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Storia Militare Antica

a cura di
Marco Bettalli ed Elena Franchi

Società Italiana di Storia Militare

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The Battle of Mycale (479 BC)
A Fitting Climax to Herodotus' *History* or Just a Brawl on the Beach?

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University of South Africa

Abstract. In their Commentary to Herodotus' *History*, How and Wells (1912) comment that the 'Story of Mycale given in H. evades detailed criticism by its slightness' (Volume 2, 395). The other major source for information, Diodorus, also offers no more than cursory treatment of this military engagement (See Green, 2006). The superficial coverage in the ancient literature is then reflected in the evident lack of interest of modern studies in their brief assessments of the battle. Considering the very clear literary construction in Herodotus' account (see Flower and Marincola, 2002) of what is universally regarded as a historical event, there has been too little consideration of the problems evident from a close inspection of the narrative. Moreover, since the works of Herodotus and Diodorus differ in the information they contain it is possible, as a result of a comparative reading of the texts, to advance new ideas about Mycale, the prelude to this event and of its aftermath.

Keywords. Persian wars; Mycale; Miletus; Ionia; Troy; Herodotus; Diodorus Siculus; Athens; Sparta; Hellenic League; Xanthippus; Leotychidas; Xerxes; Hellespont; triremes; Battle of Lade.

Introduction (Beginnings and Endings)

The expectation of an audience or reader is that the final act of a play or the final chapter of a book should bring about the denouement of the plot or narrative. In the course of 'nine' books,[1] Herodotus chronicled

1 Books 1-4 contain background information on the reason why the Greeks and Persians came into conflict. Nine books since Antiquity, but not constructed in this way, of course, by Herodotus. In a paper exceeding 11,000 words, while a difficult choice, some episodes not directly relevant to the subject of discussion have been sacrificed. Thus, the siege of Sestos and a final example of the hubris of Xerxes complete the narrative of Herodotus, are concerned with further violent deaths inflicted on Persian generals, the second of whom surely presages Xerxes' own violent end. These events, if they contain a germ of history,

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the rebellion of the Ionian cities of Asia Minor (Book 5), the Persian campaign to Marathon (Book 6), Xerxes' invasion of Greece and the battle at Thermopylae (Book 7), the sea battles at Artemisium and Salamis (Book 8), the battle of Plataea and Mycale (Book 9). A reader approaching Herodotus' 'story-telling' style should surely expect Mycale to be a suitably major military event seeing that it occupies the work's climactic spot. Therefore, Herodotus' history of the Persian Wars should, even if it was almost a prototype, satisfy that expectation of completeness, just as obviously a beginning is followed by an end. Why then did Herodotus apparently choose a relatively minor episode as a conclusion when he could have ended his account at Plataea, the place of the decisive Greek victory that ended Xerxes' imperial ambitions? Thucydides, in the next generation after Herodotus wrote, failed to complete his work, but would probably have ended his history with the capitulation of Athens, the fall of its empire, in 404. Xenophon, on the other hand, completed his *Hellenica* in just precisely the fashion that should be expected. In 363/2, following the inconclusive battle of Mantinea, he (*Hell*. 7.5.26) states that: '... exactly the opposite to what all men expected occurred … Zeus contrived that both sides erected victory trophies … and each side considered itself victorious … there was in fact in Greece greater confusion and chaos than there was beforehand.'[2]

Herodotus chose to end by mentioning a number of minor incidents and, in particular, the battle of Mycale, the focus of the discussion here (Hdt. 9.90-105).[3]

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may be linked chronologically to the battle at Mycale, but there is no causal connection, hence their exclusion here. Moreover, there seemed little new to add apropos to these episodes unlike for the Greek naval operations in Ionia in the autumn of 479. I wish to thank an anonymous referee for drawing my attention to the omission, and for the suggestion that some clarification ought to be made for why the murder of Masistes (Hdt. 9.107-113) and the siege of Sestos (Hdt. 9.114-120) found no place in this paper.

2 Diodorus Siculus ends his brief account of Xerxes' invasion (Diod. 11.34.1-11.37.6) with the same episode, but continues to include Greco-Persian affairs (Diod. 11.34.1-37.6) not least the battle of Eurymedon in 470/69 (Diod. 11.61.1-62.3), and a subsequent truce between the warring states in 449/8, later called the 'Peace of Callias' (Diod. 12.4.5). See Green (2006) for a commentary on Diodorus' Book 11. The general view has Ephorus as Diodorus' source. However, when account is taken of the way in which his narrative is hinged to events in Sicily and Magna Graecia, then Timaeus is more probably the author, albeit one who may himself have employed Ephorus.

3 See Tracey (2009) 109-115, who argues that Herodotus' account of Xanthippus at Sestos (Hdt. 9.115-120) occupies this prominent place in the narrative as a courtesy to Pericles, his patron, and that a positive bias towards the Alcmeonids is evident throughout the work.

1. Hellespont: View of the Hellespont looking West.
Note the absence of a beach on the Asia Minor side.
(Images 1-9 are property of the Author)

However, when measured against other military engagements which concluded great wars, for example the Battle of Waterloo (1815), the last Battle of the Somme (1918), the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945), Mycale seems very meagre fare. Indeed, modern scholarship has little to say about the battle at Cape Mycale, appearing to accept the account of Herodotus (9.96-107) without much criticism or scepticism of its veracity or accuracy. How and Wells tellingly observed that the: 'story of Mycale given in H. evades detailed criticism by its slightness,' while Burn's comment that it 'was a relatively small battle, but was followed by revolt in Ionia' to a great extent sums up the available views.[4]

Notwithstanding this body of opinion, nonetheless, it is possible to subject the evidence found in Herodotus and Diodorus to some reinterpretation and, as a result, will enable new light to be cast on the episode of Mycale. For example,

4 How and Wells (1912) 395; Burn (1966) 192. Thus, How and Wells (1912) 390, are more concerned with the battle's synchronisation with Plataea, although Herodotus' interest in such phenomena, real or contrived, is quite plain throughout his history. See Marincola (1996) 600 n. 40; for the synchronisation of Mycale and Plataea. See, for example, Meiggs (1972) 33-34, and van Wees (2004) 297 n. 54, for a brief synopsis of Mycale. See also Flower and Marincola (2002) 20-28 for comments on Mycale, but no analysis of the battle.

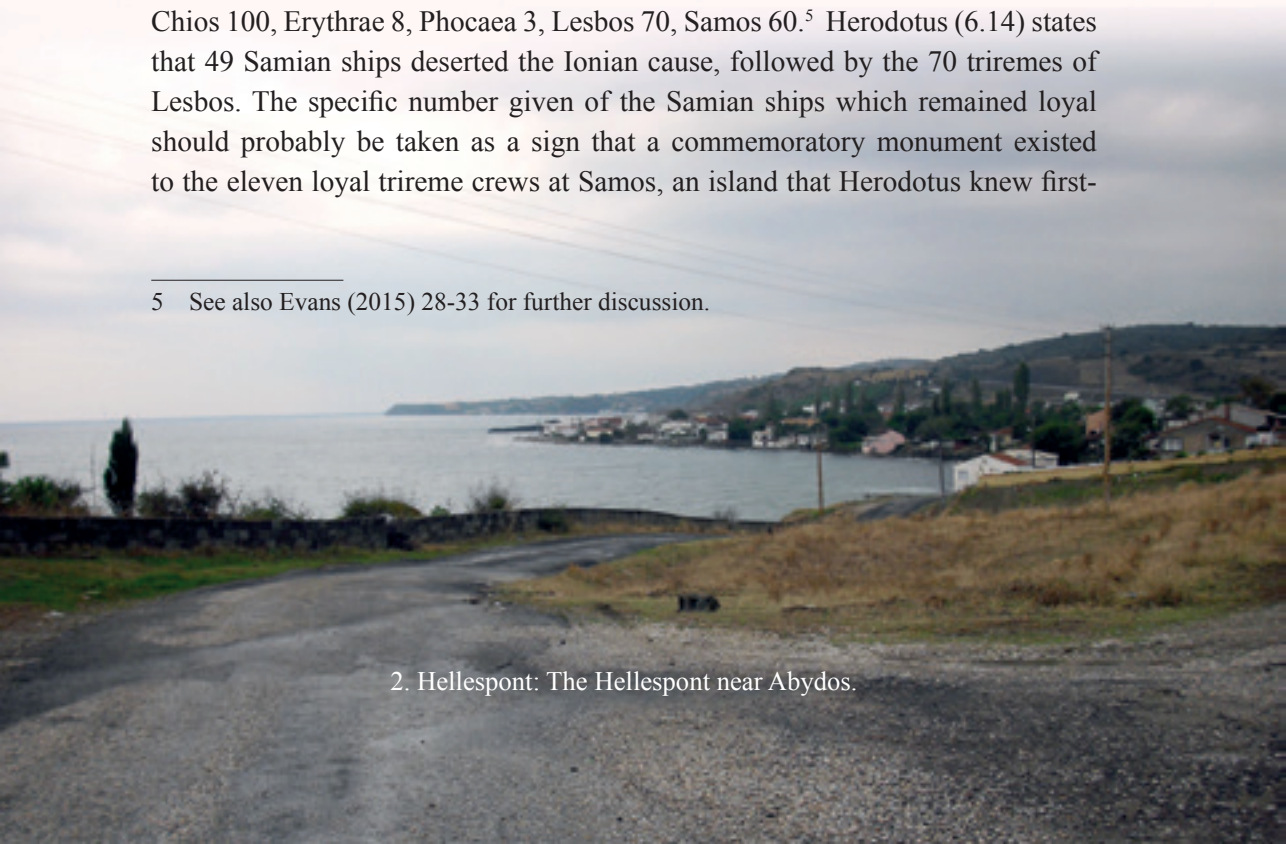
the canonical version of the 'Persian Wars' begins with the rebellion of Ionia and concludes with Mycale, and yet Mycale is probably the least important military encounter in the entire period from about 500 to 479 BC. It is argued here that Mycale was no more than a skirmish, perhaps even just a brawl on the beach, and that the event was embellished by Herodotus to become an adequate finale to his history. Simultaneously, Herodotus fabricated a suitably heroic victory on land for the Athenians to commemorate in addition to their triumph at Salamis. By doing this, Herodotus, therefore, placed Athens and Sparta on the same status as defenders of Greece against Xerxes.

The Naval Forces

In order to appreciate the composition of what has become described as armies of Greeks and Persians at Mycale, it is necessary to first look briefly at the statistics for the opposing sides at the battles at Lade, Marathon, Artemisium and Salamis.

At Lade in 494 the fleet of the Ionian rebels and their allies was 353 in total (Hdt. 6.8) from left wing to right wing: Miletus 80, Priene 12, Myus 3, Teos 17, Chios 100, Erythrae 8, Phocaea 3, Lesbos 70, Samos 60.[5] Herodotus (6.14) states that 49 Samian ships deserted the Ionian cause, followed by the 70 triremes of Lesbos. The specific number given of the Samian ships which remained loyal should probably be taken as a sign that a commemoratory monument existed to the eleven loyal trireme crews at Samos, an island that Herodotus knew first-

5 See also Evans (2015) 28-33 for further discussion.



2. Hellespont: The Hellespont near Abydos.

hand.[6] The loss of the contingent from Lesbos signalled certain defeat. However, Herodotus ends his account with a throw-away dramatic line that the 'majority of the Ionians' also fled. This statement is false, and perhaps reflects the author adding some additional drama through his personal 'story-telling' having used Hecataeus for the details of the encounter. The Chians, Milesians and Phocaeans, and probably most of the rest, fought to the bitter end.

For the campaign against Eretria and Athens in 490 the Persian fleet consisted, probably, of as many warships as transports because Datis and Artaphernes intended landing and employing at least 10,000 heavy infantry, with substantial cavalry support.[7] On the other hand, it is also worth noting that, compared to the Ionian cities and adjacent islands five years beforehand, the mainland Greek *poleis* possessed very few warships, and those they may have had in their possession avoided all contact with the enemy.

A decade later at Doriscus, Xerxes' fleet is said to have had a total number of 1207 triremes (Hdt. 7.89). It consisted of 300 Phoenician triremes, 200 from Egypt, 150 from Cyprus, 100 from Cilicia, Lycians 50, Pamphylia 30, Dorians of Asia 30, Caria 70, Ionians 100, and the Islands 17, Aeolia 60, Hellespont and Bosphorus 100.[8]

At Artemisium the Greek fleet totalled 271 triremes (Hdt. 8.1): Athens provided 127 warships and a further 20 were crewed by the Athenian colonists at Chalcis (147) while the Peloponnesian League contributed 95 triremes (Corinth, 40; Megara, 20; Sicyon, 12; Sparta, 10; Epidaurus, 8; Troezen 5), and the other island states lent 29 triremes (Aegina, 18; Eretria, 7; Styra, 2; Ceos, 2). Herodotus claims that the Persian fleet at this stage numbered a little more than twelve hundred warships (Hdt. 7.184).

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6 How and Wells (1912) 69. However, the crews of the eleven Samian triremes settled at Zancle (Messene) and, almost certainly, never returned to their original homes, Evans (2022b) 121-141. They were perhaps joined by some Milesians and the 3 ships from Phocaea commanded by Dionysius (Hdt. 6.17). See also, Evans (2015) 32 and n. 85.

7 Herodotus (Hdt. 6.95) gives a total of 600 triremes, but on the difficulty of assigning numbers and types of vessels for this fleet, see How and Wells (1912) 102-103; Evans (2015) 44-45.

8 The numbers, unlike those for the Greeks, appear rather contrived, and may be Herodotus' estimations. Hence the appearance of rounded-up totals He states (Hdt. 7.60) that no official record was kept of the numbers in Xerxes' forces. See further the discussion of How and Wells (1912) 363-366.

At Salamis the Greeks are said to have assembled 380 triremes (Hdt. 8.42-48, 8.81-82): Athens provided 180 and the 20 crewed by Chalcis (200 triremes), the Peloponnesian League had 109 triremes (Corinth, 40; Megara, 20; Sparta, 16; Sicyon, 15; Epidaurus, 10; Troezen 5; Hermione, 3); the others, 59 triremes (Aegina, 30; Eretria, 7; Styra, 2; Ceos, 2;.Ambracia, 7; Leucas, 3; Naxos, 4; Cythnus, 1; Croton, 1; Tenos, 1; Lemnos, 1). The total is actually 368 triremes,[9] more than the Ionians had mustered at Lade, but indicative of how little enthusiasm or financial resources there was among the Greek mainland cities for the development of naval power even after the defeat of the Asiatic Greeks at Lade, and the subsequent Persian campaign to Marathon.[10]

After their losses at Artemisium, the Persians are said to have still possessed a fleet of 600 triremes (Hdt. 6.9).[11] This number was reduced by the Greeks at Salamis to roughly 300 triremes (Hdt. 8.130),[12] or possibly to about 350, since, according to Diodorus (Diod. 11.19.3), in the battle the Greeks had lost 40 warships, while the Persians, lost or had captured, more than 200 triremes.[13] The Persian fleet spent the winter of 480/79 at either Cyme or Samos, after it had transported Xerxes and his escort from the vicinity of Sestos to Abydos.[14] In the

9 How and Wells (1912) 363 n. 1, offer a convincing enough solution rather than pronounce it an error of Herodotus. Since then other commentators do not appear interested in the problem.

10 The Corcyraeans promised to join in the defence of Greece, sending a fleet of 60 triremes, but these sailed no further than Pylos (Hdt. 7.168). The warships of Corcyra together with the 200 promised by Gelon of Syracuse (Hdt. 7.158) would certainly have made Xerxes reconsider a naval engagement against the Greeks in their home waters.

11 See also Wallinga (2005) 37; Evans (2015) 29, 62-63.

12 For a comprehensive analysis of Salamis, see Wallinga (2005) 114-148, and Persian losses 129-131.

13 Herodotus gives no figures for the Persian losses at Salamis. The Phoenician ships and those from Cyprus, which formed the right wing of the Persian fleet and hence were meant to attack the Greeks were particularly targeted by the Athenians. Once a large number of the Persian right wing had been forced to beach, the Greeks were able to attack the centre of the enemy causing much damage (Diod. 11.19.2-3). The remaining Phoenician ships are said by Diodorus (11.19.4) to have departed immediately after the battle, but Herodotus (Hdt. 9.96) states that they were still at Samos just before the battle at Mycale, where they were ordered to retire. Diodorus' evidence here is generally discarded in favour of Herodotus although neither has a clear view of the sequence of events. See Green (2006) 73 and n. 80 for the casualties among the Persian fleet. However, *contra* Haillet (2002) 29 n. 1, most if not all the crews of the Persian fleet were from coastal regions and no doubt with as much aquatic proficiency as the mainland Greeks.

14 Herodotus (Hdt. 8.130) states that the Persian fleet sailed directly from Phalerum to Asia,

3.Troy: The View from the Hill at Troy.
Note that the sea here has receded several kilometres. In the *Iliad* the beached ships of the Greeks would have been clearly observed from the Trojan fortifications.

spring of 479 the warships at Cyme moved down to Samos where the fleet was reunited under a trio of recently appointed commanders: Mardontes, Artaÿntes and Ithamitres (Hdt. 8.130).[15] The ethnic composition of this fleet after Salamis

perhaps Samos, and then, all or a part, joined Xerxes at the Hellespont. The harbour at Cyme would not have accommodated the entire Persian fleet and since a large contingent came originally from Samos, it was to this home harbour that a substantial part of the fleet may have remained in the winter of 480/79. Just how the warships could have carried the Persian king's escort, still in tens of thousands, is not mentioned. It may be that for the most part merchant shipping was used to ferry the troops and especially cavalry and or chariots, and these vessels were protected by the triremes, whose crews would also have been alert to the possibility that the Greeks might well pursue them from Salamis. Xerxes may well have boarded a trireme, but not for the short crossing at the Hellespont, but rather to Cyme since from this city the road led directly to Sardis, then the king's initial destination.

15 See Munro (1939) 341-342 regarding the possible responsibilities of each commander. However, it is worth noting that Herodotus explicitly asserts that Artaÿntes co-opted Ithamitres, his nephew, as general. The Persian king evidently allowed his generals some discretion in their appointments, that is, if Herodotus' evidence is accurate. It would also indicate that Ithamitres was probably in an unofficial capacity and that his senior collea-

4. The coast between Alexandria Troas and Assos in the Troad (Biga Peninsula, Turkey) There is no beach along this coastline.

plainly explains the Persian commanders' unease about another sea battle against the Greeks. Although numerically the Persian fleet might still pose a threat there was a visible lack of cohesion and loyalty among the remaining contingents, all of which would have suffered losses at Salamis. It is hardly remarkable that the Persian commanders after Salamis should regard the Ionians and the Greeks of the island states as of questionable loyalty, so recently enemies of Darius in the 490s.[16] The numerical superiority of the Persian fleet by the time it reached Sa-

gues (Artaÿntes and Mardontes) actually shared the command, the one for the triremes, the other for the on-board infantry. Thus, in the campaign to Marathon in 490, Datis and Artaphernes clearly shared the overall command, but the former is given greater prominence in the sources and may have had the warships in his charge, while the latter commanded the infantry and cavalry that formed such a crucial part of the expedition. For further discussion of the Persian campaign to Marathon, see Evans (2015) 40-81.

16 Munro (1939) 312-313, 342, describes the fleet as 'Pontic' without being specific, although this may mean the warships drawn from the communities across the Hellespont and Bosphorus (Hdt. 7.95) although these cannot have been entirely unscathed in the recent battle with the Greeks, and there is no mention that these alone provided the warships for the Persian fleet up to Mycale. See also Wallinga (2005) 137.

mos also becomes difficult to ascertain since Herodotus claims (Hdt. 9.96) that the Phoenician contingent was sent away from Samos, but noteworthy is that he also stated earlier in the narrative that the same contingent had been disgraced at Salamis (Hdt. 8.90). The Phoenicians may also have been deemed to have become untrustworthy. Diodorus (11.19.4) claims that the Phoenicians, in fear of Xerxes' anger, fled soon after Salamis. There was plainly some uncertainty about the whereabouts of some of the Persian fleet from the time of its major defeat.[17] Thus, if there were neither Phoenicians nor Egyptian warships at Samos in 479, it is also possible that other contingents had been ordered to return to their homes, to the Hellespont, Bosphorus, or Cyprus. This would mean, and it appears to be confirmed in the narratives, that the warships at Samos which were beached as Mycale were entirely of Ionian or Aeolian city-states, were rather few in number, perhaps less than 200 triremes.[18] A great irony could have drawn comment here: that the battle of Lade was about to be re-enacted, but this time with Greeks fighting Greeks. As it happened, however, that was not to be the outcome.

The Persian fleet that sailed from Cyme is described as passing close to the

17 Regarding the Egyptian triremes after Salamis, see the discussion of Wallinga (2005) 138-141.

18 Cf. Barron (1988) 613, who suggests as few as 100 warships; cf. Munro (193() 342, for 200 ships. Herodotus, having been very precise about Lade (Hdt. 6.8), probably because he had Hecataeus as his source, see Evans (2015) 29-38, now seems, by comparison, to be quite vague. However, he intimates that once the Phoenicians had departed, the Persian fleet remaining consisted of almost entirely Samians and Milesians. This may not be inaccurate. The prominence given to Samos and Miletus is not startling, seeing that these two alone had provided 140 triremes at Lade. Most of these warships probably survived that battle, however, it is unlikely that they would have been seaworthy fifteen years' later. It is, moreover, interesting to see such prominence given to Miletus in this episode, a city supposedly destroyed by the Persians in 493, according to Herodotus and dwelt on at some length (Hdt. 6.18-20). It indicates that the city on account of its important harbour remained as essential to the Persians in the 480s as it was to be for the Delian League in the following decades. For its supposed fate and that it was an invention either of Phrynichus or Herodotus, see Evans (2018) 16-30. How & Wells (1912) 330 also note Herodotus' misleading account (Hdt. 6.18-22, 6.100-102) of both the destruction of Miletus in 493 and of Eretria in 490. The Eretrians supplied triremes for Artemisium and Salamis and possibly for Mycale, but unrecorded for that last expedition. Miletus' continued significance as a naval power is clear in both 494 and 479, but its decline afterwards was a rapid one on account of the silt from the Meander River that choked its harbour. See Evans (2012) 63-64 for the decline of Miletus' economic status. Diodorus (Diod. 11.36.1-5) includes Milesians, Samians, Aeolians 'and many others from Asia' who deserted the Persians to join the Greeks in the battle. See further below.

temple of Samian Hera (Hdt. 9.96), although Herodotus cannot have been an eye-witness, nor does he acknowledge a source. According to Barron, the Persians did not trust the Milesians and therefore avoided their harbour,[19] but Miletus, like all other cities in Ionia at this time, had a pro-Persian ruler and probably a Persian garrison so the use of any harbour facilities on the coast of Asia Minor, or on many of the islands was certainly not out of the question. Furthermore, Samos, ruled by a tyrant sanctioned by Xerxes (Hdt. 9.90-92), was where a part of the fleet spent the winter months.

Wallinga has observed that there is no mention of a contribution from Chios or any ships from Lesbos or indeed any other western Asia Minor city, including Halicarnassus, among the Persian warships in 479 prior to Mycale. Thus, Artemisia, notorious for her escape from Salamis, has completely disappeared from the narrative (Hdt. 8.107).[20] The Chians and Lesbians had provided vital numbers at Lade in 494, with nearly half the total warships (as noted above). In 494, as the Persian fleet gained the upper hand after the desertion of most of the Samian and Lesbian ships, the Chian contingent, severely battered, where it could eventually also withdrew and beached its ships at Mycale. The crews intended to march north to their home, but these mostly unarmed, were massacred by the Ephesians (Hdt. 6.16).[21] The losses from this disaster in 494 may go some way to explain the apparent absence of a major Chian contribution in 480/79, although Chian exiles feature prominently in persuading the Spartan king Leotychidas to lead the Greek fleet to cross the Aegean in 479 (Hdt. 8.132). Lesbos is also not mentioned until

19 Barron (1988) 612.

20 Wallinga (2005) 147. However, note that the trireme of Artemisia at Salamis could not have had a Persian presence on board since she was able to sink the warship of Calyndus, an ally, and escape detection (Hdt. 8.87-88). The lack of Persian infantry on board the warship of a Carian ally perhaps accounts for How and Wells (1912) 278 voicing unnecessary caution regarding Herodotus' comment (Hdt. 8.130) that the *epibatai* on the ships crewed by the Ionian and other Asian Greeks before Mycale were mostly Persians and Medes. Artemisia's trireme may well have been an exception granted to a loyal subject. And after Artemisia brought some of Xerxes' sons to Ephesus (Hdt. 8.107), she perhaps sailed directly to Halicarnassus, and remained there for the duration of the war.

21 See also Köster (1923) 239. Note also the comment of How and Wells (1912) 69-70 on the 'extraordinary ignorance' of the Ephesians concerning the result of the battle at Lade. On the fate of the Chians and probable Ephesian collusion with the Persians, see Evans (2015) 32-33. The Chians are reputed to have 40 armed infantry on their 100 ships at Lade (Hdt. 6.15), perhaps on pentekonters rather than the recently developed triremes that had been adapted for that purpose.

after the battle was concluded, but like Chios, not because they had given aid to the Greeks at Mycale, but that later the island states: Samos, Chios and Lesbos provided warships for the Delian League (Hdt. 9.106).

After its great victory in 480, the triremes of the Hellenic League's fleet must have dispersed to their various home harbours, although the Athenian warships probably remained at or near Salamis in anticipation of a further Persian incursion after the winter.[22] In late spring or early summer of 479 Herodotus places the reconstituted Hellenic League fleet at Aegina (Hdt. 8.131-132) where it is said to have gathered shortly beforehand. Herodotus states that the Spartan king Leotychidas had under his command a total of 110 triremes, and he does not augment that figure, although some modern commentators have argued that further ships were added at some later unspecified point.[23] Given the changed circumstances and different objectives in this year, it is hardly remarkable that the fleet at Aegina should be a little under a third of that assembled for Salamis. The Persians had already been defeated twice at sea and suffered huge losses, and so the Greek city-states may well collectively have believed fewer ships were necessary, seeing that they were expensive to maintain. Moreover, Mardonius and the Persian land forces were still active on the mainland, and so all members of the Hellenic League remained under serious threat of destruction. The Eretrians and the Athenian colonists at Chalcis were similarly handicapped in contributing to a Hellenic League for much of 479. The Plataeans who had crewed Athenian triremes had abandoned their *polis* and were refugees in the Peloponnese. Many states, including Athens, may well have been understandably reluctant to allow their warships to stray too far from the centre of hostilities in case these were required at short notice. There is no need to assume, on the basis of a remark by Diodorus (see further below), that the Greek fleet in 479 numbered more than 110 triremes.

It is also possible to venture some idea of the composition of this fleet, and of the cities who contributed, drawing on the placement of contingents in the line of attack against the Persians at Mycale. From Herodotus' evidence it can be argued that the allies contributed roughly half of what they had provided before, while the

22 Herodotus (Hdt. 8.125) gives the impression that Athens was reoccupied since he states that Themistocles 'arrived at Athens from Sparta' after the battle of Salamis. This is usually discounted, but if so the fleet would have gone to Phalerum, if not, it remained at Salamis. For a discussion of this episode, See Munro (1939) 318.

23 See, Munro (1939) 341; Barron (1988) 595 and 599.

Athenians perhaps just a third. By this reckoning, 109 ships are accounted for of the total given by Herodotus. Thus. Xanthippus' command, by far the largest element in the composite fleet, was about 70, the rest would be half the original numbers: Sparta 8, Corinth 20, Troezen 3, Sicyon 8. Any remaining ships could have been provided by Aegina, other Peloponnesian League members such as Megara or Epidaurus, and of the islands, Naxos, the *polis* closest to Delos and Ionia.

Although the command was held by Leotychidas, Xanthippus exercised great influence because of the strength of his contingent. The identification of this Xanthippus is not without its problems. The evidence shows that a Xanthippus was the eponymous archon from summer 479 to summer 478, but an archon would not usually have commanded a naval force, and instead one of the board of the ten *strategoi* would have been chosen. Themistocles, who had been in command of the Greek naval forces at Artemisium and Salamis in 480/79, was not re-elected to the board of generals in 479.[24] The notice in Diodorus (Diod. 11.27.3) is especially lacking in precision or comprehension. Diodorus' source, probably Ephorus, would not have written what is presented in this narrative: 'that Themistocles having received gifts, the citizens of Athens removed him (in other words, did not vote for him in the annual election) from the office of general, and transferred the magistracy (τὴν ἀρχὴν) to Xanthippus, son of Ariphron.' The archonship (the eponymous archon in this instance) which Diodorus appears to have meant here was selected by lot, and not through an open election, and had an administrative not a military role. Diodorus may have wished to convey the notion that the people voted Xanthippus as general, but was plainly confused by the election of the archon Xanthippus, with whom in a single mention (Diod. 11.27.1) he begins this section of his text. Thereafter, all military and diplomatic affairs in 479/8 were those of the *strategos* Xanthippus, the father of Pericles. The archon is merely a dating mechanism for the year.[25]

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24 For the details of Themistocles' fall from power, the sources, and that Diodorus' account may be inaccurate, see Green (2006) 84 and n. 115.

25 For the eponymous archon Xanthippus, see Hill (1897) 358; Meiggs and Lewis (1969) 291. Plutarch (*Arist*. 5.7) refers to this figure as 'Xanthippides,' and hence, if used more comprehensively, would avoid further confusion. Surprisingly this is not mentioned by How and Wells (1912). Herodotus is no help here for, although having previously mentioned Xanthippus, son of Ariphron, as husband of Agariste (Hdt. 6.131), and as the parents of Pericles, he later refers to the Athenian general at Mycale without the affiliation. Plutarch's familiarity with the Athenian system of magistracies and knowledge of that city's

5.The Beach at Teos. The beach here plainly lacks sufficient depth to beach 200 triremes and any defensive structure to protect them.

According to Herodotus (Hdt. 8.132), while the Greek fleet was at Aegina, Chian exiles persuaded Leotychidas to support their bid to win power in their city, and remove the pro-Persian tyrant. The fleet sailed, but Herodotus then claims that the crews refused to go further east than Delos (Hdt. 8.132). The Greeks apparently stayed on here for several weeks, although Herodotus' account seems highly likely to have been his invention.[26] Herodotus has this fleet with its full complement of crews numbering more than 20,000 remaining on the island for

political past makes his evidence probably more reliable than that of Diodorus.

26 Herodotus' comments about the Greeks being wary of moving further east because it was unknown territory to them is complete nonsense since he was born in Halicarnassus and was well aware of the complex and continuous interchange that occurred across the Aegean. The narrative here has drawn modern comment and speculation. Thus, see How and Wells (1912) 270; Marincola (1996) 597 n. 45, but it is simply an indication of Herodotus' attachment to the 'story-telling' element of his work, poetic and dramatic, but entirely contrived. Without Hecataeus as his source Herodotus becomes rather vague about events in Asia, and this episode is probably an attempt to enliven the narrative. Note that in 490 the Persians crossed the Aegean by precisely the same route from Samos via Delos to Euboea, which Herodotus describes (Hdt. 6.95-98). See also Evans (2015) 44-45.

a considerable period (Hdt. 9.90, using the verb κάθημαι). However, the Greeks cannot have beached their fleet there for long since Delos is a small island, barely 1.3 kilometres in width and 5 kilometres in length, water was scarce, and the necessary food supplies inadequate or not available.[27] In fact, for the Greeks to have remained stationed at Delos for more than a day or so is impossible since it was a cult centre and not then the commercial hub that it was to become in the Hellenistic period. There was probably either no place or insufficient place to replenish provisions, especially water, and for regularly purchasing large quantities of food at markets, or taking advantage of any facilities for repairs to their triremes.[28] The logistical problems involved in even a short visit to Delos were insurmountable, and would indicate that the fleet must instead have either dispersed to neighbouring islands such as Naxos, or moved more directly to Asia than Herodotus reports, or was aware of.[29] Herodotus relates that while at Delos (Hdt. 9.90) a second delegation arrived, this time from Samos, to request the aid of the Greek fleet in liberating Ionia. In support of these Samians, Leotychidas decided on an attack of the Persian fleet, and presumably the irrational fears of the Greeks were immediately overcome.[30]

Diodorus' account of Mycale (Diod. 11.34.1-11.36.7) agrees broadly with Herodotus' narrative, but details of the forces that were engaged and of the battle itself differ considerably and, although on the whole it is less credible than the earlier source, it, nonetheless, provides some additional insight. Diodorus (Diod.

27 See Desruelles and Fouache (2014) 203-212. To add a modern perspective, today, Delos has no resident population.

28 The wealth of Delos, like that of Delphi and Didyma, was based on its cult and treasury, not on commerce, thus, Finley (1983) 72. Note that the Persian fleet in 490 made no use of the island even if they sailed past (Hdt. 6.95), and that Datis, after Marathon, paid a brief visit there, possibly not even leaving his trireme out of respect for the island's sanctity (Hdt. 6.118).

29 Herodotus (Hdt. 6.96) knew that the fleet of Datis in 490, albeit much larger than that commanded by Leotychidas, called at other islands such as Naxos along its chosen route. Note also Xenophon's comment (*Hell*. 2.1.25-26) and identical in Plutarch (*Alc*. 36.4-5) about the Athenian choice of a camp on the shore at Aegospotami and its unsuitable position for replenishing supplies, distance from harbour facilities, and a lack of discipline among the troops.

30 The second contact with the Asiatic Greeks may easily indicate a doublet since the earlier Chian objective was much the same, and appears completely forgotten by Herodotus, who draws no connection, perhaps of general discontent in Ionia. The second contact like the first was acted upon positively and sets the scene for the ensuing battle.

11.34.1) is in agreement with Herodotus that Xanthippus and the Athenian contingent were already present with the fleet before it sailed from Aegina (Hdt. 8.132: 'πâσαι αἱ νέες'). On the other hand, Didodorus (Diod. 11.34.2) claims that the fleet totalled 250 triremes.[31] I have argued above that the Greeks would not have committed so great a number in the year after Salamis, nor had the resources to do so. Furthermore, this number of warships is not only highly unlikely, but almost impossible to contemplate, because of the enormous number of personnel involved, mostly oarsmen, about 50,000 in total. Note further below the number also has an impact on the battle order of the Greeks once they were ashore. Finally, again there would have been the immense problem of servicing such a huge fleet, far from its home harbours, unlike at Artemisium or Salamis, and its crews at Delos where Diodorus also has them at anchor or beached (Diod. 11.34.2: 'ὁρμούντων'), but without any stipulation of length of time.[32] Diodorus (Diod. 11.34.2) has just a brief mention of the legation from Samos which convinced Leotychidas to attack the island. According to Diodorus, it was only on learning of the rapid approach of the Greeks that the Persians retired from Samos preferring not to engage in battle there, but still, seemingly, on the open sea (Hdt. 9.96).

31 This difference in total numbers, and the fact that the number given by Herodotus appears to be on the low side, has prompted much speculation about whether or not the Athenians joined the fleet later, that they had been deployed perhaps in the northern Aegean or stayed close to Salamis. Munro (1939) 341 references Diodorus, but seems uncertain about the total number in the Greek fleet; Barron (1998) 592-593 and 612 has the Athenians refusing to allow their fleet to join the rest until late; Wallinga (2005) mentions Mycale, but only for the numbers in the Persian fleet; Marincola (1996) 492 appears to accept Herodotus' total, similarly How and Wells (1912) 278. It is common in modern scholarship to find Diodorus' evidence dismissed when compared to that of Herodotus, although the latter is not always a secure guide. Remarkably, here, even when the evidence against a large Greek fleet is more compelling, Diodorus' evidence is preferred, but surely incorrectly. There is no indication of Greek aid to Olynthus when it was besieged and captured by the Persians after Salamis (Hdt. 8.127), and so it is not believable that the Greeks would have sent a fleet to the northern Aegean until after Plataea.

32 It is possible that Diodorus, no expert in military matters, found Herodotus' total inadequate to be believed because in the first century, when he wrote, Roman war fleets, such as those employed by Pompey in the war against the Cilician pirates would have been quinqueremes, much larger vessels than triremes, with far greater numbers in both rowers and fighting personnel. By the *lex Gabinia* of 67 Pompey was granted an extraordinary *imperium* to eradicate piracy with a fleet of 500 warships and 120,000 armed infantry (Plut. *Pomp*. 26.2). See also, for example, Seager (1979) 35-36.

Μάχη or Ναυμαχία

The commanders of the Greek fleet expected an engagement at sea, according to Herodotus (Hdt. 9.98) who notes that the crews readied their 'boarding bridges,' or 'gangways' or 'landing bridges.'[33] The word 'ἀποβάθρα' could relate to the departure from a ship; therefore, Munro argued that the Greeks knew that the Persian fleet had beached at Mycale, and that they would also have to fight on land.[34] Yet Herodotus was clearly under the impression that a naval battle was expected and not a land battle and when the Greek ships approached the mainland of Ionia they were still unaware that the Persians had brought their triremes ashore. Thus, the crux of the matter here is, what was 'ἀποβάθρα' meant to convey in the text? The trireme was not designed for boarding if in battle, although this may well have occurred when an opposing vessel's oars had been shattered by the ramming manoeuvre,[35] but there are few references to fighting between armed crews on board, even in the confined space of Salamis.[36] Nor were 'landing bridges' necessary since when triremes were beached, the crews simply jumped down onto the sand.[37] However, it is conceivable that in going into battle the decks, in other

33 Variously in the available texts. Thus, De Sélincourt (1996) 492: 'All gear - boarding gangways and so on ..;' Godley (1925) 273: '... equipping themselves … with gangways and all else … for a sea-fight …' How & Wells (1912)330: 'Clearly the Greeks intended to fight in the old-fashioned way by boarding … not trusting to the new manoeuvres.' This view is plainly incorrect since boarding bridges would have been used only by a large number of fighters and not required for the usual ten to fourteen *epibatai*, who must have been present in the fleet commanded by Leotychidas.

34 Munro (1939) 342.

35 For the diekplous and periplous, see, for example, Evans (2015) 29-31, on the battle of Lade; Wallinga (2005) 109, 111-112, on Salamis; Lazenby (1987) 169-177, more generally.

36 Note Diodorus' elaborate description (Diod. 14.60.1-4) of such a sea battle in 396 where Carthaginian and Syracusan crews battled across the decks of opposing warships 'locked together.' This battle occurred on the coast between Naxos and Catania and so not in a confined space, but it may be that the Carthaginian fleet was able to breach a defensive formation of the Sicilian Greeks and that this would account for the fighting at close quarters. For the κύκλος, see Lazenby (1987) 174; Whitehead (1987) 179-180. For the triremes in defensive formation, see also Herodotus (Hdt. 8.11). Diodorus or his source, probably Timaeus, described this engagement in such detail in comparison to other battles that the historian possibly regarded it as an unusual event. Battles at sea are certainly not all treated to such detail when probably much of that detail is hypothetical or based on hearsay.

37 This habit plainly remained the usual method for leaving an ancient warship when it beached, especially in a confrontation imminent with the enemy. Note Caesar's *Gallic War* (4.25) where, on arriving in Britain, seeing the numbers of hostile enemy on the beach,

6. View of the beach at Myonessus looking South. The beach is suitable for bringing triremes ashore, but is not even the depth of a single warship (approx. 36 metres). The cliff rises steeply except at this point where a small valley connects with the shore.

words, the gangways of the warships were cleared of all daily clutter so that the deck crew and the *epibatai* were allowed uninhibited movement; and this ritual must have been a necessary prelude to the commencement of all hostilities on the water. Moreover, neither Herodotus nor Diodorus note that the triremes in some fashion managed to carry additional weapons for arming the oarsmen, as did occur in the next century.[38] The triremes carried just the basic supplies of food and water, probably for a single day, few personal belongings, and no room for the armour of 170 oarsmen. No transport ships are mentioned for additional infantry, if indeed they could have been spared. The oarsmen did not possess the hoplite census, at least in Athens, and so would have, at best, to use whatever came to hand if, in fact, they could find anything effective against heavily armed infantry or Persian cavalry.[39]

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and uncertain of the terrain, the troops hesitated to engage until the standard bearer of the 10th legion jumped into the surf and waded ashore which spurred his fellow legionaries to do the same. The height of a beached trireme on the sand was about three metres, on water about two.

38 For Dionysius I at Pyrgi, see Evans (2009) 122, and Agathocles' invasion of Africa, 132-133. See also Evans (2020) 44-45.

39 See Wallinga (2005) 100-103 for a discussion of triremes used to transport troops.

The decision by Leotychidas to face the Persians on the beach at Mycale must then have been taken only after the arrival of the Greek fleet in the vicinity, and when the defensive attitude of the enemy became apparent (Hdt. 9.97; Diod. 11.34.3). The Persian triremes, or rather more exactly the Ionian triremes in the Persian fleet, had been brought ashore and a palisade behind a ditch quickly thrown up both as a camp and a protection for the warships (Hdt. 9.96).[40] Wallinga, following McDougall, suggests that the camp's defences had been constructed from the wood of some of the triremes, citing Herodotus (Hdt. 9.96) as evidence. However, Herodotus (Hdt. 9.97) is especially precise here, relating that the camp's walls were built up of 'stones and the trunks of fruit trees.' Herodotus knew the area well, and so his evidence should probably not be ignored. His account also supports the contention that here the Persians were hurried and breaking up trireme hulls, whatever their state of repair, would have taken much longer to achieve the required result. Not only this since it is worth noting that defences thrown up around 200 triremes involved a great deal of labour, and the perimeter would have been too long to secure effectively if, as is claimed, the Persians alone were armed. And even if the warships were stacked in lines of three, each of about 70, this would still mean, at 5 metres per trireme (plus a metre either side), that the defences would have been 500 metres in length and about 120 metres (approximately 38 metres for each trireme and some space between) from low to high tide mark. The fort was not especially large, but too great a space for the number of armed defenders and, moreover, a fort on the beach simply cannot have occurred in the Mediterranean where beaches are never 120 metres from land to water's edge, as noted above already.

The action of the Spartan king in sending ahead of the main fleet a trireme with a herald on deck to shout a message to the Ionians urging them to rebel (Hdt. 9.98; Diod. 11.34.4-5) suggests that it was only then that it became clear that the Persians had no intention of launching their ships (Hdt. 9.98) and hence

40 Wallinga (2005) 146, McDougall (1990). Building stockades for the protection of the triremes was normal practice when on a military campaign as Thucydides (6.66.2) shows plainly in the Athenian siege of Syracuse in 414/3. See also Evans (2009) 77-78; Evans (2015) 51, 66-67, and for maps, 86-89. The Athenians at Syracuse, with their more permanent structure, had a fleet of 199 triremes (Thuc. 6.42, 7.20). At the final sea battle in the Great Harbour at Syracuse in 413, the Athenians launched just 110 triremes, see Evans (2013) 73-74.

to win a victory over the enemy necessitated an assault on land.[41] The speech as it is recalled differs in content between the two sources,[42] but the intended effect of the message was identical in that the Persians lost any trust they may still have retained of the Ionian Greeks, and that these were quickly disarmed. However, the crews of the triremes would not have been armed, so the Samian and Milesian oarsmen may have been deprived of their oars, but not much else. The Milesians may well have been provided with some arms, but only if Herodotus is correct in having them ordered by the Persian generals to guard the mountain passes to prevent any attempted escape by the Greeks (Hdt. 9.99), who were optimistically assumed to have been defeated before the battle even began. Diodorus, on the other hand, has the Milesians and Samians agreeing to support the Greeks, but also taking some part in the fighting although this is described in a vague and unstructured way (Diod. 11.36.1-4). Nevertheless, Diodorus' account may be closer than Herodotus' version to a historical event where Samians and Milesians were probably merely onlookers until the Persian rout began.[43] Both sources recognise that, as a result of the Spartan king's subterfuge, the Milesians, Samians and any other Ionians present were denied any formal role in the battle. The attitude of the Ionians, with whom they had fought for nearly a decade just fifteen years before, can hardly have come as a surprise to the Persian commanders. Moreover, having

41 Cf. Munro (1939) 342 who states that the Persians decided on this strategy at an earlier stage arguing, without evidence, that they did this after hearing that the Athenians had joined the fleet at some later point than at Aegina. Herodotus (Hdt. 9.98) relates a far more risky tale of the Spartan king sailing past or rather alongside (παραπλέω) the beach and the Persian encampment at Mycale in his own trireme from which the message is relayed by the herald, the rowers having shipped their oars so that the ship slowed sufficiently. Diodorus' account probably makes more sense here, although both have essentially the same information.

42 Note that Herodotus has the king's herald address 'men of Ionia' while Diodorus has 'fellow Greeks.' Ephorus or Timaeus, the source for Diodorus, may have used 'fellow Greeks,' but it is perhaps more likely that this is Diodorus' own creation for readers or for an audience in an age where the name 'Greeks' had a meaning, but 'Ionian' possibly less so.

43 Diodorus has a much more vague account (Diod. 11.36.1-6) with two sides facing one another, the Greeks initially defensive, the Persians attacking. A rumour of Xerxes' arrival at the battlefield with his army is said to have caused great anxiety among the Greeks, but once quickly forgotten in the heat of the battle, seems to have helped rather than hindered victory. The Ionians are also said to have joined the Greeks, although to what extent is not related. Diodorus' short account is so formulaic that it provides hardly any additional material to that of Herodotus.

endured the defeat at Salamis these Greeks of Asia would have been sceptical of continuing support for, and loyalty to, Xerxes.

The Spartan king's message was delivered and when no move was made by the Persians to relaunch their ships to engage in battle, the Greek fleet, perhaps in a show of confidence in their military superiority, rowed past the Persian camp and went ashore, probably within sight of their enemy.

The Order of Battle and the Fight

Herodotus has the Greeks go ashore and, after a brief delay, launch an immediate assault, but Diodorus, in his narrative, interposes a day's break between the Greeks' beaching their triremes and the commencement of the battle. Given the logistics of what was effectively a sea-borne invasion, his account should be preferred.[44] Furthermore, Herodotus' dramatic opening onto a battlefield scene has clear poetic elements, interspersed with the divine and supernatural.[45] Again, it seems that Herodotus was recalling Homer's description of fighters who also rowed their ships, not triremes, perhaps pentekonters or even smaller ships. Thus, in the *Odyssey* for much of the earlier narrative, Odysseus is accompanied by fighter-rowers. With the invention of the larger trireme the older established custom was presumably abandoned in favour of speed and manoeuvrability in battles on the water rather than fighting on land. In Homer there are no battles on the sea, and here too Herodotus has the Greeks eager to do battle as if all were armed. This also gives rise to Herodotus' strange assertion that the Samians were disarmed while Milesians were armed for a specific duty. Neither the Samians nor the Milesians or any other rower had 'armour' (τὰ ὅπλα), and Herodotus knew this well enough just as he knew the ubiquitous triremes, all with their unarmed rowers. Hence the intrusion again of the story-telling element in place of history.

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44 At Aegospotami in 405, the Spartans surprised the Athenians, aware but unconcerned about their enemy's presence, who were disorganised and unprepared for an attack launched as soon as the former beached their ships. Most of the unarmed Athenian crews were easy prey (Xen. *Hell*. 2.1.23-30; Plut. *Alc*. 37.2-3). Just eight triremes under the command of Conon, together with the *Paralus*, escaped. There is a certain irony here in that, at Aegospotami, history came full circle, the destruction of Athenian hopes and the demise of Xerxes' desire for territorial expansion both ended with battles on beaches.

45 Note Herodotus' frequent interludes in which the supernatural appears in his narrative. Thus, see Evans (2022a) 36-51.

7. View of the beach at Myonessus looking North. Sand dunes are the salient feature on this stretch of the shore. Some idea of high and low tide may be obtained from the wet sand and surf.

When additional hoplites were carried it is noted, for example, at Lade (Hdt. 6.15) but probably in that battle not on triremes, in the Sicilian expedition of Athens (Thuc. 6.43) in troop transports, or at Eurymedon (Plut. *Cim*.12.2) also transports.[46] It may safely be assumed that at Mycale the usual complement of ten to fourteen *epibatai* were attached to each trireme, and that these troops were all native to their *poleis*. The Greeks were hardly in a position to spare greater numbers for this fleet since they were engaged in the main campaign against Mardonius in Boeotia.[47] The main theatre of war lay in Greece while events in Ionia were of peripheral significance in the summer of 479. To have hostilities on two fronts would have been beyond the means of the Hellenic League cities for

46 Thucydides (6.43) notes that for the attack on Syracuse 5100 hoplites were transported in 40 Athenian ships that he describes as troop carriers ('ἁι … στρατιώτιδες'), or triremes with probably two of the tiers of oars removed, and that there were also 700 *epibatai* of the Thetic class ('θῆτες ἐπιβάται …') without the hoplite census who manned the remaining triremes. See also Evans (2013) 44-45.

47 According to Plutarch (*Them*. 14.1) the Athenian ships carried 18 *epibatai* at Salamis, 14 hoplites and 4 archers, but Xanthippus' command certainly had fewer precisely for the argument raised here.

8. Miletus with the Island of Lade in the distance.
Lade, no longer an island, is now a hill in an extensive plain, the result of the silting of the estuary of the River Meander. In the foreground is the theatre at Miletus.

the provisioning of troops and equipment. The immediate danger was from the Persian army, the fleet under Leotychidas' command was probably not intended to be engaged at all, but to play a watching role shadowing any activity by enemy warships. This strategy certainly accounts for the inactivity of the fleet for much of the summer rather than any dubious comments from Herodotus (Hdt. 8.132). News that the Persian fleet had been divided and had vacated the safety of Samos may well have drawn the Greeks east. However, unlike the previous four battles of the war (Thermopylae, Artemisium, Salamis, Plataea) Mycale was not a planned engagement.

The number of Greeks who fought against the Persians can be envisaged simply by counting the 10 hoplites from a fleet consisting of 110 triremes (Athenian 70; Corinthian 20; Sicyon 8; Troezen 3, Sparta 8).[48] Thus, the Athenians pro-

48 Ten being the number of hoplites plus four archers. The archers would have covered the

9. The temple of Athena at Priene (Hellenistic)
with Mount Mycale in the background.

vided about 700 troops; Corinth 200; Sicyon 80; Troezen 30, Sparta 80 (Helots not Spartiates), plus some anonymous 'others' to the right of centre). The total number may have been roughly 1,100, yet it seems reasonably proportionate to the resources available to the Greeks in 479.[49] What also must become clear is that a wedge formation was formed in the line on account of the limited space on this beach, even at low tide not more than 20-30 metres in length (land to water's edge) at the most.[50] In usual hoplite battle formation the infantry stood in ranks to

line at its ends or acted as skirmishers standing before the line, running back through one of the gaps to relative safety behind the infantry as the line closed in on the enemy.

49 The lower figure of Herodotus is chosen here since the total of 250 triremes provided by Diodorus (Diod. 11.34.2) is simply incorrect, as argued above, and the infantry could not have formed up in any meaningful way on a beach with such a huge discrepancy in numbers between the wings.

50 If the beach at Mycale was exceptionally long, especially at low tide, Herodotus would surely have mentioned the phenomenon, as he does so when relating the siege of Plataea just

a depth of about ten men, but given the disparity in Athenian and Spartan troops, the line at Mycale, if this normal line had been followed would have produced one very long end, and one very short end with little of substance in the centre, and altogether far too long for the space on such a beach. If a wedge formation was adopted by placing a depth of about 50 on one wing, and leaving the rest at the usual depth this becomes a distinct possibility for Mycale. This strategy, whose first use is often ascribed to the Thebans at Leuctra may easily have been adopted by Xanthippus and Leotychidas in 479 using the constrained space of the beach to their advantage.[51] Allowing about a metre per hoplite, this would entail the 700 Athenians forming a block of 14 infantry in a row, but 50 deep (14 metres), alongside 20 Corinthian hoplites, 10 deep (20 metres), 8 infantry from Sicyon, 10 deep (8 metres), 3 infantrymen from Troezen (3 metres), Sparta 8 hoplites (8 metres). The total length of the line including some gaps between each section for the archers to retreat is 53 to 58 metres. Thus would illustrate how the troops in the line from 'anywhere up to half way' (Hdt. 9. 102: 'μέχρι ους τῶν ἡμισέων') were forced out of position into the dunes, arriving a little late to join the melee, but also fresh to add further impetus to the victory.[52] This would mean that, although Herodotus claims only Spartans and a few others were to the other end from the Athenians, in fact the Spartans had too few infantry to occupy a whole wing, and must have been joined by troops from Troezen, Sicyon and

the year before (Hdt. 8.129). Notably beaches in the region have little difference in low to high tide and with 'beaches' of barely a metre or two, and quite unlike some coastal regions, for example, in the western British Isles. This means that the beach length taken in this paper is obviously hypothetical, but based on Herodotus' own information that it could accommodate about half the Greek line of advance.

51 For Leuctra in 371, see Xenophon (*Hell*. 6.4.12) where the wedge was on the left wing facing the Spartiates and their king who usually occupied the right wing.

52 Note the problem of dividing the sections of an army in antiquity when the battle occurred along the shore as in Gela in 405. There the Syracusan fleet acted as an extension of the left wing and carried peltasts who attacked the enemy (Carthaginian) camp. The battle went in favour of the Carthaginians because the centre and right wings failed to coordinate and arrived late. Evans (2013) 101-105; Evans (2016) 155-159; Evans (2022c) 15-17. Note the nuances in the translations of this section: Barron (1988) 614 considers that the Spartans marched through mountainous terrain; How and Wells (1912) 33: 'hills above' the beach; Godley (1929) 279: 'through a ravine and among hills;' Munro (1939) 343: 'over a gully and hills;' Marincola (1996) 536: 'up a watercourse and over high hills.' It matters little where they went since this wing accounted for little in the strategy.

some of the Corinthians.[53] Still, Herodotus' attempt at precision here should alert the reader to a source knowing something of this aspect of the battle.

It is usually written that the Spartans, accustomed to holding the right wing as they did at Plataea (Hdt. 9.28), would have done so at Mycale,[54] and that means that the Greek fleet sailed past the Persians and beached near Priene.[55] This need not be the case at all since the Spartans may have been represented by their king, but their infantry were not Spartiates, but Helots, and their total number was very small for an offensive right wing.[56] It may actually have been considered far safer for the Greeks to land north of the Persian camp and closer to Samos than to sail into the estuary of the Meander where both Priene and Miletus were held by Persian garrisons. The Athenians' greater numbers and heavier pushing power surely ensured that they formed the right wing.

The Persian forces opposing the Greeks were commanded by the three assigned to the fleet and a certain Tigranes, the last of whom Herodotus provides only anecdotal comment (Hdt. 9.96). Said to have been in command of an army of 60,000 that Xerxes had left behind to police Ionia in his absence, more likely he had come to Mycale with a much smaller contingent raised from closer at hand, Miletus or Priene.[57] The arrival of the Greeks was sudden and unexpected, and to organise the movement of a large army would have taken several weeks, if not months. The actual Persian force, like their opponents, consisted of the *epibatai* of the roughly two hundred triremes beached at Mycale, providing approximately 2,300 armed infantry and or archers. Tigranes would have supplemented this total with his own force numbering as much again.[58] If Tigranes' participation

53 See Holladay (1988) 151 n. 2. The Spartans had no major naval power until just prior to the battle of Arginusae in 406 (Xen. *Hell*. 1.6.31).

54 Thus the order of battle may have been identical to that at Plataea (Hdt. 9.28; cf. 9.102), although Herodotus does not state this. However, the modern assumption makes no sense of the situation on the ground.

55 Thus Barron (1988) 614..

56 In 424-421 Brasidas, the most successful Spartan commander against Athens, also commanded a force composed of Helots. At Syracuse in 414/3 the sole Spartan was Gylippus who initially commanded a force of Helots numbering 700 oarsmen and 100 *epibatai* (Thuc. 7.1-2). See also, Evans (2013) 54, 58-59.

57 Diodorus (11.35.4) mentions only the prospect of Xerxes coming to aid the Persians at Mycale, although this remained just a rumour. Tigranes does not feature at all, nor are the other Persian generals named.

58 Note Munro's scepticism (1939) 342, regarding the size of Tigranes' command, and, 344,

in the battle is historical fact, then the Persian troops in total were probably a little more than 4,000, still a considerably larger force than the Greeks, but hugely outnumbered by the Ionians in their camp. This explains why the Ionians had to be removed from the battlefield area and the camp. They were not to be trusted and posed a threat by their mere presence, even if unarmed.

The two sides appear to have quickly closed ground between them and engaged just outside the Persian camp. The ease with which the Greeks broke the wicker shield (τό γέρρον) defence of the Persian infantry highlights the use of the wedge formation and its overpowering assault, the product of the great disparity in numbers of combatants. The Persian defensive line would probably have held against an assault of an opposing line of ten hoplites deep, but not fifty. This collapse led to the start of the rout, but also accounts for the heavy casualty rate among both sides, the Greeks in the front lines pushed forward into the enemy by those behind, the Persians thrown to the ground and trampled (Hdt. 9.102). The generals Tigranes and Mardontes were probably killed at this point, Artaÿntes and Ithamitres reached the safety of Sardis (Hdt. 9.107). Herodotus particularly notes that troops from Sicyon suffered large losses including their general (Hdt.9.103), but that the Athenian infantry, not surprisingly considering their numbers, won the day (Hdt. 9.105). Meanwhile, the Milesians are said to have been assigned guard duty inland on the hills away from the imminent hostilities, but Herodotus devotes considerable detail in describing their attacks on their former allies the Persians who, by then as fugitives from the battle, were trying to escape from Mycale (Hdt. 9.104).[59]

The fate of the triremes in the Persian camp is not recorded. These may easily have been burned. It is just possible that the Ionians managed to retrieve some of their warships. In the newly created Delian League (Hdt. 9.106; Thuc. 1.96) Samos, Chios and Lesbos all provided ships for the fleet of this new alliance. Sig-

his overall caution regarding the historicity of the account of Mycale.

59 Diodorus (Diod. 11.36.1-4) clearly has the Ionians initially fighting for the Persians and then changing allegiance in time to take some credit for the victory. Mention is also made of 'Aeolians and many others of Asia' who participated in the Persian defeat. However, the overall lack of any clarity in the account renders it of little value. Thus, Diodorus states (Diod. 11.36.6) that Persians losses amounted to 40,000, a much exaggerated figure, that is designed to enhance the Greeks' victory. See further Green (2006) 93-94 and n. 148 for a more positive discussion of Diodorus' reliability here.

10. Map of Ionia and Caria at the time of the Persian Wars. [I should like to thank *Pen and Sword* for providing me with the permission to reproduce this map for the discussion here. The map originally appeared in *Fields of Battle: Retracing Ancient Battlefields* (Pen and Sword, Barnsley, 2015, p. xii).]

nificantly, perhaps, the Milesians preferred to pay the annual tribute for League membership, and so may not have rescued sufficient ships to be able to play a more active role.

Conclusion

Burn's remark at this paper's start captures the essence of Mycale, but there was no actual causal connection between the battle and the newest Ionian revolt. The Ionians did not rebel in 479 because of the result at Mycale, but because of the general and catastrophic defeat suffered by Xerxes in the course of 480/79 across the whole of the Aegean region. It is, however, accurate to state that in magnitude the battle of Mycale was a trivial affair. Not a brawl probably, because the customs of the time did not allow for the arming of oarsmen, and hardly more than a skirmish with perhaps five thousand heavily armed infantry fighting along the shoreline. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that while Lade, Artemisium and Salamis were all battles fought on the sea, Mycale is the first noted example of two opposing fleets that engaged on the beach.

Mycale may be some distance from Troy but the subject of Homer's *Iliad* Books 12-13, an attack on the Greek defences, a breach in these fortifications and fighting taking place on the beach among the warships does look as if Herodotus, having little good information about Mycale, took thematic elements from Homer here as a basis for the narrative. A further similarity is the physical landscape which is very similar to that of Thermopylae's location.[60] Thus, two infantry battles in narrow places hemmed in by mountains and the sea, the close engagement at barricades with defensive lines to be overcome, both with fleets nearby, both with Spartan kings in command. Mycale had actually much more in common with Thermopylae than it had with Plataea, but it concluded with a Greek victory, a triumphant Spartan king, with honours shared equally with the Athenians. Discussion of Mycale tends to present just another land battle when it was, in fact, a rather odd affair, not unique, but the first of its kind.

And as for Herodotus' choice of ending? Mycale is also near Miletus where it all began in about 500 with the intrigue of Aristagoras. The Milesians' prominence in the battle may well have some connection with Herodotus casting a

60 See also Evans (2022a) 36-51.

glance back at the start of the hostilities that began and were to end in Ionia.[61] Mycale also has a symbolic and religious importance in that it was also where the assembly of Ionian cities (Panionion) convened. Thus, from Delos to Mycale and from Delphi to Didyma, the cult centres of the Greek world dominate Herodotus' narrative at important structural points, although often in episodes that should be regarded as more his invention than historical fact. The account of the battle of Mycale certainly has its mix of history and fiction.

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61 The construct, if it was meant as such, starting and ending in Ionia, has provoked comment. Thus, see Meiggs (1972) 33-34. There is obviously an element of specifically Athenian or pro-Athenian propaganda which, if not mostly of an oral nature, but possibly from the work of Hellanicus of Lesbos, was included by Herodotus in his narrative to enhance the reputation of Athens in opposition to Sparta. This topic has been addressed (see above Notes 1 and 3) and while forming a part of the corpus of information for Mycale has little bearing on an analysis of the battle itself.

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So called Missorium of Kerch, 4th century Found: Bosporan Necropolis, vault on the Gordikov estate. Near Kerch, the Crypt in the North-Eastern Slope of Mount Mithridates, 1891 This silver dish was a diplomatic gift from the Byzantine Emperor to a representative of the Bosporan government. In this fine example of the early Byzantine art traditional Classical themes are combined with a new artistic style. The vessel shows a composition typical of Roman coins: the Emperor on horseback is piercing the enemy with a spear. The rider was usually accompanied by one or several warriors and Nike crowning the winner. In contrast to the Classical composition showing the final scene of a battle, here we see the scene of triumph: Emperor Constantius II sits on a horse, triumphantly raising his spear. To emphasize the Emperor's highest rank and divine power, the artist used special pictorial devices including, for example, the distortion of proportions. The images were produced by a chisel. Part of the ornamentation is nielloed. The outer surface is gilded and a loop is soldered onto it. Hermitage Museum. Saint Petersburg.

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