξους ἐπετελέσατο. ὀλίγων δ' ὄντων Λακεδαιμονίων, Θεσπιεῖς γὰρ μόνους παρακατέσχε, καὶ τοὺς σύμπαντας ἔχων οὐ πλείους τῶν πεντακοσίων, ἕτοιμος ἦν ὑποδέξασθαι τὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἑλλάδος θάνατον. [3] μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα οἱ μὲν μετὰ τοῦ Τραχινίου Πέρσαι περιελθόντες τὰς δυσχωρίας ἄφνω τοὺς περὶ τὸν Λεωνίδην ἀπέλαβον εἰς τὸ μέσον, οἱ δ' Ἕλληνες τὴν μὲν σωτηρίαν ἀπογνόντες, τὴν δ' εὐδοξίαν ἑλόμενοι, μιᾷ φωνῇ τὸν ἡγούμενον ἠξίουν ἄγειν ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους, πρὶν ἢ γνῶναι τοὺς Πέρσας τὴν τῶν ἰδίων περίοδον.

[11.9.1] Having heard this [sc. the warning of Tyrrhastiadas of Cyme], the Greeks gathered together about the middle of the night and conferred about the perils which were bearing down on them. Some said that they must abandon the pass immediately and come safely through to the allies. They argued that it would be impossible for those who stayed to come off unscathed. Leonidas, the king of the Lacedaemonians, who was very ambitious to confer honour both upon himself and the Spartiates, ordered that all the other Greeks should depart and save themselves, in order to fight together with the Greeks in the battles which still remained. The Lacedaemonians themselves, he said, had to stay and not abandon the guard of the pass, for it was fitting that those who were the leaders of Hellas should gladly die, striving for the first price. [2] Immediately, then, all the rest departed, but Leonidas together with his fellow citizens performed heroic and astounding deeds. Though the Lacedaemonians were but few (he detained only the Thespians) and he had all told not more than five hundred men, he was ready to meet death on behalf of Hellas. [3] After this, the Persians who were led by the Trachinian, after making their way around the difficult terrain, suddenly shut up Leonidas in the middle. The Greeks, giving up any thought of their own safety and choosing renown instead, with one voice asked their commander to lead them against the enemy before the Persians learned of the <successful> detour of their own men.

[4] Λεωνίδης δὲ τὴν ἑτοιμότητα τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἀποδεξάμενος, τούτοις παρήγγειλε ταχέως ἀριστοποιεῖσθαι, ὡς ἐν ᾅδου δειπνησομένους· αὐτὸς δ᾽ ἀκολούθως τῇ παραγγελίᾳ τροφὴν προσηνέγκατο, νομίζων οὕτω δυνήσεσθαι πολὺν χρόνον ἰσχύειν καὶ φέρειν τὴν ἐν τοῖς κινδύνοις ὑπομονήν. ἐπεὶ δὲ συντόμως ἀναλαβόντες αὐτοὺς ἕτοιμοι πάντες ὑπῆρξαν, παρήγγειλε τοῖς στρατιώταις εἰσπεσόντας εἰς τὴν παρεμβολὴν φονεύειν τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας καὶ ἐπ᾽ αὐτὴν ὁρμῆσαι τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως σκηνήν. [11.10.1] Οὗτοι μὲν οὖν ἀκολούθως ταῖς παραγγελίαις συμφράξαντες νυκτὸς εἰσέπεσον εἰς τὴν τῶν Περσῶν στρατοπεδείαν, προκαθηγουμένου τοῦ Λεωνίδου· οἱ δὲ βάρβαροι διά τε τὸ παράδοξον καὶ τὴν ἄγνοιαν μετὰ πολλοῦ θορύβου συνέτρεχον ἐκ τῶν σκηνῶν ἀτάκτως, καὶ νομίσαντες τοὺς μετὰ τοῦ Τραχινίου πορευομένους ἀπολωλέναι καὶ τὴν δύναμιν ἅπασαν τῶν Ἑλλήνων παρεῖναι, κατεπλάγησαν. [2] διὸ καὶ πολλοὶ μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν περὶ τὸν Λεωνίδην ἀνῃροῦντο, πλείους δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδίων ὡς ὑπὸ πολεμίων διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν ἀπώλοντο. ἥ τε γὰρ νὺξ ἀφῃρεῖτο τὴν ἀληθινὴν ἐπίγνωσιν, ἥ τε ταραχὴ καθ᾽ ὅλην οὖσα τὴν στρατοπεδείαν εὐλόγως πολὺν ἐποίει φόνον· ἔκτεινον γὰρ ἀλλήλους, οὐ διδούσης τῆς περιστάσεως τὸν ἐξετασμὸν ἀκριβῆ διὰ τὸ μήτε ἡγεμόνος παραγγελίαν μήτε συνθήματος ἐρώτησιν μήτε ὅλως διανοίας κατάστασιν ὑπάρχειν. [3] ... [4] ...· ἡμέρας δὲ γενομένης καὶ τῆς ὅλης περιστάσεως δηλωθείσης, οἱ μὲν Πέρσαι θεωροῦντες ὀλίγους ὄντας τοὺς Ἕλληνας, κατεφρόνησαν[33], καὶ κατὰ στόμα μὲν οὐ συνεπλέκοντο, φοβούμενοι τὰς ἀρετὰς αὐτῶν, ἐκ δὲ τῶν πλαγίων καὶ ἐξόπισθεν περιιστάμενοι καὶ πανταχόθεν τοξεύοντες καὶ ἀκοντίζοντες ἅπαντας ἀπέκτειναν.

[4] And Leonidas, welcoming the eagerness of the soldiers, ordered them to prepare their breakfast quickly, since they would dine in Hades. He himself, in accordance with the order he had given, took food, believing that this way he could keep his strength for a long time and retain his endurance in the combat. When they had hastily refreshed themselves and all were ready, he ordered the soldiers to attack the encampment, killing anyone they came across, and to strike for the very tent of the king. [11.10.1] The soldiers, then, in accordance with the orders, having formed in a compact body, fell by night upon the encampment of the Persians, Leonidas leading the attack. Because of the unexpectedness of the attack and their ignorance of the reason for it, the Persians ran together from their tents with great tumult and in disorder, and thinking that the soldiers who had set out with the Trachinian had perished and that the entire force of the Greeks was present, they were struck with terror. [2] Therefore many were killed by the troops of Leonidas, but even more died by the hands of their comrades as if by enemies, due to their ignorance. For both the night prevented any understanding of the real situation, and the confusion, which extended throughout the entire encampment, probably caused great slaughter. For they kept killing one another, because the conditions did not allow a meticulous assessment because there was no order from a commander nor any demanding of a password nor, in general, any recovery of reason. [3] ... [4] ... However, when morning had broken and the entire state of affairs had become clear, the Persians, observing that the Greeks were few in number, came to their senses. They did not, however, join battle face to face, fearing their [sc. the Greeks'] *aretê*, but deployed on their flanks and rear, shooting arrows and hurling javelins at them from every direction, they killed all of them.

[33] *Codd.*: κατεφρόνησαν αὐτῶν; αὐτῶν *delevi*. In context, contempt (καταφρονέω + gen., i.c. αὐτῶν) makes no immediate sense, but after the previous panic to come to one's senses does (cf. for this meaning *LSJ s.v.* III). Also the sequel does not appear to be in contradiction with my intervention. On the contrary: you are not afraid of the *aretê* of people you despise or contempt. Cf. also D.S. 11.16.1.

There are some elements in this account that strike me as particular. The first is the phrase in 11.9.2, Θεσπιεῖς γὰρ μόνους παρακατέσχε ("he [sc. Leonidas] only detained the Thespians"), as παρακατέχω means "keep back", "detain", inferring an active measure by Leonidas, not a voluntary offer by the Thespians (mentioned here for the first time by Diodorus), moreover totally overlooking the position of the Thebans. The easiest solution for this issue is to assume a mistake by either Diodorus, or his direct source, or even a copyist, writing here "Thespians" where "Thebans" was meant (a mistake by Herodotus seems unlikely as his story is, more or less, corroborated by Plutarch, see below note 34, and, in a way, also by Diodorus himself). A more complex assumption would be to presume that somewhere in the process of copying (either by Diodorus or later, early in the copying process, i.e. before the completion of the *archetype* of the existing manuscripts) a mistake was made, resulting in the omission of at least some words (up to possibly one or more sentences), outlining the actual attitude of the Thespians and the Thebans. In itself, I find this a more appealing solution though, I must admit, there is no shred of evidence to back it[34]. As it is now, the Thebans play no role at all, positive or negative, in Diodorus' account of the final encounter, though he had previously mentioned them as present at the site.

The most striking aspect of the "alternative version" of Diodorus is, however, of course the nightly attack by the Greek forces on the Persian camp and the ensuing panic among the Persian forces[35]. Green (2010, 19, note 20) discusses it only briefly, but in his 2006 work, 61 and note 43, he assesses the attack slightly more

---

[34] A possibility might be, though, to refer to Plutarch, who basically used the same source as Diodorus (i.e. Ephorus?) and clearly refers to both Thespians and Thebans assisting the Spartans at Thermopylae τῶν ἄλλων ἀπολιπόντων ("when the others had left": Plu. *Herod. Malign*. 864E). The confusion regarding this paragraph is also clearly present with Jean Haillet: Haillet 2002, 16 note 2, who offers, though no explanation.

[35] As it appears, the same version also inspired one Aristides in a work *Persian History* (or: *Persian Wars*?). The work itself is lost, but Plutarch preserved the following: Περσῶν μετὰ πεντακοσίων μυριάδων ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐρχομένων, Λεωνίδας ἅμα τριακοσίοις ἐπέμφθη εἰς Θερμοπύλας ὑπὸ Λακεδαιμονίων. εὐωχουμένοις δ᾽ ἐκεῖ ἐπέκειτο τὸ τῶν βαρβάρων πλῆθος· καὶ ὁ Λεωνίδας εἶπεν ἰδὼν τοὺς βαρβάρους, "οὕτως ἀριστᾶτε ὡς ἐν Ἅιδου δειπνήσοντες." καὶ ὁρμήσας κατὰ τῶν βαρβάρων καὶ πολλοῖς περιπαρεὶς δόρασιν ἀνέβη ἐπὶ τὸν Ξέρξην καὶ τὸ διάδημα ἀφείλετο. οὗ ἀποθανόντος ὁ βάρβαρος τέμνει τὴν καρδίαν καὶ εὗρε δασεῖαν· ὡς Ἀριστείδης ἐν πρώτῃ Περσικῶν ("When the Persians were marching with five million men against Greece, Leonidas was sent by the Spartans to Thermopylae with three hundred men. While they were eating and drinking there, the Persian host attacked them; and when Leonidas saw the Persians, he said, "Eat your lunch now as if you were to dine in Hades". And when he rushed against the Persians, and was pierced by many a spear, he made his way up to Xerxes and snatched off his crown. When he was dead, the Persian king cut out his heart and found it covered with hair. So Aristides [i.e. Aristides of Miletus: cf. *BNJ* 286 F 20a-c] in the first book of his *Persian History* (or: *Persian Wars*?)": Plu. *Mor.* 306CD). As a matter of fact, Hammond 1996 as much as rejects any suggestion of a nightly attack by the Spartans.

(as indicated above, note 20, the night attack does not feature in his 1996 work). As referred to before (p. 179, note 22), Green states that it is "not entirely to be dismissed as a fabrication" purely because it is absent in Herodotus' account (unless, of course, someone would be prepared to read Hdt. 7.223.3: τότε δὲ συμμίσγοντες ἔξω τῶν στεινῶν ἔπιπτον πλήθεϊ πολλοὶ τῶν βαρβάρων ("Now, however, joining battle outside the narrows, many of the Persians fell") as a rendering of an attack against the Persian camp, a suggestion not proposed, so far, to the best of my knowledge, and not one I would be prepared to support, in fact)[36]. Green asserts that Diodorus' version is supported by Plutarch and Justin: he fails, though, to indicate that Diodorus, Plutarch, and Justin (or the latter's source, Gn. Pompeius Trogus (in the introduction to Yardley 1994, 5-6, Develin argues that Justin did more than merely excerpt Pompeius Trogus' work)) probably all used the same source, as one suspects Ephorus, and *therefore* presented a similar story.

I find it, however, strange that so far, to the best of my knowledge, no one pointed out that, under the circumstances, being about to be surrounded, a nightly attack was not the worst option for a group of proud warriors, adamant not to flee. To remain waiting, like sitting ducks, until the enemy sounds the attack, knowing you are about to be killed anyway, might well be regarded as a much more unattractive choice. If you would be able to surprise the guards of the Persian camp (the informers may have been of use on this issue as well; Diodorus is altogether silent on this point), breaking away under cover of the night to maximise the effect of the operation (and to avert the deployment of the Persian cavalry), you might create yourself at least a fighting chance. Moreover, as the elite forces of the Persians were on their tour over the byway and therefore away from the camp – likely a piece of information disclosed to the Greeks by the deserters from the Persian camp as well – the odds for the Greek army against the remaining Persians, mostly conscripts from various regions, numerous as they were, were less unevenly balanced, certainly if the Greeks could use the element of surprise. An element to consider in this context is that, as it appears, Spartan troops were not unfamiliar with nightly action (cf. X. *Lac*. 5.7; Plu. *Lyc*. 12.14). Last but not least, an offensive action from the Spartans – and their allies – might give the troops Leonidas had sent home (or that had more or less deserted: the evidence from the sources remains sadly unconclusive) suffi-

---

[36] Matthew is rightly cautious on this point, though perhaps less than I am: cf. Matthew, 2013a, 1-26 *at* 24-25. I believe that the time Herodotus gives for the start of the fighting, viz. between nine and ten in the morning, precludes a nightly attack. This, in its turn, makes it hard to conceive that the Spartiates, in spite of Herodotus' remark τότε δὲ συμμίσγοντες ἔξω τῶν στεινῶν ("now, however, joining battle outside the narrows": Hdt. 7.223.3), completely left the cover that the geography of Thermopylae offered, let alone that they would have been able to approach the Persian camp in daylight, due to the fact that the Persian cavalry would have easily prevented such an action under those conditions.

cient time to leave the area safely and reach their own respective territories. Though not adopting the option of a night attack, Daskalakis also stresses the importance of getting the other troops safely home[37].

Objectives of Herodotus and Diodorus

In his proem, Herodotus states that: Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσέος ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται, τά τε ἄλλα καὶ δι᾽ ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι ("This is the presentation of the enquiry of Herodotus the Halicarnassian, to avoid that the memory of the past is blotted out from among men by time and that great and marvellous deeds, both by Greeks and Persians, become obliterated, and the rest and why they made war against each other": Hdt. 1.0). Next, he indicates a few of the reasons why Greeks and Persians became each other's opponents, finally resulting in what has become known as the Persian Wars (which take a large part of his account, more or less starting in 6.95 – leaving aside the Ionian Revolt of which the story starts at the beginning of book five – and continuing until the end of the work). What is suggested in the proem becomes more and more obvious in the rest of the *Histories,* sc. that Herodotus views controversies – of various kinds but notably the duel – as an important narrative pattern: Greeks vs. Persians, Argos vs. Sparta, Xerxes vs. Demaratus, Xerxes vs. Sparta, to name but a few (see also Dillery 1996, *passim*). Bridges, finally, underlines that another of the constants in Herodotus' account is an underlying ethical premise, viz. "that human fortune does not reside for long in one place": Bridges 2015, 4). It is part of the didactic purpose that the *Histories* have as well, as Herodotus himself underlines in the proem: ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα … ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, …, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται ("to avoid that the memory of the past is blotted out … and that great and marvellous deeds, …, become obliterated"). The didactic purpose is, moreover, accentuated in the first five books of the *Histories* by Herodotus' interest, comparisons, and descriptions in the fields of sex, food, and dealing with the dead.

Dillery notes that Herodotus' treatment of the controversy around Thyrea (Hdt. 1.82) serves as a kind of model for the outcome of the Battle of Thermopylae. "The "Thyrea" pattern, when applied to the battle of Thermopylae, reveals the more famous conflict to be one that Herodotus reconfigured from a defeat into a victory. Thermopylae, after the fashion of Thyrea, was a contest that tested the national character of both Sparta and Persia; it was a battle that Herodotus tried to show the Spartans actually won; and as proof of the Spartans' victory, the true outcome of the battle was in a sense ratified by the refighting of the contest at

[37] Daskalakis 1962, 76-78. Green 1996, 140 stresses that "[i]f Thermopylae was abandoned, Xerxes' cavalry would cut the retreating Greek army to ribbons".

the battle of Plataea" (Dillery 1996, 218). As such, duels – also failed duels – were a phenomenon not at all unusual for the Archaic Period (and before: cf. Hom. *Il*. 3.84-380, 7.67-312; also Hdt. 5.1). Typically, in these examples, the side that wins the duel loses the larger conflict (cf. Dillery 1996, 224, 238, 245). What we see above all in Herodotus, however, is an attempt to reconfigure the past in line with the ultimate outcome of events, here the Persian wars. Nevertheless, Thermopylae actually was a terrible defeat. Borrowing an explanation from modern psychological studies, we could see in Herodotus a type of reassessment that involves "cognitive dissonance"[38]. All the famous events leading up to Greek victory are made to explain this outcome (see Dillery 1996, 241).

There is, moreover, still another element present in Herodotus' account, i.e. Greekness. "Greekness" is defined by Herodotus in a noteworthy passage: αὖτις δὲ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐὸν ὅμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον καὶ θεῶν ἱδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα ("There is our common Greekness: we are all one in blood and one in language, the shrines of the gods belong to us all in common as well as the sacrifices and our habits, result of a common upbringing": Hdt. 8.144.2). Herodotus not only confronts Greekness against the habits of several other foreign peoples, as indicated above. Time and again Greek attitudes are especially opposed to Persian ones, certainly in the description of events during the war (cf., e.g., Hdt. 7.103.5, 209.4; 9.48.1-2, 48.4, 82). A familiar *topos* is that Persian kings in Herodotus (but also in Diodorus) do not understand Greek freedom and its consequences: in this vein Xerxes dismisses the warning of Demaratus for the Spartans more than once as ridiculous (e.g. Hdt. 7.103.1, 105.1; Diodorus is even clearer on this incident, using the word καταγελάσας ("having laughed [it] away": D.S. 11.6.2); see also, e.g., Evans 1991, 26.

In a manner, Diodorus' starting point does not differ very much from Herodotus' (see also below, under *Justin, Diodorus and their sources*). Diodorus' important contribution to our knowledge is that he preserved several historical traditions, collected from a variety of literary sources (cf. also Bridges 2015, 135), to enable his audience to get to know (or even understand) historical occurrences. His basic attitude, he states, was a search for the truth (perhaps in line with his Stoic beliefs): ..., τὸ δ᾽ἀναγραφῆς ἀξιῶσαι τὰ διαφωνούμενα παρὰ τοῖς συγγραφεῦσιν ἀναγκαῖον, ὅπως ἀκέραιος ἡ περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας κρίσις ἀπολείπηται τοῖς ἀναγινώσκουσιν ("..., and yet, the differences among writers must be recorded, in order to make the judgement on the truth with an open mind possible for the readers": D.S. 1.56.6). The practice of enabling the search for *ta genomena* (≈ "what really happened") proved to be more difficult for Diodorus than he claimed, especially because he often relied (or had to rely) on biased sources (like the Athenophile Ephorus: cf. Hornblower 1994, 36-37; see also below). A

[38] For an application of the theory of "cognitive dissonance" to ancient texts, see Carroll 1979, 86-110.

strong personal bias in Diodorus becomes evident when he discusses matters more or less related with Sicily: there he shows himself a staunch nationalist and/or chauvinist (cf. also Bridges 2015, 139-140). Apart from such biases, Diodorus also appears to freely invent asides on politics, philosophy, and historiography (cf. Sacks 1990, 6; contra: Oldfather 1968, xxiii).

According to Diodorus, history: πολλὰ συμβάλλεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πρὸς εὐσέβειαν καὶ δικαιοσύνην ("contributes greatly to piety and justice among men": 1.2.2). Diodorus' attention – much like Herodotus' – is focused on the μνήμης ἄξια, the deeds worthy to remember, like wars and monuments and paradigms. Unlike Herodotus, though, Diodorus has constructed the *Bibliotheca* around a program for moral living, more or less like Ephorus and the latter's teacher Isocrates (if Isocrates indeed was Ephorus' teacher: cf. below, p. 203). He awards special praise to benefactors, mythological and historical, who contributed civilising gifts in the arts and sciences and in politics (cf. Sacks 1990, 205; also: Oldfather 1968, xx-xxi). As such it is obviously a didactic work presenting historic *exempla*. Diodorus' aim is most clearly expressed in the opening chapter of Book 15: παρ᾽ ὅλην τὴν πραγματείαν εἰωθότες χρῆσθαι τῇ συνήθει τῆς ἱστορίας παρρησίᾳ, καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἀγαθοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐπὶ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων τὸν δίκαιον ἐπιλέγειν ἔπαινον, τοὺς δὲ φαύλους, ὅταν ἐξαμαρτάνωσιν, ἀξιοῦν δικαίας ἐπιτιμήσεως, διὰ τοῦ τοιούτου τρόπου νομίζομεν τοὺς μὲν εὖ πεφυκότας πρὸς ἀρετὴν τῷ διὰ τῆς δόξης ἀθανατισμῷ προτρέψεσθαι ταῖς καλλίσταις ἐγχειρεῖν πράξεσι, τοὺςδὲ τὴν ἐναντίαν ἔχοντας διάθεσιν ταῖς ἁρμοττούσαις βλασφημίαις ἀποτρέψειν τῆς ἐπὶ τὴν κακίαν ὁρμῆς ("Throughout our entire treatise, our practice has been to employ the customary freedom of speech enjoyed by history, and we have added just praise of good men for their fair deeds and meted out just censure upon bad men whenever they did wrong. By this means, as we believe, we shall lead men whose nature fortunately inclines them to *aretê* to undertake, because of the immortality fame accords them, the fairest deeds, whereas by appropriate obloquies we shall turn men of the opposite character from their impulse to evil": D.S. 15.1.1).

Apart from that, Diodorus claims, like Herodotus, that: ὁρῶντες ταύτην τὴν ὑπόθεσιν χρησιμωτάτην μὲν οὖσαν, πολλοῦ δὲ πόνου καὶ χρόνου προσδεομένην, τριάκοντα μὲν ἔτη περὶ αὐτὴν ἐπραγματεύθημεν, μετὰ δὲ πολλῆς κακοπαθείας καὶ κινδύνων ἐπήλθομεν πολλὴν τῆς τε Ἀσίας καὶ τῆς Εὐρώπης, ἵνα τῶν ἀναγκαιοτάτων καὶ πλείστων μερῶν αὐτόπται γενηθῶμεν· πολλὰ γὰρ παρὰ τὰς ἀγνοίας τῶν τόπων διήμαρτον οὐχ οἱ τυχόντες τῶν συγγραφέων, ἀλλά τινες καὶ τῶν τῇ δόξῃ πεπρωτευκότων ("seeing that such an enterprise [i.e. the writing of the *Bibliotheca*], though useful, would claim much effort and time, we have been busy with it for thirty years. With much hardship and dangers we have travelled a large part of both Asia [Minor] and Europe, in order to obtain autopsy of the most relevant and majority of regions. In fact, many errors have occurred through ignorance of the locations, not merely by those who wrote history per-

chance, but also by some prominent in reputation": D.S. 1.4.1). This claim of autoptic knowledge may well, incidentally, complicate the search for Diodorus' sources. Sometimes, too, it also may be empty boasting in an attempt to claim authority, probably, though, not more and not less than in Herodotus' case. For the description of the Battle of Thermopylae, however, I do not believe there has been any significant contamination, apart from its being probably to a large extent dependent of Ephorus (even though Haillet 2002, xi believes Herodotus was Diodorus' main source for 'Thermopylae': in view of the notable differences regarding pivotal occurrences in their reports I disagree on this point with Haillet. His statement, some pages further, that Diodorus' account of 'Thermopylae' was the result of "l'élaboration de plusieurs sources, Hérodote, Éphore, peut-être Ctésias et d'autres encore" (Haillet 2002, xviii) seems to me much more supported by the text as it is.

Each author, Herodotus and Diodorus, wrote, based upon his own concept of contingency (*quod nec est impossibile nec necessarium* ("that what is neither impossible nor necessary"))[39], his version of the events unfolding: one more or less accentuating identity (next to controversy and Fate), the other above all stressing morality. In his description of 'Thermopylae' Herodotus focused on the physical duel between Spartiates and Persians or even between Europe and Asia (against the background of a duel of mindset between Demaratus and Xerxes), Diodorus especially stressed the ἀνδραγαθία ("bravery", "manly virtue") and ἀρετή ("*aretê*") of the Spartiates.

Literary and material evidence

As it happened, the final result of the battle in both versions is identical. The Spartiates (and their allies) were pushed back inside the "Gates", surrounded, and struck down by missiles (arrows, lances), according to Herodotus on the hill (κολωνὸς) there, while Diodorus is not specific as regards the place of the final stand. In 1939 Marinatos excavated at Thermopylae. He surmised that the final stage of the battle took place on one of the hills on the site (there are three or four hills, this is the highest of them: cf. Macan 1908, vol. 1.1, 333 *ad* 7.225 nr. [10]), which he took to be the κολωνὸς described by Herodotus. There, a large number of bronze and iron missiles was found "all or almost all of fifth-century types" and similar to those found at Marathon and there called Assyrian or Egyptian[40]. As it would seem, literary material is here, at least to some extent, corroborated by archaeological evidence – a suggestion that emanates from both Marinatos's and Pritchett's accounts. However, also in this case literary and material evidence should not be linked immediately (though the similarity of the arrowheads at Marathon and Thermopylae would seem to make it extra tempting to do so).

---

[39] Cf., e.g., Grethlein 2010, 6-10 for an elaboration of the concept of contingency.

[40] Cf. Robertson 1939, 200; Marinatos, 1951, 61-65, who suggests the arrows confirm the Colonus was the place of the last stand; Pritchett 1985b, 172; see also Flower 1998, 377 and note 55.

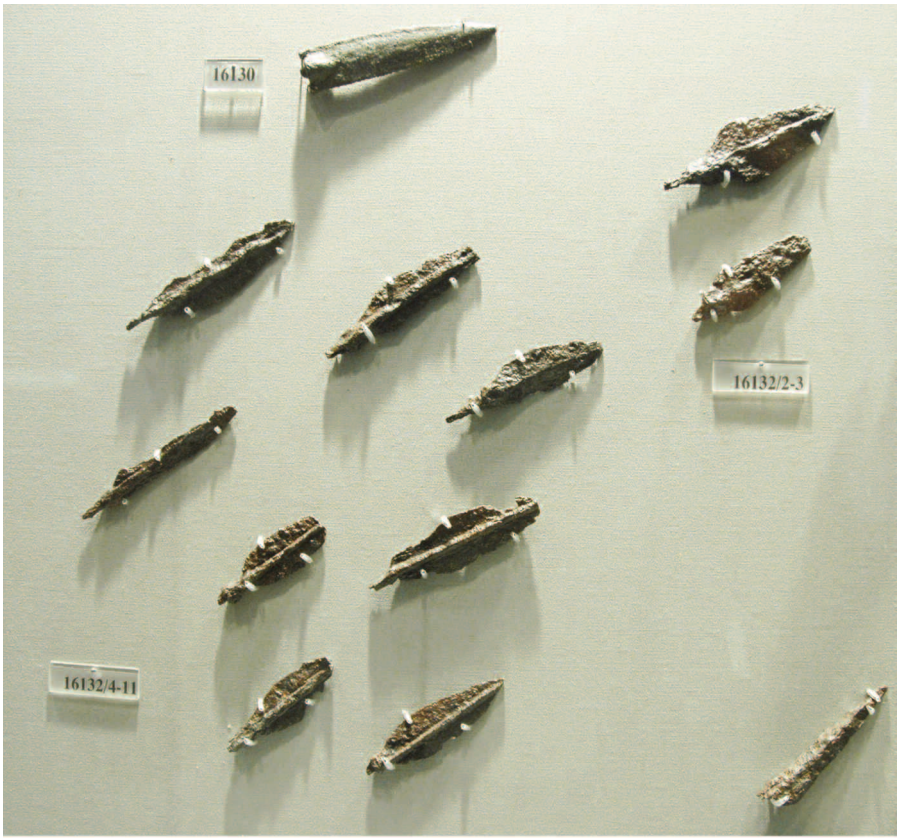

Fig. 6. Arrowheads from Thermopylae. National Archaeological Museum, Athens. Photo: Marco Prins, <http://www.livius.org/pictures/greece/thermo-pylae/thermopylae-arrowheads/>.

Such a "positivist fallacy" tends to overlook that, though both kinds of evidence *might* appear to support each other, we should constantly bear in mind that other explanations remain possible or feasible and that the available evidence may well be asymmetrical. One of the causes to entertain such prudence is the fact that our evidence, of both kinds, ultimately is extremely fragmentary. In this respect it is essential to first try and define a "broader literary or material context and only then to consider whether there might be a relationship between the two"[41]. As it seems, such a broader context is, in spite of several efforts, still lacking for the arrowheads from Thermopylae and it is outside the scope of this paper to try and provide one.

[41] Cf. Hall 2014, 208.

While Diodorus refrains from any polemic towards Herodotus in the *Bibliotheca* (at least as regards 'Thermopylae'), such restraint is completely absent in Plutarch. In his treatise *On the Malice of Herodotus* (*De Herodoti Malignitate*), 854E-874C, Plutarch of Chaeronea (in Boeotia) takes a very firm stand against Herodotus, whom he accuses, amongst other things, of a biased view against, notably, Thebans and Corinthians (Plu. *Herod. Malign.* 854F). One of the events Plutarch uses in his polemic to accuse Herodotus of malice is the latter's description of the occurrences surrounding the Battle of Thermopylae.

The position of the Thebans, part 2

In 864EF, Plutarch states (regarding Herodotus' remark that Leonidas forced Thebans to come to Thermopylae): [864E]... καίτοι ... ἔπεμψαν εἰς δὲ Θερμοπύλας ὅσους ᾔτησε Λεωνίδας· οἳ καὶ μόνοι σὺν Θεσπιεῦσι παρέμειναν αὐτῷ, τῶν ἄλλων ἀπολιπόντων μετὰ τὴν κύκλωσιν· ἐπεὶ δὲ τῶν παρόδων κρατήσας ὁ βάρβαρος ἐν τοῖς ὄροις [F] ἦν καὶ Δημάρατος ὁ Σπαρτιάτης διὰ ξενίας εὔνους ὢν Ἀτταγίνῳ τῷ προεστῶτι τῆς ὀλιγαρχίας. διεπράξατο φίλον βασιλέως γενέσθαι καὶ ξένον, οἱ δ' Ἕλληνες ἐν ταῖς ναυσὶν ἦσαν, πεζῇ δ' οὐδεὶς προσήλαυνεν, οὕτω προσεδέξαντο τὰς διαλύσεις ὑπὸ τῆς μεγάλης ἀνάγκης ἐγκαταληφθέντες. οὔτε γὰρ θάλασσα καὶ νῆες αὐτοῖς παρῆσαν ὡς Ἀθηναίοις, οὔτ' ἀπωτάτω κατῴκουν ὡς Σπαρτιᾶται τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐν μυχῷ, μιᾶς δ' ἡμέρας ὁδὸν καὶ ἡμισείας ἀπέχοντι τῷ Μήδῳ συστάντες ἐπὶ τῶν στενῶν καὶ διαγωνισάμενοι μετὰ μόνων Σπαρτιατῶν καὶ Θεσπιέων ("... and yet … they [sc. the Thebans] sent all the men that Leonidas asked for to Thermopylae; and they alone, together with the Thespians, stayed with him when the others left after they had been surrounded after the Persian had mastered the pass in the mountains. [F] There also was Demaratus the Spartiate, who was benevolent towards Attaginus, the leader of the oligarchy[42], because of guest-friendship. He arranged for him to become the <Persian> king's friend and guest, while the <other> Greeks [i.e. notably the Athenians] were in their ships and no [Peloponnesian/Spartan] infantry on its way, and in this way they [sc. the Thebans] did accept the king's terms, forced by dire necessity. Indeed, they had neither sea and ships to take refuge to, like the Athenians, nor did they live far away in the back of beyond of Greece, like the Spartiates, [but they were] holding out in the passes and fighting to the end together with only the Spartiates and Thespians against the Persian who was only one and a half day away [sc. from Thebes]"). In itself, the latter remark is not altogether unjust, as Fig. 7 shows. Moreover, contrary to Herodotus' suggestions, Plutarch's remarks implicate that the rapprochement between the Theban oligarchs and the Persian king occurred

[42] Hdt. 9.15.4-16.5 describes that Attaginus received Mardonius and 50 prominent Persians to dinner with 50 Thebans in 479 BC.

Fig. 7. Map of Boeotia, showing the respective positions of, amongst others, Chaeronea, Thespiae, and Thebes as regards Thermopylae, situated in the top left corner. From: <http://www.stilus.nl/oudheid/wdo/GEO/A/AULIS.html>.

some time before the Battle of Thermopylae, but not by a very long margin: "while the <other> Greeks were in their ships and no infantry on its way"[43].

Though Plutarch admits in the end that there was a friendly relation between the Theban leader Attaginus and the Persian king, he also both downplays its importance (and makes it something personal rather than official or state policy) and explains it as caused by dire and unsought after circumstances. There is no mention whatsoever of offering earth and water to the Persian king in advance: the Thebans, in short, acted as Greeks basically loyal to the Greek cause but were, in fact, deserted by the other Greek *poleis*. Plutarch obviously implies that Herodotus willingly misrepresented the Theban position, misrepresentation being one of the ways to show 'malice', in fact a moral defect. Herodotus, moreover, shows his malice especially (according to Plutarch) by stating that the Thebans were forced to stay as *hostages* [my italics] with Leonidas. Plutarch fur-

[43] Regrettably, Gillis (1979, 34) nearly exclusively relying on Herodotus as a source, offers no new views.

ther illustrates his view by paraphrasing and commenting upon Herodotus' words of 7.205.3 and 7.222 (Plu. *Herod. Malign*. 865A-D), concluding ὅτι τοίνυν οὐ διεβέβλητο τοῖς Θηβαίοις ὁ Λεωνίδας, ἀλλὰ καὶ φίλους ἐνόμιζε βεβαίους, ἐκ τῶν παπραγμένων δῆλόν ἐστι ("that Leonidas was not at variance with the Thebans but considered them as firm friends is clear from the occurrences": Plu. *Herod. Malign*. 865F).

The final encounter, part 2

Also as regards this point Plutarch discredits Herodotus' account. Plutarch's version reads as follows:

Plu. *De Herod. Malig.* 866AB:

[866A] ὁ δ' Ἡρόδοτος ἐν τῇ διηγήσει τῆς μάχης καὶ τοῦ Λεωνίδου τὴν μεγίστην ἠμαύρωκε πρᾶξιν, αὐτοῦ πεσεῖν πάντας εἰπὼν ἐν τοῖς στενοῖς περὶ τὸν Κολωνόν· ἐπράχθη δ' ἄλλως. ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἐπύθοντο νύκτωρ τὴν περίοδον τῶν πολεμίων, ἀναστάντες ἐβάδιζον ἐπὶ τὸ στρατόπεδον καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν ὀλίγου δεῖν βασιλέως, ὡς ἐκεῖνον αὐτὸν ἀποκτενοῦντες καὶ περὶ ἐκείνῳ τεθνηξόμενοι· μέχρι μὲν οὖν τῆς σκηνῆς ἀεὶ τὸν ἐμποδὼν φονεύοντες, τοὺς δ' ἄλλους τρεπόμενοι προῆλθον· ἐπεὶ δ' οὐχ εὑρίσκετο Ξέρξης, [B] ζητοῦντες ἐν μεγάλῳ καὶ ἀχανεῖ στρατεύματι καὶ πλανώμενοι μόλις ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων παντα χόθεν περιχυθέντων διεφθάρησαν. ὅσα δ' ἄλλα πρὸς τούτῳ τολμήματα καὶ ῥήματα τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν παραλέλοιπεν, ἐν τῷ Λεωνίδου βίῳ γραφήσεται·	[866A] In the description of the battle Herodotus has also obscured the greatest achievement of Leonidas, stating that all fell in the pass around the Colonus[44]. This is not what happened. When they learned during the night about the detour of their enemies, setting out, they proceeded to the [enemy] camp, almost as far as the king's tent, intending to kill him and die in return for his death. They came up to the tent, killing all who came in their way and chasing forth the others. When they did not find Xerxes, [B] searching in the great and vast army and wandering, they were, with toil and pain, killed by the Persians who were from all sides amassing around them. All the other brave actions and sayings of the Spartiates that he [sc. Herodotus] omitted, I shall describe in the Life of Leonidas[45].

Essentially, this is a version of the events that, like Diodorus', appears to be based upon, as one assumes (see above, p. 174), Ephorus. The same source also becomes visible further in 866B: αὐτὸς δ' ὁ Λεωνίδας πρὸς μὲν τὸν εἰπόντα παντελῶς ὀλίγους ἐξάγειν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὴν μάχην πολλοὺς μὲν ἔφη τεθνηξομένους ("Leonidas answered to the person who said that he took few men out to the battle: 'Many, though, to be killed'". Leonidas' answer here is reflected in the description of the events we already came across in Diodorus 11.4.3-4.

---

[44] Cf. Hdt. 7.225.2-3.

[45] If it ever has been written at all, the *Life of Leonidas* has not been transmitted among the other *Lives* written by Plutarch. A collection of alleged sayings by Leonidas has survived as part of the *Apophthegmata Laconica*, Plu. *Mor*. 208A-236F *at* 225A-E.

We have but briefly indicated a number of specific passages in Plutarch's pamphlet against Herodotus. The list could be made longer, including Plutarch's refutation of Herodotus' statement that the Thebans fled the Battle of Thermopylae and, supported by the Thessalians, begged the Persians for their lives as well as Plutarch's assertion (as it appears adducing evidence) that the Thebans at Thermopylae were not commanded by Leontiadas but by Anaxander [of Thebes][46] "as Aristophanes [i.e. Aristophanes Boeotus, a historian dating to the fourth century BC: *FGrH*/*BNJ* 379] and Nicander of Colophon report" (Plu. *Herod. Malign*. 866D-867B). In short: Plutarch asserts his audience that Herodotus' story – here as regards the Battle of Thermopylae – will hold no water. Of course, in the vein of this work by Plutarch, the same conclusion is applicable in the rest of his case against Herodotus, but that is irrelevant for the subject at hand. Plutarch's final remarks though, should be mentioned – even if they come from this demonstrably biased source: … ἀμέλει ταῦτα καὶ κηλεῖ καὶ προσάγεται πάντας, ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ ἐν ῥόδοις δεῖ κανθαρίδα φυλάττεσθαι τὴν βλασφημίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ κακολογίαν, λείοις καὶ ἁπαλοῖς [C] σχήμασιν ὑποδεδυκυῖαν, ἵνα μὴ λάθωμεν ἀτόπους καὶ ψευδεῖς περὶ τῶν ἀρίστων καὶ μεγίστων τῆς Ἑλλάδος πόλεων καὶ ἀνδρῶν δόξας λαβόντες ("These things delight, please, and affect all men, but just like we must beware of cantharides[47] in roses, so must we take heed of his calumnies and evil speaking, [C] hidden under smooth and gentle phrases, to avoid that we do unawares accept absurd notions and lies about the best and greatest cities and men of Greece": Plu. *Herod. Malign*. 874BC).

From the paragraphs above it may be clear that as regards the Battle of Thermopylae Plutarch considers both the Thebans and Leonidas victims of Herodotus' work. The victimisation certainly is in order, as Jona Lendering in a personal communication rightly remarked, for those of the Thebans who bravely fought and died at Thermopylae. They may well have been recruited from those Thebans dedicated to the Greek cause (both Herodotus and Diodorus acknowledge that the Thebans were divided among themselves; cf. also Keaveney 2011, 56, 59-60) and rejecting the medising policy followed – as it seems – by (some of) the leading oligarchs. It is doubly wry that on the one hand their demise facilitated a further pro-Persian policy of the oligarchs and that on the other hand they were kicked by Herodotus while they were down. However, that the Theban *polis* in general, indeed, was regarded as medising by (the) other Greek *poleis* could be construed from the, much later imposed and obviously politically motivated, punitive measures directed against Thebes and recorded by Diodorus (D.S. 17.14.2-4; cf. also Ath. 4.148D-F, referring to Clitarchus [= *FGrH* 137 F 1])[48].

---

[46] This is the only place where this commander has been mentioned.

[47] The so-called Spanish fly, in fact an emerald green beetle.

[48] To the best of my knowledge, the name of Thebes is not referred to as member of the anti-Persian league on the monument erected in memory of the Battle of Plataea, the so-called Serpentine Column, at present in the Hippodrome in İstanbul. Cf., e.g., Jung 2006, 241-259, 271-282.

JUSTIN

M. Iunianius[49] Iustinus (Justin) is known for a single work, the *Epitome of the* Philippic History *of Pompeius Trogus*. The so-called *Philippic History* by Gn. Pompeius Trogus is one of those frequently overlooked sources for ancient history, even more so because it predominantly has survived as an *epitome* by Justin[50]. Because of its relative obscurity I shall introduce author and work here shortly. Gn. Pompeius Trogus was born somewhere around the middle of the first century BC and had his *floruit* during the reign of Emperor Octavianus Augustus: it makes him a younger contemporary of Diodorus of Sicily[51]. Pompeius Trogus wrote, *inter alia*, a general history in 44 books, though more or less focused on both the Macedon empire founded by Philip II, the father of Alexander III the Great, (hence its accepted name) and occurrences in Greece and the Ancient Near East, starting with Ninus (the eponymous founder of Nineveh), the last event recorded being the recovery of the Roman standards, captured by Parthians, in 20 BC. Among his sources are counted the works of Timaeus, Polybius, Theopompus, and Ephorus. It is, though, unsure whether he had read the works of Theopompus[52] and Ephorus themselves in their entirety or only in an abridged version, produced by Timagenes of Alexandria. The *epitome* by Justin should be dated about 200 AD at the latest and might, as already indicated above, p. 189, be even (much) more than a mere *epitome.* Regrettably it is too seldomly used by ancient historians, perhaps due to the fact that an English text and translation has been absent for a long time. An edition, with notes, was published by John Selby Watson in 1853 (now also available on the internet: <http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/justin/>). The currently available translation is Yardley 1994 (also the main source of my information)[53].

---

[49] Most modern authors refer to him as M. Iunianus Iustinus, but Develin believes (in Yardley 1994, 4) that Iunianius is to be preferred as *nomen gentis*.

[50] Regrettably the *epitome* by Justin is somewhat unbalanced, some books being epitomised at (much) greater length than others: as it happens, book 2, which is here relevant for us, is with 22 pages of *epitome* in the Teubner edition the largest summary. The preserved "prologues" to Trogus' work show the extent of his work. In total, the *epitome* only represents no more than one fifth to, more probably, one tenth of the original work: Develin in Yardley 1994, 6.

[51] Diodorus of Sicily was born *ca*. 90 BC. Together with Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus, Trogus belongs to the canon of the four great Latin historians. "We can only regret that we do not have at least as much of his text as we do of theirs": Develin in Yardley 1994, 3.

[52] Theopompus (fourth century BC) had, *inter alia*, written an *epitome* of Herodotus as well as a work, in 59 books, centering on the history of Philip II of Macedon.

[53] This translation is based upon the third Teubner edition, of 1971, of the *Historiae philippicae*, edited by Otto Seel. Seel also took care of a German translation of this work in 1972: *Weltgeschichte von den Anfängen bis Augustus/Pompeius Trogus; im Auszug des Justin; eingeleitet, übersetzt und erläutert von —*, Zürich/München and in that same year as well of an elaborate and fundamental study: *Eine römische Weltgeschichte: Studien zum Text der "Epitome" des Iustinus und zur Historik des Pompejus Trogus,* Nürnberg (series: Erlanger Beiträge zur Sprach- und Kunstwissenschaft, Bd. 39).

In book 2 of Justin's *epitome,* attention is paid to the Persian Wars and the Battle of Thermopylae naturally features therein. Though elements of the chapter touch upon several aspects of the battle discussed above separately, I think the cohesion of Justin's words is served best if we present it as completely as necessary, i.e. as:

The final encounter, part 3

Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 2.11.2-18:

[2.11.2] *Namque cum Leonida, rex Spartanorum, cum IV milibus militum angustias Thermopylarum occupasset, Xerxes contemptu paucitatis eos pugnam capessere iubet, quorum cognati Marathonia pugna interfecti fuerant.* [3] *Qui dum ulcisci suos quaerunt, principium cladis fuere; succedente dein inutili turba maior caedes editur.* [4] *Triduo ibi ... dimicatum.* [5] *Quarta die cum nuntiatum esset Leonidae a XX milibus hostium summum cacumen teneri, tum hortatur socios, recedant et se ad meliora patriae tempora reseruent, sibi cum Spartanis fortunam experiendam;* [6] … . [7] *Audito regis imperio discessere ceteri, soli Lacedaemonii remanserunt.* [8] *Initio huius belli sciscitantibus Delphis oracula responsum fuerat, aut regi Spartanorum aut urbi cadendum.* [9] *Et idcirco rex Leonidas, cum in bellum proficisceretur, ita suos firmauerat, ut ire se parato ad moriendum animo scirent.* [10] *angustiasque propterea occupauerat, ut cum paucis aut maiore gloria uinceret aut minore damno rei publicae caderet.* [11] *Dimissis igitur sociis hortatur Spartanos, meminerint qualitercumque proeliatis cadendum esse; cauerent, ne fortius mansisse quam dimicasse uideantur;* [12] *nec expectandum, ut ab hoste circumuenirentur, sed dum nox occasionem daret, securis et laetis superueniendum;*	[2.11.2] For when Leonidas, king of the Spartans, had occupied the pass of Thermopylae with four thousand men, Xerxes, in contempt of so small a number, ordered those who had lost relatives in the battle of Marathon, to commence the attack. [3] As these sought to avenge those close to them, they were the first to be killed; when next a useless multitude took their place, the bloodshed became still greater. [4] Three days the struggle continued, … . [5] When on the fourth Leonidas was informed that the summit of the mountain was occupied by twenty thousand of the enemy, he exhorted the allies to retire and prepare themselves for their country for better times, but that he himself would try his luck with the Spartans; [6] … . [7] On hearing the king's orders, the others retired, while the Lacedaemonians alone remained behind. [8] At the beginning of this war, when the Spartans consulted the oracle at Delphi, they had received the answer that either the king or their city must fall. [9] Therefore King Leonidas had, when he proceeded to war, so fixed the resolution of his men, that they felt they must go to the field with minds prepared for death. [10] He had positioned himself with this goal in a narrow pass, in order to be able to either conquer more gloriously with a few, or fall with less damage to his country. [11] The allies being therefore sent away, he exhorted his Spartans they should remember that, however they struggled, they must expect to perish; that they should take care not to show more resolution to stay than to fight; [12] they should not wait till they were surrounded by the enemy, but when night afforded them opportunity, must surprise them in security and at their ease;

[13] *nusquam uictores honestius quam in castris hostium perituros.* [14] *Nihil erat dificile persuadere persuasis mori:* [15] *statim arma capiunt et sexcenti uiri castra quingentorum milium inrumpunt statimque regis praetorium petunt, aut cum illo aut, si ipsi oppressi essent, in ipsius potissimum sede morituri*. [16] *Tumultus totis castris oritur. Spartani, postquam regem non inueniunt, per omnia castra uictores uagantur; caedunt sternuntque omnia, ut qui sciant se pugnare non spe uictoriae, sed in mortis ultionem.* [17] *Proelium a principio noctis in maiorem partem diei tractum.* [18] *Ad postremum non uicti, sed uincendo fatigati inter ingentes stratorum hostium cateruas occiderunt.*	[13] that conquerors could die nowhere more honourably than in the camp of the enemy. [14] There was no difficulty in stimulating men determined to die. [15] They immediately seized their arms, and six hundred men rushed into the camp of five hundred thousand, heading directly for the king's tent, either to die with him, or, if they should be overpowered, at least in his quarters. [16] An alarm spread through the whole [Persian] camp. The Spartans being unable to find the king, swarmed over the whole camp as victors; they killed and overthrew all that stood in their way, like men who knew that they fought, not with the hope of victory, but to avenge their own deaths. [17] The fight continued from the beginning of the night through the greater part of the following day. [18] At last, not conquered, but exhausted with conquering, they fell amidst vast heaps of slaughtered enemies.

It is an exposé in which we recognise several of the elements we also find in both Diodorus' (and Isocrates', see below, p. 208) version of the occurrences, some with minor variations that do not distract from the overall picture. Recurring elements are: the (apocryphal) prophecy of the oracle at Delphi; the initial force of the Greeks at Thermopylae was 4,000 men; Leonidas had intentionally taken a small force of Spartiates with him; 20,000 Persians had made the circuit to come in the back of Leonidas' force; 600 men stayed behind with Leonidas; the night attack.

Justin, Diodorus, and their sources

As already detailed above, both Theopompus and Ephorus (as it appears, both pupils of Isocrates: see below, p. 211) are counted among the sources of Pompeius Trogus/Justin. As regards Theopompus' influence we can only guess (as it seems the focus of his historical works was the period after the Persian Wars: see above, note 50), just like of those of Polybius and Timaeus, but Ephorus' influence here looks relatively certain, at least as regards the scope of Ephorus' work (see below, pp. 203-205). As Diodorus and Pompeius Trogus were (near) contemporaries, it seems unlikely that they transmitted information to each other: to me it suggests they had – at least for this subject – a common source. It has been suggested that Diodorus was unfamiliar with Herodotus' work: however, being a Greek of good social position and therefore likely to have been well-educated, I find that hard to believe (cf., e.g., Stronk 2017, chapter 1 and also below; cf. also Haillet 2002, i-xx). Why he did prefer not to use Herodotus as his sole source for, e.g., the Battle of Thermopylae eludes me. We merely have to accept that he did not.

Whether Pompeius Trogus was familiar with Herodotus' *Histories* we do not know. Though being of Gallic origin (but third generation Roman citizen and well versed in rhetoric), the sources of his work – also due to the nature of his work – were generally of Greek origin (cf. Develin in Yardley 1994, 7). I think it is, therefore, fair to assume he may well have been at least to some extent familiar with Herodotus' work. Though Herodotus' position as 'Father of History' was coined by Cicero in the days of Diodorus and Pompeius Trogus (see Cic. *Leg*. 1.5), it seems that instead of the *Histories* both looked for an alternative version of the occurrences. As it seems, probably few alternatives were available, though the number of *Hellenica* ("*Histories of Greece*") current at that time is likely to have been greater than that transmitted to our days. Diodorus says that he had travelled at least to Egypt and Rome and had had access to research materials in Alexandria and Rome (1.4.2-4; 3.38.1; 17.52.6), where, if anywhere, travelogues, local histories, various *Histories of Greece*, and, no doubt, Herodotus' *Histories* were (more or less readily) available. Though the opportunities for Pompeius Trogus may have been less, he had evidently sufficient access to sources for his work as well. However, how many of these works had chapters on the Greco-Persian Wars is, once again, one of those issues that eludes us (see also below, under Plutarch, p. 208). At least Ephorus' work is credited to have filled the gap.

Whether Diodorus used Ephorus' work extensively to compile his chapters on the Greco-Persian Wars is not entirely certain. Usually, Diodorus seems to be extremely reticent in the *Bibliotheca* as regards his sources and to a large extent they can only be found through a thorough scrutiny of his text (cf. Haillet 2002, x). Pascale Giovannelli-Jouanna and Christine Maisonneuve (in: Lenfant 2011, 120, 122) argued that Diodorus relied for those parts in his work dedicated to [Greece,] Asia Minor, and Persia on the works of Herodotus (cf. 11.37.6), Thucydides, Xenophon (cf. 15.76.4 and 15.89.3), Ctesias (cf., e.g., 14.46.6), Ephorus (cf. 14.11.1 [indirect reference] and 16.76.5), Clitarchus, and Hieronymus of Cardia (book 17, *passim*). Specifically for his books 11-15 and part of book 16, he drew, according to Giovannelli-Jouanna and Maisonneuve (in: Lenfant 2011, 122), directly or indirectly, heavily upon both Ephorus and the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*. In its present state, we can, regrettably, not judge whether the latter might have added to our knowledge regarding the Battle of Thermopylae. To the major sources for these books we perhaps should add, I think, Ctesias' *Persica*, Isocrates, Hellanicus, and chronographic sources (cf. Haillet 2002, xi), obviously not including the sources for his chapters on Sicily and Rome. It is at least certain that Diodorus used Ctesias to compile his second book (featuring notably Semiramis) and possibly also used parts of Ctesias' books 19 to 23 (on the reign of Artaxerxes II: cf. Stronk 2010, chapter 3 *passim*; also Stronk 2017, chapter 1*)*. Whether Diodorus also used other books of Ctesias' *Persica* can, regrettably, not be determined with certainty, though Haillet believes he did (Haillet 2002, xi). Though I was for reasons of method unable to include these passages in Stronk 2010, I concur on this point

with Haillet and will discuss them in the commentary on Ctesias' *Persica* I am preparing. As we shall discuss later, however, Ctesias' information on the Persian Wars regrettably seems to be quite imperfect.

Though Diodorus appears, as already stated, generally, quite silent as regards his sources, he does reveal, occasionally, some of his potential sources apart of those mentioned above. He mentions Hecataeus of Miletus (D.S. 10.25.4), Simonides (D.S. 11.11.6), epigraphic evidence (D.S. 11.14.4), Theopompus of Chios (D.S. 14.84.7 and 16.3.8), Callisthenes of Olynthus (D.S. 14.117.8 and 16.14.3), Duris of Samos (D.S. 15.60.4), Isocrates and pupils (D.S. 15.76.4), Anaximenes of Lampsacus (D.S. 15.76.4 and 15.89.3), Dionysodorus and Anaxis the Boeotians (D.S. 15.95.4), Demophilus, the son of Ephorus (D.S. 16.14.3), and Diyllus of Athens (D.S. 16.14.3 and 16.76.5). We may, further, add the work of some of the companions of Alexander the Great, like Ptolemy and Nearchus. Taken together, we get the picture of a much more informed author than he is sometimes credited with (see also Stronk 2017, chapter 1). Of course, not every single one of these authors has discussed the Battle of Thermopylae, let alone that all of their works have survived time to allow comparison with the *Bibliotheca*. Collecting their names in a list, though, may serve to demonstrate we should not dismiss Diodorus as easily as an insignificant author as Schwartz has done. Diodorus' views on the Battle of Thermopylae deserve, therefore, more attention than they generally receive.

Ephorus of Cyme

At this stage, it seems opportune to have a closer look at Ephorus. Of the life of Ephorus very little is known: he lived in the fourth century BC, came from Cyme in Asia Minor, parentage unknown, had a son, named Demophilus, was a pupil of Isocrates of Athens (though as a historian his connection with Isocrates may well have been looser than generally taken for granted: cf. Marincola 2014, 42)[54], and his reputation as historian was solid, his works being read and their value recognised at least until the second century AD (cf. Barber 1935, 1). The fruit of his labours was, *inter alia*, a set of 29 books, his *Universal History* (Tully prefers a translation like *Common Affairs*: Tully 2014, 169 and note 36), Ephorus being the first to author one (cf. Plb. 5.32.2; see also Tully 2014, *passim*). The whole work, edited by his son Demophilus – who added a 30th book – contained narratives from the days of the Heraclids down to the taking of Perinthus in 340 BC

[54] Cf. V. Parker in *BNJ* 70 (Ephoros): "The tradition that Ephoros was a pupil of Isocrates is widespread ([*BNJ* 70] T 2a, T 3, T 4, T 5, T 7, T 8, T 27, T 28), yet not attested before the first century BC. Douris of Samos ([*BNJ* 70] T 22 [a fragment preserved by Photius, *Bibl.* [176] 121a.41], JPS), in a context in which one might reasonably expect him to mention it, appears not to know that Ephoros had been Isocrates' pupil; and Douris (late 4th, early 3rd century BC) still stood close in time to the two historians, Ephoros and Theopompos, whom he was discussing": <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-jacoby/ephoros-70-a70>.

by Philip II of Macedon, covering a time span of almost seven hundred and fifty years (cf. D.S. 16.76.5; cf. for an alternative view however Luraghi 2014, *passim*). The work was probably simply named *History* (cf. Str. 13.3.6/C 622), and followed a thematic rather than a strictly chronological order in its narrative.

Because of the fact that, as it appears, Ephorus' *History* was relatively accessible and, probably more important, well regarded, it seems to be more or less obvious that it has been assumed that this *History* was a viable source for later historians. There is no direct evidence that it really did serve as such in significant measure for, e.g., Diodorus, Pompeius Trogus, and/or Plutarch, but as there is no evidence to the contrary either, I shall here further accept the current assumptions as a *datum* (though a new book on Ephorus is long overdue). The excerpts of Ephorus' *History* in Diodorus' *Bibliotheca* constitute the only continuous narrative on the history of Greece between 480 and 340 BC[55]. It is likely that Ephorus has made critical use of the best authorities available and Strabo quotes Ephorus at length (in spite of his mocking Ephorus' love for Cyme: *ibidem*). Nevertheless, not everything Ephorus wrote was acclaimed: Polybius, e.g., makes little of Ephorus' description of the Battle of Mantinea because of his lack of knowledge regarding the nature of land operations (cf. Plb. 12.25). Ultimately, though, the "innovative nature of Ephorus' history made him and it important in the later tradition…" (Tully 2014, 155).

Ephorus strove hard to find additional sources[56]. This entailed an apparently thoroughgoing review of Greek poetry (in the fashion of Isocrates, see below, pp. 208-211) as well as the many historical works that had been produced since the days of Herodotus and Thucydides[57]. He consulted at least the works of Xenophon of Athens (cf. *FGrH/BNJ* 70 F 44a and F 161b – march of the 10,000), Xanthus of Lydia (cf. *FGrH/BNJ* 70 F 180 – presumably for the history of Lydia and environs), Antiochus of Syracuse (cf. *FGrH/BNJ* 70 F 216 – colonisation of

---

[55] Cf. Meister 1990, 85.

[56] This paragraph and the next are exclusively based upon Parker, V., *BNJ* 70 (Ephoros), Biographical Essay <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-jacoby/ephoros-70-a70>, retrieved January 2, 2015.

[57] Marincola 2014, 45 argues, very rightly in my opinion, that certainly in the fourth century BC, Thucydides' work (and I believe by implication also Herodotus' work) did not yet have the canonical value it has got later and, many believe, it ought to have had right from its start. Instead, it merely represented just another particular approach to the past for – at least – fourth century BC authors. As a matter of fact, it appears that many historians both before and after Thucydides directed their attention at least as much to collateral values like ethics, morals, and/or national pride as to establish *ta genomena* with precision. To condemn those authors for that attitude, as, e.g., Wilamowitz, Schwartz, and Jacoby have done, understandable as it may be, seems to me not the right way to react. Instead we should, I think, treat such sources with the utmost care, trying to dissolve what matters to us from the side issue(s) that mattered to those historians, attributing both elements their respective historical value.

the West and related events – here, surprisingly, Sparta), (an) unknown author(s) on Persia (cf. *FGrH/BNJ* 70 FF 190-191), and likely others such as Ctesias of Cnidus (see *FGrH/BNJ* 70 F 208) and Charon of Lampsacus (see *FGrH/BNJ* 70 F 190). Moreover Ephorus used various specialised tracts: geographical works by Euthymenes of Massilia (cf. *FGrH/BNJ* 70 F 65f) and the Ionian geographers (cf. *FGrH/BNJ* 70 F 128 and F 158); a political pamphlet composed by Pausanias, the exiled King of Sparta (cf. *FGrH/BNJ* 70 F 118); scientific writings on celestial phenomena (cf. *FGrH/BNJ* 70 F 212). In addition, Ephorus sought out historical inscriptions, though it is uncertain whether he collected them himself – he may have found them cited for him in the literature which he consulted (cf. Barber 1935, 113-137). With this help Ephorus was able to supplement his chief narrative sources as well as, on occasion, to 'correct' them.

How Ephorus used his sources, notably the works of Herodotus and Thucydides, is fair game for criticism, although, unfortunately, we have very few fragments which cover the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars and must rely for that period almost entirely on Diodorus' itself often imperfectly preserved *epitome.* On the whole, it seems that Ephorus followed his predecessors' works closely. Nevertheless, major revision and reinterpretation appear far more common than Jacoby admits (see *FGrH,* vol. II C (1926), 30, lines 34-38) and investigation of such fragments may well be a complicated matter (see, e.g., cf. *FGrH/BNJ* 70 F 179, F 183, and F 196).

As Barber phrases it, under guidance of Isocrates "φιλοσοφία – the sublime art of statesmanship – {that} the subtler arts of effective speaking and writing were taught to all who cared to pay the fees. … Thus literature became permeated with the glitter of rhetoric; for incapable speakers might still become competent historians" (Barber 1935, 85). However, this mixture may lead to partiality, which in its turn deepens contrasts and leads to a system of administering praise and blame (*ibidem*). Such biases are apparent throughout Ephorus' work: Ephorus' bias was firstly his home town of Cyme (Barber 1935, 86-88; cf. Str. 13.3.6/C 622 referred to above); next he was strongly biased in favour of Athens (as one might expect, Ephorus being a pupil of Isocrates) and, as Barber surmises, against Sparta (Barber 1935, 88), and he showed a violent dislike of Persians, whether or not collaborating with others (cf, e.g., *FGrH/BNJ* 70 F 211 = *Scholia on Aristides* 294.13 Dindorf; *FGrH/BNJ* 70 F 186); lastly he indulged in 'moralising platitudes' on the virtues and vices of the great" (Barber 1935, 89). It is noteworthy, though, that "Ephorus appears to have adopted an impartial attitude towards Thebes" (Barber 1935, 101). Ultimately, "Ephorus … adopted a utilitarian view of history, and his pragmatism expressed itself in the conviction that the first principle of historiography was the edification of the reader; this he intended to secure by exalting virtue, and magnifying vice" (Barber 1935, 102-103). These are the very same notions and elements we encounter frequently in Diodorus Siculus, Justin (or Pompeius Trogus), and Plutarch.

PLUTARCH'S SOURCE(S)

Above it has become obvious that also Plutarch (*ca*. 50-*ca*. 119 AD) was in need of an alternative for Herodotus' work, if only to refute the latter's biased views (in Plutarch's conception, at least). As goes from his pamphlet *De Herodoti malignitate* (cf. Marincola 1994, *passim*), Plutarch was (very) familiar with the *Histories*. On the other hand, Plutarch in many respects does not emerge throughout his works as an original thinker. He was primarily a moralist, firmly believing in Plato's doctrines (but much less adamant than the master: Ziegler 1964, 273; see also Russell 1973, 63). Next to Plato, Polybius was for Plutarch another significant predecessor. Polybius' views regarding biography and history appear to link up with Plutarch's: ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ὁ τόπος, ὑπάρχων ἐγκωμιαστικός, ἀπήτει τὸν κεφαλαιώδη καὶ μετ' αὐξήσεως τῶν πράξεων ἀπολογισμόν, οὕτως ὁ τῆς ἱστορίας, κοινὸς ὢν ἐπαίνου καὶ θόγου, ζητεῖ τὸν ἀληθῆ καὶ τὸν μετ' ἀποδείξεως καὶ τῶν ἑκάστοις παρεπομένων συλλογισμῶν ("Because that work [*sc.* biography], being an encomium, demands an outlined and enlarged account of his deeds, the present history, in which praise and blame go hand in hand, likewise seeks an absolutely truthful account and one that explains the reasons for either praise or blame": Plb. 10.21.8). Plutarch uses similar arguments, both in his criticism of Herodotus and in the aims he outlines for several of the many *Lives* and comparisons of lives he wrote. Plutarch therefore needed a source that offered him information to refute Herodotus – whose work he generally appears to have appreciated not very much – and at the same time offered him sufficient space to introduce his own, predominently moral, conceptions. After all: "a historian should present worthy characters and models fit for imitation by the young; he should offer edification and moral lessons rather than critical accuracy" (cf. Stronk 2007, 34). As it appears, Ephorus' work filled Plutarch's needs best.

Thucydides was presented by Plutarch as a class of his own among historians. He seems to show his reverence for Thucydides in the introduction to the *Life of Nicias*, but at the same time explains there his own (diverging) method and aims: "Of course, it is not possible to omit the events treated by Thucydides and Philistus [author of a *Sicelica* (sc. *History of Sicily*), JPS] .... But I have summarised them briefly and kept to the essentials, just to avoid the charge of total negligence. I have tried instead to collect material that is not well-known, but scattered among other authors, or found on ancient dedications and decrees. Nor is this an accumulation of useless erudition: I am conveying material that is helpful for grasping the man's nature and character" (Plu. *Nic*. 1.1-5). It seems very much the same method also Ephorus applied (see above, pp. 203-205). Scardigli states that large part of Plutarch's material comes from work of a historical

[58] Hose 2006, 669-690 at 674.

nature (cf. Scardigli 1992, 109). Contrary stands the view of Hose[58], who argues that much of the material of Plutarch regarding fifth century BC's characters stems from varied sources, especially Comedy. As regards solid evidence for Plutarch's sources these views help but little and provide, regrettably, no solid basis.

Wilamowitz states (Wilamowitz 1995, 48) that Plutarch, on his father's orders, had been educated at the Academy at Athens. Also after his education Plutarch regularly returned to Athens, *inter alia* to consult libraries. The first public library in Athens had been founded by Peisistratus in the sixth century BC. However, libraries like those of Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum, the earliest examples of a research library (though certainly the latter had, by the time of Plutarch, long been removed from Athens: cf. Plu. *Sulla* 29), were much more serviceable (cf. Str. 13.1.54/C 609; D.L. 8.15). Discussing Plutarch's sources, Stadter stipulates that the most recent subject in Plutarch's series of *Lives*, sc. Mark Antony, lived more than a century earlier, and Pericles and Alcibiades more than half a millennium earlier than Plutarch himself. "Plutarch had to construct his lives from written sources, usually historians" (Stadter 1992, 3).

It is, therefore, likely that Plutarch was intimately familiar with the work of most Greek historians, like Herodotus (as we already have discussed), Ephorus, who at the time Plutarch was engaged in his work still was a well-regarded author, and probably several others. Since most of the works of those authors are now lost, we, regrettably, do not have the possibility to check how precisely the construction of Plutarch's work was performed. As it is, however, we cannot begin to imagine the problems Plutarch (and for that matter also Diodorus, Pompeius Trogus, and many others) faced in collecting sources, informing us on times further (or as far) away from them as the Spanish Armada of AD 1588 from us. When *we* discuss classical literature, we are in fact dealing with a countable number of texts, but even the libraries of Athens only counted a chance selection of an enormous amount of texts.

The number of texts present at Chaeronea itself will, probably, have been limited to those Plutarch and his circle of friends owned themselves. Few works, though, existed in many copies and an ancient scholar/author could only hope to see a few of the works he heard of. Add to this the problem of looking-up passages in papyrus rolls and it must become obvious that any writer, but surely a writer dealing with such a variety of topics as Plutarch – or extensive histories like Ephorus, Diodorus, or Pompeius Trogus –, faced a titanic task (cf. also Reynolds/Wilson 1991, 2). This could only be facilitated by relying whenever necessary on opinions and references at second or third hand (Russell 1973, 42; also Ziegler 1964, 273, 277). To facilitate things further, there also existed prepared sets of extracts on various themes. Apart from these, Plutarch himself also is likely to have collected excerpts and commonplaces – and so are Ephorus, Diodorus, and Pompeius Trogus, to name but a few.

Looking for an alternative to counter the image Herodotus had created for the situation during the Persian Wars, the work of a quite well-read author as Ephorus appears to have been may well have been, under those circumstances, a logical option for later authors, including Plutarch, to serve as a *Fundgrube*. However, here, too, no conclusive certainty can be acquired. Hammond (1996, 10) summarised the situation as follows: "There are thus no *a priori* grounds for supposing that X's account [= the common source of Diodorus, Justin, and Plutarch], as reflected in D[iodorus] …, J[ustin] …, and some passages of Plutarch is any less accurate than that of Herodotus. Each had his own favourite. X was φιλολάκων[59]. Herodotus was φιλαθήναιος. Both had the Panhellenic cause in mind …" adding somewhat further: "In his eagerness to show that Athens was the saviour of Greece, Herodotus overstated his case" (Hammond 1996, 10).

Isocrates of Athens

Isocrates (436-338 BC) is above all known as a rhetorician, being one of the 'Ten Attic Orators'. Several orations have been preserved because he has written them down[60]. "Isocrates' literary and rhetorical stance grows from two major roots, roots which nourish its political and ethical interests. The first is his connection with the philosophical and rhetorical world of the older sophists. ... The second seed from which Isocrates' ideas grow is his awareness of the Greek poetic tradition as an educative and therefore ethicizing force for Greece" (Papillon 1998, 41). Isocrates makes several observations on the nature and advantages of poetry, stressing "its usefulness, its focus on praise, its ability to create a new history, its ability to immortalize, and its employment of ornament" (Papillon 1998, 43; cf. also Quint. *Inst.* 3.4.11). Reading Isocrates' works, one cannot but agree with Anne Carson that Isocrates made use for his education of 'paradigm-acquisition'[61]: "One hears the stories of great persons of old, and strives to live in accordance with the ἀρετή they exhibit"[62]. These are, evidently, the same features we already encountered in the works of, notably, Ephorus and Diodorus.

---

[59] This could well be a complicating factor in the assumption that Ephorus was the common source for Diodorus, Pompeius Trogus/Justin, and Plutarch. As it seems from the remaining fragments (*FGrH/BNJ* 70), Ephorus was obviously much more φιλαθήναιος ("friendly towards Athens") than φιλολάκων ("friendly towards Sparta"), though he was above all φιλοκυμαῖος ("friendly towards Cyme"), his home town (see also above). The antagonism might be solved (partly) by assuming that φιλολάκων means here no more than "less overtly pro-Athenian"). As it is, I do not think the works of Diodorus, Pompeius Trogus/Justin, and Plutarch – as far as preserved – show a distinct pro-Spartan attitude.

[60] For a review of works attributed over the centuries to Isocrates see, e.g., Too 1995, 10-19. For an appreciation of Isocrates´ discourses and teachings: D.H. *Isoc*. 4. Obviously, Isocrates' works and ideas are much more complex than can be outlined in the framework of an, after all, limited paper like this: see for a useful introduction Marincola 2014.

[61] Cf. also Marincola 2014, 54-57.

[62] Papillon 1998, 60; also see: Carson 1992, 124.

Papillon observes, moreover, that "Isocrates recognized the power of the poetic tradition and adapted it for his own kind of prose. In response to the criticism of the sophists and the strength of the poetic tradition, Isocrates' goal was to produce men of affairs, talented and politically astute, through a new sort of *politicos* [sic!] *logos*. This type of *logos*, broader and more inclusive, has a strong ethical content, which speeches like the *Panegyricus* and the *Panathenaicus* demonstrate" (Papillon 1998, 42; see for the *logos politikos* also Too 1995, 24-35). Though not writing poetry proper but prose, "Isocrates is presenting an argument for a kind of prose more useful to the Greeks than the prose seen in the law courts or seen in extemporaneous debate", a kind of prose that preserves the characteristics of the poetic tradition without using the meter (Papillon 1998, 46 and note 14; also see Marincola 2014, 43-44, 46)[63].

In his *Panegyricus*, the first aim of Isocrates is to extol the noble history of his home town, Athens, the second to express his love of (the concept of) Hellas (cf. also Bridges 2015, 107). As Norlin phrases it in his 'General Introduction' to Isocrates' works in the Loeb Classical Library (1966, x): "A worship of Hellenism as a way of life, a saving religion of which he conceives Athens to be the central shrine and himself a prophet commissioned by the gods to reconcile the quarrels of the Greeks and unite them in a crusade against the barbarian world". Papillon phrases it slightly differently, though I believe with a stronger political emphasis: "[He] says in the *Panegyricus* that Homer correctly set before the Greeks a glorious picture of enmity between Greece and the East ([Isoc. *Paneg.*] 159). That is, Homer picked a morally edifying topic" (Papillon 1998, 43). Next to this element of the controversy between Greece in general and "the East", "[w]e can see a focus on the city, specifically Athens, in the public works of Isocrates such as the *Panegyricus,* the *Panathenaicus* and the *Antidosis.* The city supports the political life of the Greeks against the potential despotism from the East; as a result, the city is the central locus of praise and benefit to which devotion is due" (Papillon 1998, 52). Therefore: "[h]e [sc. Isocrates] will strive for the concept of the great city, the unity of Greece against Persia under Athens' leadership (or anyone's leadership later on), and a sense of 'the glory that was Greece' that is worth preserving. ... [T]he idea of Panhellenism, is not only a political idea, but an educational and ethical ideal" (Papillon 1998, 59; cf. also Too 1995, 147). Moreover, taking into account *Panegyricus* 50, it is ultimately an etnically determined ideal as well, even though Isocrates makes some effort here to downplay that element (cf. Too, *ibidem*).

---

[63] A poetic tradition, also treating the Greco-Persian wars, obviously remained in tact, as Llewellyn-Jones 2012, 331 rightly notices, *inter alia* referring to the *Persica* (also known as the *Barbarica* or the *Medica*) by Choerilus of Samos (a lyric poet flourishing at the end of the fifth century BC), a poem at present lost apart from its title tag (= *P.Oxy.* 1399). Also other poets, like e.g. Aeschylus, were inspired by the Greco-Persian Wars and their various consequences and implications (cf. also Bridges 2015, 11-43). Also in other forms of art, like pottery, we obviously find outings inspired by the wars, but they fall outside the scope of this paper.

When the *Panegyricus* was written *ca*. 380 BC, however, the power and influence of Isocrates' beloved Athens were almost non-existent. Sparta was the leading state in Greece, though *formally* still to some extent dependent of the Persian Empire (cf., e.g., Stronk 1990-91, *passim*). Urging Sparta to resume its former role as a προστάτης τῆς Ἑλλάδος ("leader of all Greece": cf. X. *HG* 3.1.3), even risking her very existence, to protect Greece alongside Athens against the menace of the Persian Empire, the Battle of Thermopylae serves as a welcome example. In Isocrates' words: πρὸς δὴ τὸν οὕτω μέγα φρονήσαντα καὶ τηλικαῦτα διαπραξάμενον καὶ τοσούτων δεσπότην γενόμενον ἀπήντων διελόμενοι τὸν κίνδυνον, Λακεδαιμόνιοι μὲν εἰς Θερμοπύλας πρὸς τὸ πεζόν, χιλίους αὐτῶν ἐπιλέξαντες καὶ τῶν συμμάχων ὀλίγους παραλαβόντες, ὡς ἐν τοῖς στενοῖς κωλύσοντες αὐτοὺς περαιτέρω προελθεῖν ("It was against such a haughtly and much accomplishing ruler of so many [i.e. Xerxes] that, dividing the danger, the Lacedaemonians went to Thermopylae against the land force, choosing one thousand of their own and taking with them a few of the allies, in order to prohibit them [sc. the Persians] in the passes to advance further": Isoc. *Paneg*. 90). The result was not what was hoped for: ἀλλ᾽ οἱ μὲν διεφθάρησαν καὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς νικῶντες τοῖς σώμασιν ἀπεῖπον - οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτό γε θέμις εἰπεῖν, ὡς ἡττήθησαν· οὐδεὶς γὰρ αὐτῶν φυγεῖν ἠξίωσεν ("but they [sc. the Lacedaemonians] were utterly destroyed, though victorious in spirit, they fell short in their bodies – in fact it would be sacrilege to say they were defeated, since no one of them deigned to flee": Isoc. *Paneg*. 92).

In slightly different words, this is the very same message as expressed by Lysias (*ca*. 458-*ca*. 378 BC, only some 30 years younger than Herodotus) in Lysias' *Epitaphios* ("Funeral oration": cf., e.g., Bridges 2015, 102-107 for Lysias' objectives): [30] Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ καὶ τῶν συμμάχων ἔνιοι εἰς Θερμοπύλας ἀπήντησαν, ἡγούμενοι διὰ τὴν στενότητα τῶν χωρίων τὴν πάροδον οἷοί τ᾽ ἔσεσθαι διαφυλάξαι. [31] … Λακεδαιμόνιοι δέ, οὐ ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἐνδεεῖς γενόμενοι, ἀλλὰ τοῦ πλήθους ψευσθέντες καὶ οὓς φυλάξειν ᾤοντο καὶ πρὸς οὓς κινδυνεύσειν ἔμελλον, διεφθάρησαν οὐχ ἡττηθέντες τῶν ἐναντίων, ἀλλ᾽ ἀποθανόντες οὗπερ ἐτάχθησαν μάχεσθαι ([30] "The Lacedaemonians and some of their allies went off to Thermopylae, believing that because of the narrowness of the place they would be able to keep the passage safe. [31] … the Lacedaemonians, showing no failure in spirit, but deceived by the multitude, not only of those they believed to stand guard for but also of those against whom they would contend, were destroyed, undefeated by their opponents, but killed where they had been positioned to do battle": Lys. *Epit.* 30-31[64]). Though neither Sparta, nor Leonidas,

[64] Perhaps the phrase τοῦ πλήθους ψευσθέντες καὶ οὓς φυλάξειν ᾤοντο ("deceived by the multitude, not only of those they believed to stand guard for ...") *might* be read as a confirmation that more soldiers were expected to arrive at Thermopylae: I am not absolutely sure it does. It also could mean that more Greek *poleis* had sided with the Persians than anticipated. Cf. also Simpson 1972, 3.

nor Thermopylae is referred to directly in their works, the same message may well also have been conveyed by Hyperides in his *Epitaphios* (25-29) and by Lycurgus in his *Against Leocrates* (47-49). Lysias' account is a sober one: no reference whatsoever is made of a byway, let alone of a nightly attack, perhaps only a mere faint hint that they expected reinforcements (see note 64). Instead, much emphasis is placed upon the self-sacrifice of the Spartans and the fact that they, allegedly, were not defeated but merely were worn down.

Also in his *Archidamus*, Isocrates returns to the Battle of Thermopylae and the attitude of the Lacedaemonians: [99] ἀναμνήσθητε ... καὶ τῶν χιλίων τῶν εἰς Θερμοπύλας ἀπαντησάντων, [100] οἳ πρὸς ἑβδομήκοντα μυριάδας τῶν βαρβάρων συμβαλόντες οὐκ ἔφυγον οὐδ' ἡττήθησαν, ἀλλ' ἐνταῦθα τὸν βίον ἐτελεύτησαν οὗ περ ἐτάχθησαν, τοιούτους αὑτοὺς παρασχόντες ὥστε τοὺς μετὰ τέχνης ἐγκωμιάζοντας μὴ δύνασθαι τοὺς ἐπαίνους ἐξισῶσαι ταῖς ἐκείνων ἀρεταῖς ([99] "Remember … also the thousand who went out to Thermopylae, [100] who engaging seven hundred thousand Persians did not flee nor suffered defeat, but died there where they had been positioned, acquitting themselves in such a manner that those who praise them with all their skills are unable to laud them equal to their *aretê*": Isoc. *Arch*. 99-100)[65]. Here, too, Lysias may well have been one of Isocrates' sources, together with Simonides of Ceos.

Though Isocrates stimulated his pupils (most notably Theopompus and Ephorus[66]) to write history, he himself never wrote a proper history (cf. Marincola 2014, 40-41 and note 6). Instead, he used occurrences (mythical, poetical, and historical), like e.g. the Battle of Thermopylae, as *exempla* to support his assumptions and/or views (*inter alia* his enmity towards Persia and his call for Greek unity) in his various works (cf. Llewellyn-Jones 2012, 328). It is the 'paradigm-acquisition' discussed above. To achieve his goals he needed positive examples. The account by Herodotus of the Battle of Thermopylae could hardly be regarded as a totally positive example, a Greek betraying fellow-Greeks to the Persians for a rich reward. As the battle itself provided sufficient positive elements, like the courage of the Spartans against the Persians, Isocrates had to look elsewhere for his examples. As indicated above, Lysias may well have been one to turn to, Simonides of Ceos probably (or even likely) another.

---

[65] Cf. also Isocrates' remark: καὶ γὰρ ἐκείνων μᾶλλον ἄγανται τὴν ἧτταν τὴν ἐν Θερμοπύλαις ἢ τὰς ἄλλας νίκας ("In fact, their [sc. the Lacedaemonians´] defeat at Thermopylae is more admired than their many victories": Isoc. *Phil.* 148; translation Norlin 1966, Loeb Classical Library, slightly adapted); cf. also. Isoc. *Panath.* 187-188; X. *HG* 6.43; V. Max. 3.ext.3, who seems to have based himself on either Diodorus/Pompeius Trogus or their source, as he refers to supper in Hades waiting for the Spartiates. The same is also valid for Sen. *Ep.* 82.21. See also the observations by Trundle 2013, 27-38, *passim.*

[66] This connection was fiercely denied by Schwartz and Jacoby, but despite this it has been generally accepted: cf. Marincola 2014, 42 and note 11.

Simonides of Ceos

Simonides lived from the 56th Olympiad (556-553 BC) to the 78th Olympiad (468-465 BC) and was acknowledged by the Greeks as one of the most important intellectual and literary innovators of the early classical period. According to the *Suda*: καὶ γέγραπται αὐτῷ Δωρίδι διαλέκτῳ ἡ Καμβύσου καὶ Δαρείου βασιλεία καὶ Ξέρξου ναυμαχία καὶ ἡ ἐπ' Ἀρτεμισίῳ ναυμαχία δι'ἐλεγείας, ἡ δ' ἐν Σαλαμῖνι μελικῶς· θρῆνοι, ἐγκώμια, ἐπιγράμματα, παιᾶνες καὶ τραγῳδίαι καὶ ἄλλα ("and the following were written by him [sc. Simonides] in the Doric dialect: the kingdom of Cambyses and Darius and (a naval battle of) Xerxes, and the naval battle at Artemisium in elegiac meter, the naval battle at Salamis in lyric meter; *threnoi* [sc. laments], *encomia* [sc. odes honouring people], epigrams, *paeans* [sc. odes of joy], tragedies, and other things": *Suda*, ed. Adler, vol. 4, 361 *s.v.* sigma,439). Regrettably the text of the *Suda* is corrupt, even "deeply corrupt" according to Grethlein (Grethlein 2010, 51 and note 10), so that the enumeration of Simonides' works here probably has no conclusive value. However, recently Parsons succeeded, by combining two very fragmented sets of papyri from Oxyrhynchus, *P.Oxy*. 3965 and *P.Oxy* 2327, to reconstruct part of what appears to have been an elegy on the Battle of Plataea[67].

Kowerski (2005, 4-19) argues, based, *inter alia*, on the entry in the *Suda* and the fragments on Plataea mentioned above, that the existent fragments do not support the assumption of *several* elegiac poems but that, instead, we might presume that Simonides has written a *single* large poem encompassing several battles, not only that of Plataea but, likely, also that of Thermopylae. It might even be argued that such a poem did not focus upon the merits of a single *polis* (though in the reconstructed fragment Sparta's position is as dominant as in the 'Thermopylae elegy', see below pp. 213, 214-215), but (already) had a pan-Hellenic stance[68]. It seems, moreover, that "Simonides evokes the siege of Troy as a mirror for the Persian Wars" (Grethlein 2010, 54; cf. also Jung 2006, 225-241)[69] and casts the Battle of Plataea in a heroic, epic, register. If there is, indeed, such a continuous tradition, from the Homeric *epos* to Simonides' elegy, this also, likely, means that like the former also the latter was multi-layered, including both 'sympotic' and 'narrative/historical' elements: within the framework of this paper, however, such a digression might lead us too far from the subject (cf., e.g., Grethlein 2010, 59-68).

---

[67] Parsons, P.J. 1992: 3965; Simonides, Elegies, in: Parsons 1992, 4-50; see however also West 1992, vol. 2, fr. 11 sqq. and also Boedeker 1995.

[68] Boedeker 1995, 225; Kowerski 2005, 63-107; Grethlein 2010, 53-54; cf. also Plu. *Herod. Malign*. 872CE. Jung, however, believes that Simonides' elegy on Plataea was a separate poem: Jung 2006, 225-241.

[69] Also Herodotus (Hdt.1.3-5.1) refers to the Trojan War as the start of the enmity between Greeks and Persians, but he claims it were the Persians who mentioned it as such.

As indicated above, Simonides moved in the field of the elegy, more specific the historical narrative in elegy (cf. Grethlein 2010, 47 and notes 1 and 2). At the same time Simonides was credited by antiquity with having pioneered that very Greek genre of poetry of the *epinikion* or epinician ode, a genre culminating in the works of Pindar, though in itself praise-poetry owed its origin to a social and ethical order that pre-existed Simonides' 'invention' of the epinician by many centuries if not millennia (cf. Carson 1992, 115): in fact, as inferred above, parts of Homer can be read, I think, as epinician poetry. Ultimately, tradition holds Simonides also responsible for the professionalisation of the art of poetry in Greece, he being the first ancient poet (that we know of) to demand a fee for poetic composition and to make his living from these (Carson 1992, 113). As it appears, the famous elegy on the Spartan dead (at Thermopylae) by Simonides (*PMG* 531, see below, pp. 214-215) was commissioned by Sparta (cf. Boedeker 1995, 220), whether or not as part of an elegy on Greek or Spartan dead in the Greco-Persian War[70], while also several other elegies had been made on commission. Such a development, beneficial for the author, may simultaneously have led to his losing his independence (insofar it existed at all) regarding content and/or context of a specific work. It is an element to take into account reviewing his words on the Battle of Thermopylae.

The fifth century BC was a good time to interest oneself in the art of epigraphy. Simonides' lifetime coincided with the period of highest development in ancient engraving techniques. During this period, as the various *epichoric* (≈ local, here perhaps rather regional) alphabets of the Greeks found their way to regularisation, letter shapes became more precise in their construction and engravers began to develop a feeling for the form and arrangement of an inscription, as well as its relationship to the stone on which it was inscribed (Carson 1996, 2). As it appears, Simonides benefitted optimally from this development, adapting his elegiac writings but certainly also his epigrams to the possibilities the epigraphic techniques offered, while his clients appeared to appreciate the results Simonides could produce.

Simonides has, of course, become known to later generations because of the lines of praise, rightly or wrongly, ascribed to him (see for the discussion Molyneux 1992, 175-187), most notably:

---

[70] In my view, this does not exclude at all the *possibility* that *PMG* 531 indeed was part of a large poem that not only referred to the occurrences at Thermopylae but also included *inter alia* the lines devoted to the Battle of Plataea. As already indicated, the lines of the latter reveal strong pro-Spartan sentiments.

ὦ ξεῖν', ἀγγέλλειν[71] Λακεδαιμονίοις ὅτι τῇδε
κείμεθα, τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι
("O Stranger, report to the Lacedaemonians that here
We are laid to rest, having obeyed their laws": Simonides F. 22b, Page)[72].

An epigram resounding another one, in which the number of adversaries is greatly exaggerated (cf. also note 12 above):

μυριάσιν ποτὲ τῇδε τριηκοσίαις ἐμάχοντο
ἐκ Πελοποννάσου χιλιάδες τέτορες
("Against three millions here once fought
Four thousand, coming from the Peloponnese": Simonides F. 22a, Page).

And a third epigram:

μνῆμα τόδε κλεινοῖο Μεγιστία, ὅν ποτε Μῆδοι
Σπερχειὸν ποταμὸν κτεῖναν ἀμειψάμενοι,
μάντιος, ὃς τότε κῆρας ἐπερχομένας σάφα εἰδώς
οὐκ ἔτλη Σπάρτης ἡγεμόνα προλιπεῖν
("This is the memorial of famed Megistias, whom once the Persians
Killed after they'd crossed the Spercheios River,
A seer who, though well aware of impending doom,
Did not contemplate to desert the king of Sparta": Simonides F. 6, Page).

As regards a fourth epigram, the *Anthologia Palatina* clearly attributes it to Simonides:

εὐκλέας αἶα κέκευθε, Λεωνίδα, οἳ μετὰ σεῖο
τῇδ' ἔθανον, Σπάρτης εὐρυχόρου βασιλεῦ,
πλείστων δὴ τόξων τε καὶ ὠκυπόδων σθένος ἵππων
Μηδείων ἀνδρῶν δεξάμενοι πολέμῳ
("The earth conceals the famous men, Leonidas, who with you
Died here, king of broad Sparta,
Having endured the might of the many bows and swift
Horses of the Persians in war": *A.P.* 7.301 = Simonides F. 7, Page).

A longer fragment by Simonides is quoted by Diodorus (D.S. 11.11.6 = *PMG* 531):

---

[71] Several authors, like, e.g., Strabo read here instead of ἀγγέλλειν, ἄγγειλον: cf. Str. 9.4.16/C 429; I have opted here to follow Herodotus' version, also rendered in Page 1975, 18.

[72] A version in Latin of this epigram we find in Cic. *Tusc.* 1.103.

τῶν ἐν Θερμοπύλαις θανόντων
εὐκλεὴς μὲν ἁ τύχα, καλὸς δ᾽ ὁ πότμος,
βωμὸς δ᾽ ὁ τάφος, πρὸ γόων δὲ μνᾶστις, ὁ δ᾽ οἶτος ἔπαινος.
ἐντάφιον δὲ τοιοῦτον οὔτ᾽ εὐρὼς
οὔθ᾽ ὁ πανδαμάτωρ ἀμαυρώσει χρόνος.
ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν ὅδε σηκὸς οἰκέταν εὐδοξίαν
Ἑλλάδος εἵλετο. μαρτυρεῖ δὲ καὶ Λεωνίδας
ὁ Σπάρτας βασιλεύς, ἀρετᾶς μέγαν λελοιπὼς
κόσμον ἀέναόν τε κλέος
("Of those who perished at Thermopylae
All glorious is the fortune, beautiful the doom;
Their grave's an altar, ceaseless memory's theirs
Instead of lamentation, remembrance; and for pity,
Praise. Such an offering as this
Nor mould nor all-consuming time shall obscure.
This sepulchre of valiant men has received
The glory of Hellas for its eternal companion.
And witness to this is Leonidas, once king
Of Sparta, who has left behind a crown
Of mighty *aretê* and everlasting fame": Simonides F. 4, Bergk).

This fragment of Simonides, referred to by Diodorus, may have been part either of Simonides' *Thermopylae Elegy* or of a larger work as discussed above[73]. As it is, I believe (though I obviously have no evidence to back it) that the solution offered by Kowerski (Kowerski 2005, 4-19), mentioned above (p. 212), might well be a viable one.

As Molyneux indicates, the authorship of the first two of the epigrams is debated, though it is at least obvious from Herodotus' words (Hdt. 7.228.4) that Simonides was responsible for the third epigram (for his friend Megistias) and that the Amphictyons decided that the first two were to be composed and carved into stones as well as financed this honour. Of course, this does not exclude that Simonides did compose those first two epigrams as well (as has been largely accepted), but the evidence is not conclusive. Certain is, though, that all epigrams emphatically stress the valour, discipline, and self-sacrifice of the Spartan soldiers fallen at Thermopylae and, moreover, that the epigrams appear to have been created shortly after the events they referred to[74].

---

[73] Lesky does not mention a *Thermopylae elegy* as such, cf. Lesky 1971, 220-225, Trundle appears to believe Simonides did write such a work, stating the lines quoted by Diodorus may come from it, in: Matthew/Trundle 2013, 27-38 at 32-33; for the problems to solve it see Dillery 1996, 247 note 82. See also above, and note 65.

[74] Jung dates the lines by Simonides on Plataea to 478/477 BC (Jung 2006, 225-241); probably the lines dedicated to the dead of Thermopylae were written about the same time, if not somewhat earlier.

In all epigrams the same elements appear. The Spartans' self-sacrifice under Leonidas is glorified but no suggestion – let alone mention – whatsoever is made of a detour of Persian forces or defecting/surrendering Thebans, a nightly attack, or any of those other features we encounter in later authors. In this respect, whether or not all of these epigrams have been correctly attributed to Simonides is, ultimately, not a real concern for us. What really matters is that these really are the only contemporary documents we have, conceived only a very short period after the battle. On the other hand we also have to take into account that most of the lines (with the exception of those dedicated to Megistias) were commissioned and therefore perhaps biased.

Ctesias of Cnidus

The last author we shall discuss regarding his views on Thermopylae is (also) in that respect quite controversial, if only because the battles of Plataea and Salamis were switched in order in the transmitted version of his story of the events of the Greco-Persian Wars (cf. Ctes. *Pers.* F. 13 §§ 28 and 30). This author is Ctesias of Cnidus[75]. Also Ctesias made, more than likely, an opening statement to his *Persica,* a work in 23 books. Regrettably the proem is lost, but based upon Phot. *Bibl.* [72] 36a1 and 42b11 as well as the remark at D.S. 2.32.4, we can make an educated guess what he stated. Previously, I suggested the following (Stronk 2010, 2): "Among the Greeks there are many stories about the Persians, and not a few are not true. I, Ctesias, Ctesiarchus' son, of Cnidus will be the first to inform the Greeks about the complete history of the Persians and their kings, and their predecessors the Assyrians and the Medes, based both on their written evidence and their oral information as well as on my own observations during seventeen years of occupation at the court." As such the proem would not have been very different from the remarks by Herodotus or Diodorus referred to above (p. 190 and p. 192) or, for that matter, those of Thucydides' proem (Th. 1.1-3).

In fact, not only Ctesias' proem to his work is missing. The *Persica* is a work on which many modern writers have an opinion, generally a negative one (cf., e.g., Gardiner-Garden 1987, 2 and note 7 for a review), though in fact no one has read as much as a quarter of a page in modern print written by Ctesias himself. Apart from some 29 narrow lines written on a worn papyrus from the second century AD (*P.Oxy*. 2330: cf., e.g., Stronk 2008-09), we have not much more authentic material written by Ctesias. Everything else we nowadays call 'Ctesias' is, in fact, an adaptation or a summary of his writing by a third party, be it Diodorus of Sicily, Nicolaus of Damascus, Plutarch of Chaeronea, Photius of Constantinople, or one of the minor transmitters of (parts of) Ctesias' story, each writing with his (or her) private objectives/contingencies. If we define 'fragment' as 'piece of a non-trans-

[75] For an elaborate review of my views on Ctesias of Cnidus, see Stronk 2007 and Stronk 2010, 1-53.

mitted text', we have, up to now, probably only a few proper fragments of Ctesias' *Persica*, i.e. *P.Oxy*. 2330 as well as some sentences in Demetrius' *De Elocutione*. Everything else that is considered to be part of Ctesias' *Persica* is, in fact, only an interpretation and/or adaptation – or at best an unbiased and reliable quotation or *epitome* – by a third party (cf. also Lenfant 2004, cxc and note 784).

Both from his own testimonies (cf. Plu. *Art.* 11.3, 13.3, 14.1) and Xenophon's[76] we know that Ctesias served among Artaxerxes II's staff during the battle of Cunaxa. Ctesias is said to have served 17 years at the Persian court (D.S. 2.32.4) and we can deduce from Ctesias' own writings as they are transmitted to us that he left Persia for his homeland in 398/397 BC at the latest. For the writing of the *Persica,* Ctesias is said to have claimed that he had access to the royal archives. These are called βασιλικαὶ ἀναγραφαί, *basilikai anagraphai* (D.S. 2.22.5) or βασιλικαὶ διφθεραί, *basilikai diphtherai* (D.S. 2.32.4). Reinhold Bichler (Bichler 2007, 232) however suggests that Ctesias did not (have to) use Persian archives as his source, but could rely only on Greek literature. From D.S. 2.32.5 emerges clearly that the use Ctesias (allegedly?) made of 'royal archives' for Assyrian history obviously rested at best upon indirect use through hearsay. Moreover, most of Ctesias' Persian story appears to be set at the court, cradle of many intrigues linked with the interests of the persons involved (cf. also Bridges 2015, 132). It seems to be partly based upon rumours, court-gossip, and stories by hearsay, and other, more formal expressions of oral history[77]. Actually, Ctesias himself admits, according to the *epitome* by Photius, that he heard certain facts directly from the Persian Queen Parysatis (cf. Phot. *Bibl.* [72] 42b11-13). Though the importance of such information may, in itself, be enormous, and the power of informal forces working at courts can hardly be overestimated, there is a major problem. Such situations are historically hardly (if at all) verifiable since they are not likely to be documented. Even if Ctesias were telling the truth all the time, we would not be able to prove (or disprove) it.

An extra complication in the assessment of Ctesias' value for Persian history is the fact that his subject, and, perhaps, his intended audience, determined his scope and indeed – as far as we can see – the nature of his work. What we can safely state with respect to Ctesias' writings is that he does claim some authority as an expert in Persian matters (cf. esp. *FGrH* No. 688 T8). One of Ctesias' purposes may have been a didactic – or perhaps even moralising – one, as has

---

[76] X. *An.* 1.8.26, probably based upon Ctesias' own story: cf., e.g., Plu. *Art.* 13.4; also: Bassett 1998, 10.

[77] As it appears, one of Ctesias' objectives was to describe Persian (court) life, possibly to "cater for the tastes and expectations of his readers" (Bridges 2015, 132). Earlier I have described the *Persica* as a combination of historical fact and fictitious elements (much like Xenophon´s *Cyropaedia):* cf. Stronk 2007, 45-47, 48, 50-52, 55. It indicates we should use the *Persica* as a historical source with caution.

been supposed as well for Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and may be assumed for at least the works of Herodotus, Ephorus, Diodorus, and Plutarch. Like in the *Cyropaedia*, Ctesias' didactic element is veiled in a (quasi-)historical context: as such this work, of course, has a historical dimension, too. Finally, the political issues of the day, including the increasing xenophobia which afflicted Greece from *ca*. 450 onwards[78], may have determined to some extent scope and content of Ctesias' work as well.

In his work Ctesias may not always have come forward as an unbiased author: Plutarch, e.g., reproaches Ctesias for 'philolaconism': ἀλλὰ δαιμονίως ὁ Κτησίας, ὡς ἔοικε, φιλότιμος ὢν καὶ οὐχ ἧττον φιλολάκων καὶ φιλοκλέαρχος ... πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ μεμνήσεται Κλεάρχου καὶ τῆς Λακεδαίμονος ("But clearly is Ctesias very ambitious and none the less partial to Sparta and to Clearchus ... [and] he will bring forward many fine things regarding Clearchus and Sparta" (Plu. *Art.* 13.4)). Plutarch's testimony might lead us to suppose that Ctesias, whenever possible, follows a Spartiate source and tradition. In fact, in the preserved fragments Ctesias does not appear at all to be an overly devoted partisan of the Spartans (cf. Eck 1990, 416-417). He seems to have adapted himself above all cautiously to the political reality of the moment he wrote his work, reflecting the dominant ideology. The remarks of Lucian (Luc. *Hist. Conscr*. 39), accusing Ctesias of a strong Persian bias, seem to be certainly wide off the mark.

Ctesias' version of the Battle of Thermopylae (slightly extended for clarity's sake) reads as follows:

Ctesias *Persica* F. 13 §§ 27-28:

[27] Ξέρξης δὲ συναγείρας στρατιὰν Περσικὴν ἄνευ τῶν ἁρμάτων ὀγδοήκοντα μυριάδας καὶ τριήρεις χιλίας, ἤλαυνεν ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ζευγνὺς τὴν ἅλμην περὶ	[27] Then Xerxes set out against Greece, after he had collected a Persian army of eight hundred thousand men and one thousand triremes without reckoning the chariots and after he had bridged the sea

[78] Cf. Hall 1989, *passim,* refined by Harrison 2000; also Isaac 2004, 257-303 and figs. 2-4; Llewellyn-Jones 2012, *passim*; even in Herodotus' *Histories* it is already visible: cf. Lenfant 2004, cxxxiii-iv. As a matter of fact, Ctesias' work would, then, not differ very much from the purpose of Herodotus'. Jonas Grethlein argues that also Herodotus' *Histories* may well have had a didactic purpose, an aim that is already suggested in the proem. First of all the Persian Council, described in the opening chapters of book 7, in combination with the outcome of Xerxes' expedition, shows that lessons should be learned from the past (Grethlein 2009, 195-205). Next: "A dense net of foreshadowing in his account of the Persian Wars evokes later intra-Hellenic fights and indicates that Athens will be next in the cycle of empires" (Grethlein 2009, 196). Especially the role of Xerxes should be taken as example: "An examination of Xerxes' gaze will reveal that he blurs the borderline between past and present and thereby disregards an insight that is at the core of the Histories" (Grethlein 2009, 205)

Ἄβυδον[79]. Δημάρατος δὲ ὁ Λακεδαιμόνιος παρεγένετο ἤδη πρότερον, καὶ συνῆν αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ διαβάσει, καὶ ἀπεῖργε τῆς εἰς Λακεδαίμονα ἐφόδου. Ξέρξης δὲ προσβάλλει ἐν Θερμοπύλαις Λεωνίδᾳ τῷ στρατηγῷ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων δι᾽ Ἀρταπάνου, ἔχοντος μυρίους· καὶ κατεκόπη τὸ Περσικὸν πλῆθος, τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων δύο ἢ τριῶν ἀναιρεθέντων. εἶτα προσβαλεῖν κελεύει μετὰ δισμυρίων, καὶ ἧττα γίνεται κἀκείνων. εἶτα μαστιγοῦνται ἐπὶ τῷ πολεμεῖν, καὶ μαστιγούμενοι ἔτι ἡττῶντο. τῇ δὲ ὑστεραίᾳ κελεύει μάχεσθαι μετὰ πεντακισμυρίων· καὶ ἐπεὶ οὐδὲν ἤνυεν, ἔλυσε τότε τὸν πόλεμον. Θώραξ δὲ ὁ Θεσσαλὸς καὶ Τραχινίων οἱ δυνατοί, Καλλιάδης καὶ Τιμαφέρνης, παρῆσαν στρατιὰν ἔχοντες. καλέσας δὲ Ξέρξης τούτους τε καὶ τὸν Δημάρατον καὶ τὸν Ἡγίαν τὸν Ἐφέσιον, ἔμαθεν ὡς οὐκ ἂν ἡττηθεῖεν Λακεδαιμόνιοι, εἰ μὴ κυκλωθείησαν. ἡγουμένων δὲ τῶν δύο Τραχινίων, διὰ δυσβάτου στρατὸς Περσικὸς διελήλυθε, μυριάδες τέσσαρες, καὶ κατὰ νώτου γίνονται τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων· καὶ κυκλωθέντες ἀπέθανον μαχόμενοι ἀνδρείως ἅπαντες. [28] Ξέρξης δὲ πάλιν στράτευμα πέμπει κατὰ Πλαταιέων, μυριάδας ιβ΄, ἡγούμενον αὐτοῖς Μαρδόνιον ἐπιστήσας· Θηβαῖοι δ᾽ ἦσαν οἱ κατὰ Πλαταιέων τὸν Ξέρξην κινοῦντες. ἀντιστρατεύει δὲ Παυσανίας ὁ Λακεδαιμόνιος, τριακοσίους μὲν ἔχων Σπαρτιήτας, χιλίους δὲ τῶν περιοίκων, ἐκ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων πόλεων χιλιάδας ἕξ· ...

somewhere near Abydos. Demaratus the Spartan arrived there first and accompanied Xerxes across it, and dissuaded him from invading Sparta. At Thermopylae Xerxes ordered his general Artapanus to attack Leonidas, the Spartan general, with ten thousand men. The Persian host was cut to pieces, while only two or three of the Spartans were killed. The king then ordered an attack with twenty thousand, but these, too, were defeated. Consequently they [sc. the Persian troops] were flogged to the battle, and though flogged, were routed again. The next day he ordered an attack with fifty thousand, but without success, and consequently ceased operations. Thorax the Thessalian and Calliades and Timaphernes, the leaders of the Trachinians, who were present with their forces, were summoned by Xerxes together with Demaratus and Hegias the Ephesian. Xerxes learned that the Spartans could never be defeated unless they were surrounded. A Persian army of forty thousand men was conducted by the two leaders of the Trachinians over a barely passable mountain-path and came to the rear of the Lacedaemonians. The surrounded Spartans all died fighting bravely. [28] Xerxes sent another army of one hundred and twenty thousand men against Plataea under the command of Mardonius, at the instigation of the Thebans. He was opposed by Pausanias the Spartan, with only three hundred Spartiates, one thousand perioeci and six thousand from the other cities. ...

[79] The transmitted text runs as follows: ζευγνὺς τὴν Ἄβυδον. Lenfant translated this as follows “après avoir mis Abydos sous le joug” (Lenfant 2004, 124), but historically this makes no sense. In that respect Henry’s translation (“il atteint Abydos en jettant un pont”) is somewhat nearer to the point (Henry 1959, vol. i, 115), though Abydos is situated on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles and, arriving from Babylon, no bridge is needed to reach Abydos. Looking at both Herodotus 7.33-34 and the context of Ctesias’ story in historical perspective, the meaning of this passage becomes clear and my conjecture obvious: ζευγνὺς την ἅλμην περί Ἄβυδον “having bridged the sea somewhere near Abydos”. It should be noted that the use of the verb ζεύγνυμι “yoking”, “fastening together” in comparible sense (joining beasts together) has been used in Greek since Homer (e.g. Hom. *Il*. 18.543) but, to the best of my knowledge, for the first time in almost the same way as Ctesias does here by Aeschylus (A. *Pers*. 71).

This fragment is part of the *epitome* of Ctesias' *Persica* made by the Byzantine Patriarch Photius (before 828-after 886 AD). Elsewhere I have argued at some length, with examples, that Photius was not a very reliable epitomist (Stronk 2010, 142-144) and that the *epitome* can, therefore, not be used to decide whether Ctesias was a reliable historian or not (Stronk 2010, 145-146). The overall picture of § 27 is, however, apart from the numbers (40,000 Persians making the circuit is out of proportion), not totally unfamiliar. We encounter, at least, in this account several elements more or less familiar from other versions, such as the role of Demaratus (more or less in line with Herodotus), the numbers of the Greek force at Thermopylae (quite in line with Diodorus' account), the help for the Persian king from two Trachinian leaders (D.S. 11.9.3 mentions one Trachinian, not necessarily a leader, guiding the Persians), and the use of whips by Persian commanders to force their men to do battle (an element also mentioned by both Diodorus and Herodotus), as well as the bravery of the Spartan soldiers. The account of § 28 is rather more puzzling. It is stated to relate events at Plataea. The sequel, describing a severe Persian defeat and the wounding (and flight) of Mardonius, appears to confirm it. However, though the name of the Greek commander at Plataea is correct, the description of his force only suits that of the Spartan force at Thermopylae: there has been obviously a severe contamination of the source. Whether Ctesias himself is to blame for this mixing up of occurrences, or Photius, or some later copyist can, regrettably, not be stated with any firm degree of certainty. As it is: "[t]he practice of most modern authors is to blame Ctesias for all errors" (Stronk 2010, 36).

This account obviously is insufficient to make valid statements on the origin of Ctesias' information. Ephorus' work hardly if at all can be regarded as a source for Ctesias, Ctesias being probably nearly half a century older than Ephorus (and, as it appears, Ctesias' work rather served as one of Ephorus' sources). Theoretically, though, there might well have been sources used by both Ctesias and Ephorus, like the work(s) of Herodotus, Lysias, and/or Simonides. Whether Ctesias here freely varied upon Herodotus' work cannot be stated with certainty either, though Ctesias elsewhere does refer to the work of Herodotus, viz. in the case of Egyptian burial costums, at least if we are to trust a reference by Diodorus (D.S. 2.15.2). It may show that Ctesias was familiar with Herodotus' work (even though he apparently misread it in the passage referred to). Taken together, I think we are unable to state anything at all with any degree of certainty as regards Ctesias' sources for the Battle of Thermopylae apart from the fact that I very much doubt that Ctesias' sources here were of Persian origin[80]. We could, perhaps, add that, as it appears, Ctesias may have regarded the Battle of Plataea in some sense a replay of that of Thermopylae (cf. Dillery 1996, 243 note 74).

---

[80] As he claims to have used: cf. D.S. 2.32.4; Phot. *Bibl.* [72] 36a1-6; D.S. 2.22.5; Phot. *Bibl.* [72] 42b11-13.

Additional remarks

In a memorable paper in Dunsch/Ruffing 2013, Josef Wiesehöfer discussed the issue of Herodotus and a Persian Hellas. In this paper, he acknowledged that, in general, our knowledge of Persian motives for invading Greece is, as yet, far from complete. Partly this is due to a lack of knowledge of Greek (and notably Athens-oriented) authors, including Herodotus, but also partly to the (both ancient and modern) inability to discern between the nuances of Achaemenid Persian state ideology and Achaemenid Persian "Realpolitik" (Wiesehöfer 2013, 279-282). As regards the last element of Wiesehöfer's view we can only hope that insight will proceed in time, but Wiesehöfer's first observation doubtless is largely right.

This lack of understanding by the Greeks seems at first sight odd, looking at the, perhaps a little too one-sided, fascination for Persia in ancient Greek culture in general and Greek literature in particular. As Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones rightly remarked: "The Persians and their vast empire exerted a remarkable hold over the Greek imagination. Greek art from the late archaic period and throughout the classical age contains an abundance of images of the Otherness of the Persians, showing them as pampered despots and effeminised defeated soldiery. Greek literature too overflows with references to all kinds of diverse Persian exotica: ..."[81] (with – apart from chapter 8.8 – probably Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, which displays positive qualities of Persian rulers, notably Cyrus the Great, as an exception). A picture of such Greek sentiments is painted by Christopher Tuplin in his *Achaemenid Studies* (Stuttgart, 1996, 164)[82]. Such literary examples may have helped to establish (or strengthen) a picture of the Greek Self. As such, this may explain on the one hand the Greek deficit to really try and understand Achaemenid politics and/or ideology, on the other hand elucidates many of the elements, most notably in the outings of Isocrates and followers, we have encountered above.

Simultaneously we should realise that for Greeks, looking from the outside in (though Ctesias claimed to look from the inside out), the situation within the Achaemenid Empire, certainly until the end of the reign of King Darius III, was

---

[81] Llewellyn-Jones 2012, 317; also Bridges 2015, 133-135; cf. as regards literature, e.g., A. *Pers*. *passim*; the exposition in Pl. *Lg*. 2.639C-698A, esp. 694A-696A; Arist. *Mu*. 398A; Isoc. *Paneg*. 150-156; the O.T. book of Esther, *passim*. The practice continues at least until the third century AD, as Philostratus senior's *Imagines* (2.31) shows. Cf. also Tuplin 2014; Lenfant 2001, 407-438; Wiesehöfer 1996, 39-78. Bridges 2015, 70 refers to "a strand of Xerxes-traditions which focused more upon the Persian court as a locus for domestic intrigue and sexual politics", pointing at Herodotus' so-called 'bedroom scene' (Hdt. 3.134), antedating Ctesias' descriptions by far.

[82] For a review of Greek literature on Persia see, e.g., Stevenson 1997; Lenfant 2011; Harrison 2011; Lenfant 2014.

perhaps dark and beset with revolts. Nevertheless, it certainly was not as dark as Greeks tried to make us believe (cf. Llewellyn-Jones 2012, 318-319). "The Greeks, ..., could use the Persian past with great precision (or an attempt at precision at least): Aeschylus had already demonstrated that in his bid to chronicle Median and Persian royal genealogy in his *Persai* (lines 765–81) of 472 bce. Nevertheless, the Greeks were equally capable of overwriting Persian history and willing to do so, skewing the historical process for their rhetorical, cultural or theoretical needs, omitting and ostracising persons and events from the picture" (Llewellyn-Jones 2012, 346). Such notions we should bear in mind because they *might* add another perspective on the Greek renderings of the events at and around Thermopylae in 480 BC.

Persian and Babylonian sources

Naturally, we want to confront the various Greek reports on the Battle of Thermopylae, wherever possible, with Persian accounts of the Greco-Persian Wars in general and the encounter at Thermopylae in particular. Necessarily, I shall have to provide some introductory remarks to the available evidence, as not all readers will be sufficiently familiar with it. The Persian state inscriptions (mostly collected in Kent 1953) are, regrettably, not very revealing as regards the particularities of specific occurrences (with the exception of the great inscription ordered by Darius I the Great at Behistun), being primarily directed to underline the Achaemenid royal vision "to emphasize the legitimacy and scope of the ruler's imperial power" (Bridges 2015, 76; as it is, Darius' inscription combines both elements: it is quite specific and emphasises the ruler's legitimacy and power). Nevertheless, we might gather some *insight* as regards the position of the Persians from that direction. The first to consult, then, are the inscriptions ordered by Xerxes, such as an inscription from Persepolis, the so-called *Daiva*-inscription.

Persepolis XPh[83], lines 23-25, reads as follows:

[23] … *: Yaunā : tya : drayahiyā : da*
[24] *rayatiy : utā : tyaiy : paradraya : dārayat*
[25] *iy :* …

("[By the favour of Ahuramazda these are the countries of which I was king …], [23-25] Ionians [sc. Greeks], those who dwell by the sea [sc. the Greek *poleis* in Asia Minor] and those who dwell across the sea [sc. the *poleis* in mainland Greece], …": text and translation after Kent 1953, 151).

[83] I follow the method of Kent 1953, in which the first letter designates the king (D for Darius, X for Xerxes, A for Artaxerxes, when necessary followed by a numeral in Arabic in superscript, e.g. A^2 for Artaxerxes II), the second letter the provenance (e.g. P for Persepolis, S for Susa, N for Naqš-e Rustam, Z for Suez), and the last letter (in lower case) the number (a for 1, e for 5 etc.).

As Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg has explained, this inscription poses some particular problems (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1980, 1-47), one of them being the date it was ordered. Though by the time the inscription was made, the Persian army probably had already been defeated at Plataea, the Persian king could, she states, not admit defeat and continued to strive to extend his influence to mainland Greece (and, *inter alia* thanks to his relatively extensive financial resources, frequently succeeded to do so: cf. Stronk 1990-91, *passim*). Like most other Achaemenid state inscriptions (perhaps with the exception of the Behistun inscription of Darius I the Great), Sancisi-Weerdenburg declares, this text is, in fact, a-historic (cf. Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1980, 29): according to her, this inscription can, therefore, not be used as a source for Persian expansion.

Also an inscription by Darius the Great at Persepolis (DPe, lines 12-14) records his overlordship over the Greeks "of the mainland and who are by the sea" (Kent 1953, 136). It *might* reflect the campaign against Eretria in 490 BC, but, following the lines set out by Sancisi-Weerdenburg, it *could* be safer to consider also this inscription as 'a-historic'. The same goes for his inscription from Susa (DSe, lines 27-29: Kent 1953, 141-142). In some other inscriptions (DNa, lines 28-29; DSm, lines 8 and 10-11) a distinction is made between ordinary Ionians/Greeks (*Yaunā*) and the Petasus – wearing [a broad-brimmed hat of Thessalian origin] Ionians/Greeks (*Yauna takabarā*)[84]: I presume the latter description refers to Greeks on the mainland, based on the origin of such hats, i.e. Thessaly. Also these inscriptions *could,* however, following the view of Sancisi-Weerdenburg, be considered as 'a-historic' and therefore non-conclusive.

Doing so, however, we might overlook the fact that the Persians did have a strong foothold in northern Greece (and southern Thrace-Macedonia, the region known in the Persian texts as *Skudra* and adjacent to Greece). Moreover, all these texts make unmistakably clear that, even if the Persians did not *physically control* mainland Greece, they at least (and with some right, if we take the offerings of water and soil to the Persian kings by various Greek states into account) did make some sort of *claim* to the region [my italics]. The texts are, as such, part of expressions of the Achaemenid Persian state ideology rather than a reflection of historical reality. In this respect, they follow a traditional pattern that already becomes clear in Assyrian texts of Assurnasirpal II and Salmanassar III[85], where making the claim manifest is all-important (cf. also Wiesehöfer 2013, 280). In that respect, these texts are therefore by no means 'a-historic'. I

---

[84] The same distinction is, by the way, made in A?P, lines 23 and 26, a text ascribed to either Artaxerxes II or Artaxerxes III. Due to, amongst others, the expedition of the Cyreans and its aftermath and this king's involvement in Greek affairs, finally leading to the King's Peace of 386 BC, I feel tempted to opt for an ascription to Artaxerxes II.

[85] Cf., e.g., Rollinger 2013, 95-116 *at* 109-110 and notes 74-78.

think, therefore, that the observation by Sancisi-Weerdenburg cannot be maintained in its absoluteness.

At Persepolis we also have the reliefs on the staircase to the *apadāna*, the large audience hall, designed by Darius I the Great and completed by Xerxes, dating to the first half of the fifth century BC. These reliefs show delegations of peoples bringing tribute to the Achaemenid kings and among those delegations also a delegation of what appears to be *Yaunā*, Ionians/Greeks. Most likely, however, these are Greeks from Asia Minor; moreover, like the texts, also these reliefs are so formalised that they offer no evidence other than that they predominantly underline Achaemenid Persian ideological claims.

During the excavations of the palace of Persepolis in the 1930s two collections of tablets were found, documenting state administration. The first collection, the so-called Persepolis Fortification Tablets, refers to the period from 509 to 493 BC, from regnal year 13 to regnal year 28 of Darius I. The chronological distribution of the archive is uneven, the largest concentration of tablets dating from the 22nd and 23rd regnal years. A second group of tablets found were the so-called Persepolis Treasury Tablets. Though the Persepolis Treasury Tablets cover the period we are interested in, they run from 492-458 BC, from regnal year 24 of Darius to regnal year 8 of Artaxerxes I, they offer no clues as regards any military or political event: in Cameron's words: "the documents from the Treasury of the royal city Persepolis here published are not of a political nature. There are no treaties, chronicles, annals, letters to or from satraps, or edicts to distant outposts of the realm. Instead, they are specifically 'Treasury' documents" (Cameron 1948, 9).

Though Babylonia was part of the Achaemenid Empire and geographically closer to Greece than the Achaemenid heartland, Babylonian texts (the historically most important of these being the so-called *Astronomical Diaries* (cf. Sachs/Hunger 1988) but also the archive of the Murašū-family (a family of bussinessmen) from Nippur) offer no evidence whatsoever. Matthew Stolper phrases it as follows: "The available Babylonian texts are similar in kind to those from the early Achaemenid reigns, but there are fewer of them. They include few fragments of historiographic texts and royal inscriptions. Most are legal and administrative documents" (Stolper 1994, 234). As regards the *Astronomical Diaries*, Sachs and Hunger add to that: "... [T]he compilers of the diaries lived in Babylon and depended for their historical remarks on whatever they happened to hear. … For events in other parts of the empire they had to rely on hearsay. Even if we had the diaries complete, historical information from them would be very Babylon-centered" (Sachs/Hunger 1988, 36).

As there are no other Achaemenid documents, either of Iranian or Babylonian origin, that I know of that can shed any light on the Persian perspective on the

conflict, let alone specifically as regards Xerxes' expedition of 480 BC, we have no alternative – unless ongoing research reveals such a document as yet – than to exploit the traditional ancient (i.e. predominantly Greek) accounts and to try to make the best of these, after all, and in more than one respect, biased, stories[86]. Their main objective, in the end, may well have been, apart from telling a good and edifying story, to accentuate Greek *aretê* over Persian effeminacy. Certainly from the fourth century BC onward such a story could well find an obliging audience in Greece.

Varia

There might be, finally, (descriptions of) some objects that may have some relevance as yet. The first is a reference in *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* by (L. Flavius) Philostratus (*ca*. 170-*ca*. 247 AD). He mentions tapestries in a palace in Babylon, as he states a city richly adorned by a queen of Median origin. On one tapestry, he writes: ἐνύφανταί που καὶ ὁ Δᾶτις τὴν Νάξον ἐκ τῆς θαλάττης ἀνασπῶν καὶ Ἀρταφέρνης περιεστηκὼς τὴν Ἐρέτριαν καὶ τῶν ἀμφὶ Ξέρξην, ἃ νικᾶν ἔφασκεν· Ἀθῆναι γὰρ δὴ ἐχόμεναί εἰσι καὶ Θερμοπύλαι καὶ τὰ Μηδικώτερα ἔτι, ποταμοὶ ἐξαιρούμενοι τῆς γῆς καὶ θαλάττης ζεῦγμα καὶ ὁ Ἄθως ὡς ἐτμήθη ("Also woven into the tapestries are Datis drawing up Naxos from the sea, Artaphernes encircling Eretria, and the alleged victories of Xerxes. The occupation of Athens is there, Thermopylae, and things even more typically Median – the rivers of the earth drained dry, a bridge over the sea, and the cutting of Athos": Philostr. *VA* 1.25.2; translation Jones, Loeb Classical Library). Naturally, this description is more than likely of an object sprouting from the author's phantasy, though all based upon events from the Greco-Persian Wars as described by Herodotus (Philostratus mentions that the subjects on the tapestries "come from Greek tales"), but might as yet reveal a certain attitude on the Persian side or at least might be a reflection of Persian state ideology. Odd as it might seem, it is not *totally* out of order, as the following fragments from the *Trojan discourse* by Dio Chrysostom (*ca.* 40-*ca*. 120 AD) may demonstrate.

First Dio Chrysostom puts 'historical knowledge' into perspective: [145] οἷον εὐθὺς περὶ τοῦ Περσικοῦ πολέμου, οἱ μέν φασιν ὑστέραν γενέσθαι τὴν περὶ Σαλαμῖνα ναυμαχίαν τῆς ἐν Πλαταιαῖς μάχης, οἱ δὲ τῶν ἔργων τελευταῖον εἶναι τὸ ἐν Πλαταιαῖς· [146] καίτοι γε ἐγράφη παραχρῆμα τῶν ἔργων. οὐ γὰρ ἴσασιν οἱ πολλοὶ τὸ ἀκριβές, ἀλλὰ φήμης ἀκούουσι μόνον, καὶ ταῦτα οἱ γενόμενοι κατὰ τὸν χρόνον ἐκεῖνον· οἱ δὲ δεύτεροι καὶ τρίτοι τελέως ἄπειροι καὶ ὅ τι ἂν εἴπῃ τις παραδέχονται ῥᾳδίως· ("In regard to the Persian War, for instance, some hold

[86] Cf. also Bridges 2015: 5: "…it is striking that no surviving source from Persia itself makes any reference to this military campaign which took place on what was the western fringe of the Persian empire. This omission acts as a reminder that the dominant verdict upon the king [sc. Xerxes], as pronounced by western society, is largely coloured by the response of that society to his military campaign".

that the naval engagement off Salamis took place after the battle of Plataea [we have seen that, e.g., Ctesias did so, JPS], others that the affair at Plataea was the last of the events; yet a record was made immediately after the events occurred. [146] For most people have no accurate knowledge. They merely accept rumour, even when they are contemporary with the time in question, while the second and third generations are in total ignorance and readily swallow whatever anyone says": D. Chr. 11.145-146, translation Cohoon, Loeb Classical Library). Next Dio discusses events relating to the Greco-Persian Wars and the expedition:

Dio Chrysostom 11.148-149 (translation Cohoon, Loeb Classical Library):

[148] τοῦτο δὲ τὸ στρατήγημα παρὰ πολλοῖς ἐστιν. ἐγὼ γοῦν ἀνδρὸς ἤκουσα Μήδου λέγοντος ὅτι οὐδὲν ὁμολογοῦσιν οἱ Πέρσαι τῶν παρὰ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, ἀλλὰ Δαρεῖον μέν φασιν ἐπὶ Νάξον καὶ Ἐρέτριαν πέμψαι τοὺς περὶ Δᾶτιν καὶ Ἀρταφέρνην, κἀκείνους ἑλόντας τὰς πόλεις ἀφικέσθαι παρὰ βασιλέα. ὁρμούντων δὲ αὐτῶν περὶ τὴν Εὔβοιαν ὀλίγας ναῦς ἀποσκεδασθῆναι πρὸς τὴν Ἀττικήν, οὐ πλείους τῶν εἴκοσι, καὶ γενέσθαι τινὰ μάχην τοῖς ναύταις πρὸς τοὺς αὐτόθεν ἐκ τοῦ τόπου. [149] μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα Ξέρξην ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα στρατεύσαντα Λακεδαιμονίους μὲν νικῆσαι περὶ Θερμοπύλας καὶ τὸν βασιλέα αὐτῶν ἀποκτεῖναι Λεωνίδην, τὴν δὲ τῶν Ἀθηναίων πόλιν ἑλόντα κατασκάψαι, καὶ ὅσοι μὴ διέφυγον ἀνδραποδίσασθαι. ταῦτα δὲ ποιήσαντα καὶ φόρους ἐπιθέντα τοῖς Ἕλλησιν εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν ἀπελθεῖν. ὅτι μὲν οὖν ψευδῆ ταῦτά ἐστιν οὐκ ἄδηλον, ὅτι δὲ εἰκὸς ἦν τὸν βασιλέα κελεῦσαι στρατεῦσαι τοῖς ἄνω ἔθνεσιν οὐκ ἀδύνατον, ἵνα μὴ θορυβῶσιν·

[148] This is a very common device. I heard, for instance, a Mede declare that the Persians concede none of the claims made by the Greeks, but maintain that Darius despatched Datis and Artaphernes against Naxos and Eretria, and that after capturing these cities they returned to the king; that, however, while they were lying at anchor off Euboea, a few of their ships were driven on to the Attic coast – not more than twenty – and their crews had some kind of an engagement with the inhabitants of that place; [149] that, later on, Xerxes in his expedition against Greece conquered the Lacedaemonians at Thermopylae and slew their king Leonidas, then captured and razed the city of the Athenians and sold into slavery all who did not escape; and that after these successes he laid tribute upon the Greeks and withdrew to Asia. Now it is quite clear that this is a false account, but, since it was the natural thing to do, it is quite possible that the king ordered this story to be spread among the inland tribes in order to keep them quiet.

I fail to be able to completely discern irony (if, indeed, intended) and factual information in this fragment, but I believe (though I, obviously, do not have sufficient supporting evidence) it certainly holds a kernel of truth and really represents notions or ideas on the Greco-Persian Wars in "Persia", both within the times of the Achaemenid Empire[87] and perhaps even during the period of its suc-

[87] As a matter of fact, a similar attitude – on the one hand denial and belittling results of the adversary, emphasising the own achievements on the other hand – was displayed by Habsburg authorities in their reactions to the Dutch revolt in the second half of the sixteenth century AD: verbal communication, through Clio Stronk, by Dr. R.P. Fagel, Leiden University, Institute for History, Department of General History, who teaches, amongst others, on his project "Facing

Fig. 8. Persian king (Xerxes?) killing a Greek hoplite. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. An "anonymous loan", referred to as L.1992.23.8. Photo: Marco Prins, <http://www.livius.org/pictures/a/iran/an-achaemenid-king-killing-a-greek-hoplite/>.

cessors, notably the Seleucid and Arsacid periods, especially in the non-ethnic Greek circles in the society. It is a reflection of the state ideology, referred to above. Simultaneously it is showing Greek pride, culminating in one of the closing remarks: ὅτι μὲν οὖν ψευδῆ ταῦτά ἐστιν οὐκ ἄδηλον ("Now it is quite clear that this is a false account").

Of a slightly different order is an object currently in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Fig. 8). It is a (Chalcedon) seal with its impression, depicting a Persian king (among other things to be recognised by his crown) killing a Greek hoplite. The seal is to be dated to the first quarter of the fifth century BC: theoretically two kings may be relevant, viz. Darius I and Xerxes. Of these, the former has never been up in arms against the Greeks, but Xerxes has, of course. It has, therefore, caused the interpretation that the seal depicts Xerxes killing Leonidas (cf. <http://www.livius.org/pictures/a/iran/an-achaemenid-king-killing-a-greek-hoplite/>). Naturally, it is merely an interpretation, by no means a solid *datum.* Nevertheless, this very seal itself indicates that the Greco-Persian Wars also have had their impact on the Persian side, even though they may have evoked different emotions.

Conclusion

In the pages above we have followed various accounts of the events leading up to the Battle of Thermopylae and the battle itself, taking into account several factors.

---

the Enemy. The Spanish Army Commanders during the First Decade of the Dutch Revolt (1567-1577)". See, e.g., also: http://www.hum.leiden.edu/history/staff/fagel.html (retrieved August 10, 2015).

In the process, we have shown (I hope beyond reasonable doubt) that each of the ancient authors carefully wrought his version of the occurrences to comply with his needs. I think that, based upon the accounts we have discussed, different separate main strands in the written tradition may be discerned. At the top of all there is the work of Simonides, the oldest surviving tradition, written in the traditional way to convey the past since at least the times of Homer, i.e. poetry. Afterwards, that function was taken by prose, the literary form of the other strands of testimonies we have on 'Thermopylae'. The first strand, then, is the account by Herodotus (and possibly his sources, most of which remain unnamed). The second goes from Lysias through Isocrates and Ephorus to Diodorus of Sicily, Pompeius Trogus (in Justin's *epitome*), and Plutarch. A third strand may have been that of Ctesias of Cnidus, but what remains of his *Persica* is too damaged to draw any solid conclusion regarding potential affiliations with any of the other sources – even Simonides – we have come across. Apart from these some minor strands may be discerned, most of which we have encountered in the discussion and as it appears all dependent of one of the main strands mentioned above.

I hope that in the discussion the reader on the one hand may have acquired a better view on the problems the interpretation of the texts poses due to the adaptations contingency demanded and on the other hand will acknowledge the hesitation modern historians *should* have to favour, almost unquestionably, a particular vision or source. In the words of Flower: "Neither we, nor our sources, have sufficient information to reconstruct *what* took place during the last night and day at Thermopylae with as much certainty and precision as many moderns lay claim to" (Flower 1998, 376). In fact, the same conclusion also goes for the events leading up to that last night and day. Only very few facts are uncontested, though we can admit that, from the point of view of narrative, Herodotus presents us, probably, with the most attractive story, not necessarily being equal with the most reliable one.

In view of the limited amount of *solid* historical evidence we have[88], it seems pretty needless to create even more myths – especially such myths as practically demonise and, in fact, dehumanise the Persians and their king – such as a cinematographic 'version' of the events at and around Thermopylae (lately a film called *300,* directed by Zack Snyder, 2007, loosely based upon Frank Miller's graphic novel *300,* 1998, Milwaukie, OR, presenting Xerxes as arch-villain: cf. Bridges 2015, 191). As it is, the extant versions of the battle are already sufficiently complicated to untangle.

---

[88] See also Trundle, in: Matthew/Trundle 2013, 27-38 at 28: "There was no set version or tradition of the actual events at Thermopylae in antiquity despite Herodotus´ authoritative account". In similar vein: Brown 2013, 100-116 at 101: "The account of Herodotus was not necessarily as definitive in antiquity as it is now". Her account provides her audience with more epigrams and references than discussed in this paper.

Texts and Editions

Aeschylus
Sommerstein, A.H. (ed.) 2009: *Aeschylus. With an English Translation by —*, vol. I: *Persians. Seven against Thebes. Suppliants. Prometheus Bound* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 145), Cambridge, MA/London.

Astronomical Diaries
Sachs/Hunger 1988.

BNJ
Worthington, I. (ed.) 2006: *Brill´s New Jacoby*: see:
<http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-jacoby>.

Cicero
King, J.E. (ed.) 1927: *Cicero. With an English Translation by —*, vol. XVIII: *Tusculan Disputations* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 141), Cambridge, MA/London.

Ctesias
Lenfant 2004; Stronk 2010.

Demosthenes
Murray, A.T. (ed.) 1939: *Demosthenes, with an English Translation by —,* vol. VI: *Orations L-LIX* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 351), Cambridge, MA/London.

Dexippus Vindobonensis
Martin, G./J. Grusková 2014: "Dexippus Vindobonensis"(?). Ein neues Handschriftenfragment zum sog. Herulereinfall der Jahre 267/268, *Wiener Studien* 127, 101–120.

Dio Chrysostomus
Cohoon 1932.

Diodorus
Green 2006, 2010; Haillet 2002; Oldfather 1968, 1970; Stronk 2017.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus
Usher, S. (ed.) 1974: *Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The Critical Essays, in Two Volumes, with an English Translation by —* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vols. 465-466), Cambridge, MA/London.

Ephorus
Barber 1935; Parker (*BNJ* 70).

FGrH
Jacoby, F. (ed.) 1923-1958: *Die Fragmente griechischen Historiker*, 3 Parts in 17 vols., Berlin/Leiden.

Frontinus
Bennett, C.E./M.B. McElwain (eds.) 1925: *Frontinus: Stratagems. Aquaducts of Rome. With an English Translation by —* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 174), Cambridge, MA/London.

Greek epigrams
Page 1975a.

Greek poetry
West 1992.

Herodotus
Godley 1971; Hude 1958; Wilson 2015a.

Isocrates
Norlin 1966.

Justin
Yardley 1994.

Pausanias
Jones 1965; Jones/Ormerod 1966.

Persepolis tablets
Cameron 1948.

Persian inscriptions
Kent 1953.

Plutarch
Pearson/Sandbach 1997.
Perrin, B. (ed.) 1926: *Plutarch's Lives in Eleven Volumes, with an English Translation by —* vol. XI: *Aratus, Artaxerxes, Galba, Otho* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 103), Cambridge, MA/London.

Philostratus
Jones 2005.

Photius
Henry 1959-1978.

PLG
Bergk 1892.

PMG
Page, D.L. (ed.) 1975b: *Poetae Melici Graeci: Alcmanis, Stesichori, Ibyci, Anacreontis, Simonidis, Corinnae, poetarum minorum reliquias, carmina popularia et convivialia quaeque adespota feruntur*, Oxford [1st edition 1962].

Seneca
Gummere, R.M. (ed.) 1920: *Seneca. With an English Translation by —*, vol. V: *Epistles 66-92* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 76), Cambridge, MA/London.

Simonides
Molyneux 1992; Kowerski 2005.

Strabo
Jones, H.L. (ed.) 1917-1932: *The Geography of Strabo, in Eight Volumes, with an Translation in English by —* (series: Loeb Classical Library), Cambridge, MA/London.

Suda
Adler 1938-1978.

Thucydides
Smith, C.F. (ed.) 1919: *Thucydides. History of the Peloponnesian War, with an English Translation by —,* Vol. I: *Books 1-2* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 108), Cambridge/MA/London.

Xenophon
Brownson, C.L. (ed.) 1918-1921: *Xenophon. Hellenica, with an English Translation by —*, 2 vols. (series: Loeb Classical Library, vols. 88-89), Cambridge, MA/London.
Brownson, C.L. (ed.), revised by J. Dillery 1998: *Xenophon. Anabasis, with an English Translation by —* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 90), Cambridge, MA/London.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Altichter, H./H. Neuhaus (eds.) 1996: *Das Ende von Grossreichen*, Erlangen.
Barber, G.L. 1935: *The Historian Ephorus*, Cambridge.
Barkworth, P.R. 1993: The Organization of Xerxes' Army, *Iranica Antiqua* 27, 149-167.
Bassett, S.R. 1998: *Literary Borrowings and Craftmanship in Xenophon's* Anabasis [diss. University of W. Australia, Perth].
Bergk, T. (ed.) 1882: *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*[4], vol. III, Lipsiae [= Leipzig].
Bichler, R. 2007: *Historiographie - Ethnographie - Utopie. Gesammelte Schriften*, Teil 1. *Studien zu Herodots Kunst der Historie* (Herausgegeben von Robert Rollinger), Wiesbaden.
BNJ = Worthington, I. (ed.) 2006→, *Brill's New Jacoby*: see: <http://referenceworks.brill-online.com/browse/brill-s-new-jacoby>; a version in print is anticipated.
Boedeker, D. 1995: Simonides on Plataea: Narrative Elegy, Mythodic History, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 107, 217-229.
Briant, P. 2003: *From Cyrus to Alexander. A History of the Persian Empire*, Winona Lake, IN [a translation of Briant, P. 1996: *Histoire de l'empire perse. De Cyrus à Alexandre*, Paris].
Bridges, E. 2015: *Imagining Xerxes. Ancient Perspectives on a Persian King* (series: Bloomsbury Studies in Classical Reception), London.
Brown, A.R. 2013: Remembering Thermopylae and the Persian Wars in Antiquity, in: Matthew/Trundle 2013, 100-116.
Burn, A.R. 1962: *Persia and the Greeks*, London.
Cameron, G.G. 1948: *Persepolis Treasury Tablets* (series: The University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications, vol. 65), Chicago, IL.
Carroll, R. P. 1979: *When Prophecy Failed: Cognitive Dissonance in the Prophetic Traditions of the Old Testament*, New York.
Carson, A. 1992: How Not to Read a Poem: Unmixing Simonides from "Protagoras", *Classical Philology* 87(2), 110-130.
Carson, A. 1996: Writing on the World: Simonides, Exactitude and Paul Celan, *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, Third Series, 4(2), 1-26.
Cohoon, J.W. (ed.) 1932: *Dio Chrysostom*, vol. 1, *Discourses 1-11, with an English Translation by –* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 257), London/Cambridge, MA.
Dandamaev, M.A./V.G. Lukonin 1989: *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran*, Cambridge.

Daskalakis, A. 1962: *Problèmes historiques autour de la Bataille de Thermopyles*, Paris.
Dillery, J. 1996: Reconfiguring the Past: Thyrea, Thermopylae and Narrative Patterns in Herodotus, *American Journal of Philology* 117(2), 217-254.
Dunsch, B./K. Ruffing (eds.) 2013: *Herodots Quellen – Die Quellen Herodots* (series: Classica et Orientalia, 6), Wiesbaden.
Eck, B. 1990: Sur la vie de Ctésias, *Revue des Études Grecques* 103, 404-434.
Evans, J.A.S. 1991: *Herodotus, Explorer of the Past*, Princeton, NJ.
Farnell, L.R. 1907: *Cults of the Greek States*, vol. IV, Oxford.
FGrH = Jacoby, F. (ed.) 1923-1958: *Die Fragmente griechischen Historiker*, 3 Parts in 17 vols., Berlin/Leiden.
Flower, M.A. 1998: Simonides, Ephorus, and Herodotus on the Battle of Thermopylae, *Classical Quarterly* 48(2), 365-379.
Formara, C.W. 1983:*The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome*, Berkeley, CA.
Fowler, R.L. 1966: Herodotos and His Contemporaries, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 116, 62-87.
Gardiner-Garden, J.R. 1987: *Ktesias on Early Central Asian History and Ethnography* (series: Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, vol. 6), Bloomington, IN.
Gillis, D. 1979: *Collaboration with the Persians* (series: Historia Einzelschriften, 34), Wiesbaden.
Godley, A.D. (ed.) 1971: *Herodotus in Four Volumes, with an English Translation by —*, vol. III: *Books V-VII*, (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 119), London/Cambridge, MA.
Gonis, N./D. Obbink/P.J. Parsons (eds.) 1992: *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 59, London.
Green, P. 1996: *The Greco-Persian Wars*, Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA/London.
Green, P. 2006: *Diodorus Siculus, Books 11-12.37.1. Greek History, 480-431 BC: the Alternative Version, translated, with introduction and commentary by —*, Austin, TX.
Green, P. 2010: *Diodorus Siculus, The Persian Wars to the Fall of Athens, Books 11-14.34 (480-401 BCE), translated, with introduction and notes by —*, Austin, TX.
Grethlein, J. 2009: How Not to Do History: Xerxes in Herodotus' *Histories*, *American Journal of Philology* 130(2), 195-218.
Grethlein, J. 2010: *The Greeks and Their Past. Poetry, Oratory and History in the Fifth Century BCE*, Cambridge.
Haake, M./M. Jung (eds.) 2011: *Griechische Heiligtümer als Errineringsorte: Von der Archaik bis in den Hellenismus*, *Erträge einer internationalen Tagung in Münster, 20.-21. Januar 2006. Alte Geschichte*, Stuttgart.
Haillet, J. (ed.) 2002: *Diodore de Sicile. Bibliothèque historique, tôme VI, livre XI, texte établi et traduit par —* (series: Les belles lettres, collection Budé, série grecque, 408), Paris.
Hall, E. 1989: *Inventing the Barbarian. Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy*, Oxford.
Hall, J.M. 2014: *Artifact and Artifice: Classical Archaeology and the Ancient Historian*, Chicago, IL.
Hammond, N.G.L. 1996: Sparta at Thermopylae, *Historia* 45(1), 1-20.
Harrison, T. 2000: *The Emptiness of Asia. Aeschylus'* Persians *and the History of the Fifth Century*, London.
Harrison, T. 2011: *Writing Ancient Persia* (series: Classical essays series), London/New York.
Henry, R. (ed.) 1959-1978: *Photius Bibliothèque; texte établi et traduit par —*, viii vols. and index (series: Les Belles Lettres, collection Budé, collection byzantine), Paris.
Hignett, C. 1963: *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece*, Oxford.
Hornblower, S. (ed.) 1994: *Greek Historiography*, Oxford.
Hose, M. 2006: The Peloponnesian War: Sources other than Thucydides, in: Rengakos/ Tsakmakis 2006, 669-690.
How, W.W./J. Wells 1964: *A Commentary on Herodotus/with Introduction and Appendices by —*, 2 vols., Oxford (original edition 1912).
Hude, C. (ed.) 1958[3]: *Herodoti Historiae, Recognovit Brevique Annotatione Critica Instruxit*

—, 2 vols., vol. ii (series: Oxford Classical Texts), Oxford.
Isaac, B.H. 2004: *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, Princeton, NJ.
Jacobs, B./R. Rollinger (eds.) 2010: *Der Achämenidenhof/The Achaemenid Court*, Wiesbaden.
Jacobs, B./R. Rollinger (eds.) forthcoming: *Blackwell's Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire*, Malden, MA etc. (scheduled to be published in 2016).
Jacoby, F. 1922: Ktesias, in: *RE*, vol. XI.2, 2032-2073.
Jones, C.R. (ed.) 2005: *Philostratus. The Life of Apollonius of Tyana, Books I-IV, edited and translated by —* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 16), London/Cambridge, MA.
Jones, W.H.S. (ed.) 1965: *Pausanias. Description of Greece in Four Volumes with a Companion Volume, ... with an English Translation by —*, vol. IV, Books VIII.22-X (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 297), London/Cambridge, MA.
Jones, W.H.S./H.A. Ormerod (eds.) 1966: *Pausanias. Description of Greece in Four Volumes with a Companion Volume, ... with an English Translation by —*, vol. II, *Books III-V* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 188), London/Cambridge, MA.
Jung, M. 2006: *Marathon und Plataiai. Zwei Perserschlachten als »lieux de mémoire« im alten Griechenland* (series: Hypomnemata, 164), Göttingen.
Jung, M. 2011: "Wanderer, kommst Du nach Sparta ...". Die Bestattung Perserkämpfer Leonidas und Pausanias im Heiligtum der Athena Chalkioikes, in: Haake/Jung 2011, 95-108.
Keaveney, A. 2010: The Chiliarch and the Person of the King, in: Jacobs/Rollinger 2010, 499-508.
Keaveney, A. 2011: *The Persian Invasions of Greece* (series: Pen & Sword Military), Barnsley.
Llewellyn-Jones, L. (forthcoming): The Court, in: Jacobs/Rollinger.
Keaveney, A. 2011: *The Persian Invasions of Greece*, Barnsley.
Kent, R.G. 1953 (2nd edition): *Old Persian: Grammar, Texts, Lexicon*, New Haven, CT.
Kowerski, L. 2005: *Simonides on the Persian Wars. A Study of the Elegiac Verses of the 'New Simonides'*, New York.
Kraft, J.C./G. Rapp/J.G. Szemler/C. Tziavos/E.W. Kase 1987: The Pass at Thermopylae, Greece, *Journal of Field Archaeology* 14(2), 187-195.
Kuhrt, A. (ed.) 2007: *The Persian Empire. A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period*, 2 vols., vol. 1, 254-285, Abingdon/New York.
Lazenby, J.F. 1964: The Strategy of the Greeks in the Opening Campaign of the Persian War, *Hermes* 92(3), 264-284.
Lenfant, D. 2001: La "decadence" du Grand Roi et les ambitions de Cyrus le Jeune, *Revue des Études Grecques* 114, 407-438.
Lenfant, D. (ed.) 2004: *Ctésias de Cnide: La Perse, l'Inde, autres fragments* (series: Les belles lettres, collection Budé, série grecque 435), Paris.
Lenfant, D. (ed.) 2011: *Les Perses vus par les Grecs. Lire les sources classiques sur l'empire achéménide* (series: collection U-histoire), Paris.
Lenfant, D. 2014: Greek Monographs on the Persian World, in: Parmeggiani 2014, 197-210.
Lesky, A. 1971 (3rd edition): *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, Bern/München.
Llewellyn-Jones, L. 2012: Great Kings of the Fourth Century BCE and Greek Conceptions of the Persian Past, in: Marincola, J./L. Llewellyn-Jones/C. McIver (eds.), *Greek Notions of the Past in the Archaic and Classical Eras: History without Historians* (series: Edinburgh Leventis Studies, 6), Edinburgh.
LSJ = Liddell, H.G./R. Scott/ H. Stuart Jones/R. McKenzie (eds.) 1996 (9th edition): *A Greek-English lexicon, With a Revised Supplement* (P.G. Glare (ed.)), Oxford.
Luraghi, N. 2014: Ephorus in Context. The Return of the Haraclidae and Fourth-century Peloponnesian Politics, in: Parmeggiani 2014, 133-151.
Macan, R.W. (ed.) 1908: *Herodotus, The Seventh, Eighth, & Ninth Books with Introduction, Text, Apparatus, Commentary*, *Appendices, Indices, Maps*, 2 vols. in 3, London [repr. Cambridge 2013].

Marinatos, S. 1951: *Thermopylae. An Historical and Archaeological Guide*, Athens.
Marincola, J. 1994: Plutarch's Refutation of Herodotus, *Ancient World* 20, 191-203.
Marincola, J. 2014: Rethinking Isocrates and Historiography, in: Parmeggiani 2014, 39-61.
Martin, G./J. Grusková 2014: "Dexippus Vindobonensis"(?). Ein neues Handschriftenfragment zum sog. Herulereinfall der Jahre 267/268, *Wiener Studien* 127, 101–120.
Matthew, C.A. 2013a: Towards the Hot Gates: The Events leading to the Battle of Thermopylae, in: Matthew/Trundle 2013, 1-26.
Matthew, C.A. 2013b: Was the Greek Defence of Thermopylae in 480 BC a Suicide Mission?, in: Matthew/Trundle 2013, 60-99.
Matthew, C./M. Trundle (eds.) 2013: *Beyond the Gates of Fire: New Perspectives on the Battle of Thermopylae*, Barnsley.
Meister, K. 1990: *Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung: von den Anfängen bis zum Ende* des Hellenismus, Stuttgart.
Molyneux, J.H. 1992: *Simonides: A Historical Study*, Wauconda, IL.
Norlin, G. (ed.) 1966: *Isocrates in Three Volumes, with an English Translation by —*, vol. I (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 209), London/Cambridge, MA.
Oldfather, C.H. (ed.) 1968: *Diodorus of Sicily in Twelve Volumes, with an English Translation by —*, vol. I: *Books I and II, 1-34* (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 279), London/Cambridge, MA.
Oldfather, C.H. (ed.) 1970: *Diodorus of Sicily in Twelve Volumes, with an English Translation by —*, vol. IV: *Books IX-XII 40*, (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 375), London/Cambridge, MA.
Parmentier-Morin, É. (ed.) 1998: *L'œuvre historique de Nicolas de Damas*, Paris [diss.].
Page, D.L. 1975: *Epigrammata Graeca* (series: Oxford Classical Texts, vol. 83), Oxford.
Papillon, T. 1998: Isocrates and the Greek Poetic Tradition, *Scholia* ns 7, 41-61.
Parmeggiani, G. (ed.) 2014: *Between Thucydides & Polybius. The Golden Age of Greek Historiography*, Cambridge, MA/London.
Parsons, P.J. 1992: 3965: Simonides, Elegies, in: Gonis/Obbink/Parsons 1992, 4-50.
Pearson, L./F.H. Sandbach (eds.) 1997: *Plutarch, Moralia, with an English Translation by —*, Vol. XI (contains: *On the Malice of Herodotus* and *Causes of Natural Phenomena*), (series: Loeb Classical Library, vol. 426), London/Cambridge, MA.
PMG = Page, D.L. (ed.) 1975: *Poetae Melici Graeci: Alcmanis, Stesichori, Ibyci, Anacreontis, Simonidis, Corinnae, poetarum minorum reliquias, carmina popularia et convivialia quaeque adespota feruntur*, Oxford [1st edition 1962].
Pritchett, W.K. 1982: *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography*, Part IV: *Passes* (series: University of California Publications in Classical Studies, vol. 28), Berkeley, CA/Los Angeles, CA.
Pritchett, W.K. 1985a: *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography*, Part V (series: University of California Publications in Classical Studies, vol. 31), Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA.
Pritchett, W.K. 1985b: *The Greek State at War*, Vol. IV, Berkeley, CA/Los Angeles, CA.
Rapp, G. 2013: The Topography of the Pass at Thermopylae Circa 480 BC, in: Matthew/Trundle 2013, 39-59.
RE = Pauly, A./G. Wissowa/K. Ziegler (eds.) 1894-1980: *Real-Encyclopaedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 84 vols., Stuttgart.
Rengakos, A./A. Tsakmakis (eds.) 2006: *Brill's Companion to Thucydides*, Leiden/Boston.
Reynolds, L.D./N.G. Wilson 1991 (3rd edition): *Scribes and Scholars. A Guide to the Transmission of Greek & Latin Literature*, Oxford.
Robertson, M. 1939: Archaeology in Greece 1938-39, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 59(2), 189-209.
Rollinger, R. 2013: Dareios und Xerxes an den Rändern der Welt, in: Dunsch/Ruffing 2013, 95-116.
Russell, D.A. 1973: *Plutarch*, London.
Sachs, A.J./H. Hunger 1988: *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia,* vol. 1: *Diaries from 652 B.C. to 262 B.C.* (series: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Denkschriften, 195. Band), Wien.

Sacks, K.S. 1990: *Diodorus Siculus and the First Century*, Princeton, NJ.
Sancisi-Weerdenburg, H.W.A.M. 1980: *Yaunā en Persai. Grieken en Perzen in een Ander Perspectief*, Groningen [diss.].
Scardigli, B./M. Affortunati 1992: Aspects of Plutarch's Life of Publicola, in: Stadter 1992, 109-131.
Scardigli, B. (ed.) 1995: *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, Oxford.
Schliemann, H. 1883: Untersuchung der Thermopylen, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 15, 146-150.
Schwartz, E. 1905: Diodorus, in: *RE*, vol. V, 663-704.
Simpson, R.H. 1972: Leonidas' Decision, *Phoenix* 26(1), 1-11.
Stadter, P.A., (ed.) 1992: *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition*, London/New York.
Stählin, F. 1934: Thermopylen, in: *RE*, vol. V A,2, 2398-2423.
Stevenson, R.B. 1997: *Persica. Greek Writing about Persia in the Fourth Century BC* (series: Scottish Classical Studies, 5), Edinburgh.
Stolper, M.W. 1994: Mesopotamia, 482-330 B.C., in: Lewis, D.M./J. Boardman/S. Hornblower/M. Ostwald (eds.) 1994: *The Cambridge Ancient History*, (2nd edition), vol. 6: *The Fourth Century B.C.*, Cambridge, 234-260.
Stronk, J.P. 1990-91: Sparta and Persia: 412-386. An Outline, *Talanta, Proceedings of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society* 22-23, 117-136.
Stronk, J.P. 1995: *The Ten Thousand in Thrace. An Archaeological and Historical Commentary on Xenophon's Anabasis, Books VI.iii-vi - VII* (series: Amsterdam Classical Monographs, 2), Amsterdam.
Stronk, J.P. 2007: Ctesias of Cnidus, a Reappraisal, *Mnemosyne, A Journal of Classical Studies* 60(1), 25-58.
Stronk, J.P. 2008-09: *P. Oxy.* 2330: a New Collation, *Talanta, Proceedings of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society* 40-41, 219-222.
Stronk, J.P. 2010: *Ctesias' Persian History*, Part 1: *Introduction, Text, and Translation*, Düsseldorf.
Stronk, J.P. 2017: *Semiramis' Legacy. The History of Persia according to Diodorus of Sicily* (series: Edinburgh Studies in Ancient Persia), Edinburgh.
Suda = Adler, A. (ed.) 1938-1971: *Suidae Lexicon*, 5 vols., Stuttgart [originally edited between 1928 and 1938].
Too, Y.L. 1995: *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates. Text, Power, Pedagogy* (series: Cambridge Classical Studies), Cambridge.
Trundle, 2013: Thermopylae, in: Matthew/Trundle 2013, 27-38, *passim.*
Tully, J. 2014: Ephorus, Polybius, and τὰ καθόλου γράφειν. Why and How to Read Ephorus and his Role in Greek Historiography without Reference to 'Universal History', in: Parmeggiani, 2014, 153-195.
Tuplin, C.J. 2014: The Sick man of Asia?, in: Parmeggiani 2014, 211-238.
Vouvalidis, K./G. Syrides/K. Pavlopoulos/S. Pechlivanidou/P. Tsourlos/M.-F. Papakonstantinou 2010: Palaeogeographical Reconstruction of the Battle Terrain in Ancient Thermopylae, Greece, *Geodinamica Acta* 23(5-6), 241-253.
Wallace, P.W. 1980: The Anopeia Path at Thermopylai, *American Journal of Archaeology* 84(1), 15-23.
West, M.L. 1992 (2nd edition): *Iambi and Elegi Graeci*, 2 vols., vol. 2, Oxford.
West, S. 2002: Demythologisation in Herodotus*, Xenia Toruniensia* 6, 1-48.
Wiesehöfer, J. 1996: Dekadenz, Krise oder überraschendes Ende? Überlegungen zum Zusammenbruch der Perserherrschaft, in: Altichter/Neuhaus 1996, 39-78.
Wiesehöfer, J. 2013: Herodot und ein persisches Hellas. Auch ein Beitrag zu populärer und 'offiziöser' Geschichtskultur, in: Dunsch/Ruffing 2013, 273-283.
Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, U. von 1995: Plutarch as Biographer, in: Scardigli 1995, 47-74; [translated from the *Reden und Vorträge*, ii (5) 1967 (1922), 247-79].
Wilson, N.G. (ed.) 2015a: *Herodoti Historiae recognavit brevique adnotatione critica instruxit*, 2 vols., (series: Oxford Classical Texts), Oxford.

Wilson, N.G. (ed.) 2015b: *Herodotea: Studies on the Text of Herodotus*, Oxford.
Usher, S. 1985[2]: *The Historians of Greece and Rome*, Bristol.
Yardley, J.C. (ed.) 1994: *Justin, Epitome of the* Philippic History *of Pompeius Trogus, translated by —, with Introduction and Explanatory Notes by R. Develin*, Atlanta, GA.
Zahrnt, M. 2011: Herodot und die Makedonenkönige, in: Rollinger, R./B. Truschnegg/R. Bichler (eds.), *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich/Herodotus and the Persian Empire* (series: Classica et Orientalia, 3), Wiesbaden, 761-777.
Ziegler, K. 1964 (2nd edition): *Plutarchos von Chaironeia*, Stuttgart.

Jan P. Stronk
Universiteit van Amsterdam, Oude Geschiedenis
c/o "Phoenix"
Reestein 9
NL-2151KB Nieuw-Vennep
jpstronk@planet.nl